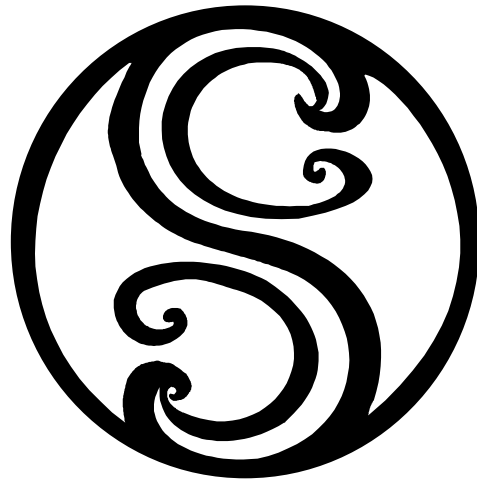


# The Scottish Chamber Choir

Directed by Michael Harris



## MAGNIFICAT

Saturday 18th November 2000

St Giles' Cathedral  
High Street  
Edinburgh

# The Scottish Chamber Choir

Director: Michael Harris

Organist: Philip Sawyer

HEINRICH SCHÜTZ MOTETS  
(1585-1672)

SELIG SIND DIE TOTEN  
DIE MIT TRÄNEN SÄEN

ORGAN

J S BACH  
(1685-1750)

FUGE ÜBER DAS MAGNIFICAT (BWV733)

HIERONYMUS PRAETORIUS  
(1560-1629)

MAGNIFICAT

INTERVAL  
of 20 minutes

Wine and soft drinks will be available in the Lower Aisle

CÉSAR CUI  
(1835-1918)

MAGNIFICAT (Op 93)

GERALD FINZI  
(1901-1956)

MAGNIFICAT

ORGAN

OLIVIER MESSIAEN  
(1908-1992)

LA VIERGE ET L'ENFANT  
FROM LA NATIVITÉ DU SEIGNEUR

ARNOLD BAX  
(1883-1953)

MATER ORA FILIUM

## PROGRAMME NOTES

Tonight's programme focuses on music for the season from All Saints and All Souls to Advent, with the emphasis on settings of the Magnificat from the early seventeenth to the twentieth centuries.

### Heinrich Schütz: Motets

Heinrich Schütz's great collection of German polyphonic writing, his *Geistliche Chormusik* (Sacred Choral Music) was published in Dresden, the Saxon capital, in 1648, at the end of the Thirty Year's War, a conflict that had devastated the German principalities of central Europe, and affected Schütz's family personally. The collection consisted of 29 motets on biblical texts of between five and seven voices, marking a return to polyphony, but incorporating the more recent trends in text setting. Each line of text in the motets is set individually, with the spirit of the text imitated in the music.

*Selig sind die Toten*, written for All Souls, is typical in this respect, with the slow moving chordal writing of 'sie ruhen' (they rest) being contrasted by the more rhythmically incisive 'und ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach' (their works follow them). *Die mit Tränen säen* is based on Psalm 126, and was a motet written for the last Sunday after Trinity. Here again the intensity of the opening is contrasted by faster moving passages, leading to the optimistic conclusion.

### J.S.Bach: Meine Seele erhebt den Herren: Fuge über das Magnificat pro organo pleno (My soul magnifies the Lord: Fugue on the Magnificat for full organ) BWV 733

The Magnificat was sung in the Lutheran Church on the Feast of the Visitation and at Vespers. The melody used for the German metrical version of the biblical text was the well-known plainsong *tonus peregrinus*. This first phrase melody is heard clearly in long notes during most of the piece; the complete plainsong melody is played in the pedal part towards the end. The term 'fugue' that is used in the title of this work refers to the imitative texture of the music; the piece is not a fugue in the usual Bachian sense.

### Hieronymus Praetorius: Magnificat

Hieronymus Praetorius, who was no relation to the better-known contemporary Michael Praetorius came from a family of organists and composers from Hamburg. He was Organist of the Jakobikirche in Hamburg from 1586 until his death, publishing a considerable corpus of church music during that time. The full title of this Magnificat is *Manificat 5 Toni Alio Modo cum Canticis Ecclesiasticis*, and it was intended for use at Christmas.

The setting alternates the plainsong tone with eight-voiced polyphonic verses, the music for which is derived from the rising triadic pattern of the tone itself. The style of this polyphony is derived from the Venetian polychoral idiom, which was increasingly popular in Germany at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The arrangement of the voices, with one high and one low choir, leads to some spectacular effects, as does the often alliterative text setting, for example 'dispersit superbos', or 'dimisit inanes'.

### Cesar Cui: Magnificat

Cesar Cui was born in Vilnius of mixed Lithuanian and French parentage. He gained prominence as one of 'The Five', the group of composers established by Balakirev to create a Russian school of composition. By profession he was an engineer, specialising in military fortifications; musically his compositions were mainly in the opera field, although his songs and piano pieces enjoyed greater popularity.

The Magnificat Op 93 was written once Cui had semi-retired, and first published in 1914, in St Petersburg. It is possible that it may have been commissioned by the Imperial Court Chapel Choir. One of Cui's few sacred works, its verses, the text of which is given to the mezzo-soprano solo, are interspersed by a refrain taken from the Hymn to the Virgin, in accordance with Russian Orthodox usage.

### Gerald Finzi: Magnificat

The choral works of the Gloucestershire-based composer Gerald Finzi are all marked by a combination of fastidious attention to detail and lyrical vocal lines; this was undoubtedly more than a little due to his studies with Sir Edward Bairstow, the Organist of York Minster, and one of the most significant teachers of his era.

Finzi's setting of the Magnificat was written in 1952 as a result of a commission from the Choirs of Smith and Amherst Colleges in Massachusetts for Christmas that year. It was not intended as a liturgical setting, and indeed has no Gloria doxology, but just a typically mellifluous concluding Amen. Two main ideas dominate – the opening figure with its swift ascent to 'magnify', and the more expressive melodic idea that appears at 'For he hath regarded'. There are also numerous instances of Finzi's attention to the detail of word-setting – the forthright 'He hath shewed strength' or 'He hath put down the mighty from their seat' for instance.

### Olivier Messiaen: La Vierge et L'Enfant from La Nativité du Seigneur

In 1936 Messiaen published his nine meditations on the birth of Jesus Christ. The first of these, *La Vierge et L'Enfant* (The Virgin and Child), written using Messiaen's own modal harmonic and melodic technique, is prefaced by words from the prophets Isaiah and Zechariah: 'Conceived by a Virgin, a child is born to us, a Son is given. Be uplifted with joy, O daughter of Zion! Behold your King comes to you, righteous and humble.'

### Arnold Bax: Mater ora filium

Whilst Finzi had some connection to the English Cathedral tradition, Arnold Bax was very much further removed from the world of Cathedral choirs. *Mater ora filium*, for unaccompanied double choir, was written in 1921, and is said to have been inspired by hearing Byrd's Mass for Five Voices. Bax produced a work which is unique in twentieth century choral literature, and one that makes considerable demands on the singers. The text is that of a medieval carol from a Balliol College manuscript; Bax combines rhapsodic writing with a homage to polyphony, with writing that reaches elaborate climaxes. Each section is interspersed with a return to the first prayer, the setting becoming more intense on each occasion. This is sung in Latin, except for the last occasion before the final ecstatic section, where it appears in English.

## TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

### SCHÜTZ: MOTETS

<i>Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herren sterben, von nun an.</i>	Blessed are they who die in the Lord.
<i>Ja, der Geist spricht: Sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit, und ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach.</i>	Yea, the Spirit speaks, they rest in their labours now and their works follow them.
<i>Die mit Tränen säen, werden mit Freuden ernten.</i>	They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
<i>Sie gehen hin und weinen und tragen edlen Samen, und kommen mit Freuden und bringen ihre Garben.</i>	He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. <i>Ps.126: 5,6</i>

### PRAETORIUS: MAGNIFICAT

<i>[Magnificat anima mea Dominum], et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo; [quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae. Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.] Quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est, et sanctam nomen eius, [et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies timentibus eum.] Fecit potentiam brachio suo, dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.</i>	[My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord:] my spirit rejoices in God my saviour; [for he has looked with favour on his lowly servant. From this day, all generations will call me blessed.] The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. [He has mercy on those that fear him in every generation.] He has shown the strength of his arm: he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
<i>[Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles.] Esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit inanes.</i>	[He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly.] He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.
<i>[Suscepit Israel, puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae,] sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini eius in saecula.</i>	[He has come to the help of his servant Israel, for he has remembered his promise of mercy,] the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children for ever.
<i>Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen</i>	Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be for ever. Amen

### CUI: MAGNIFICAT

<i>Vyelichit dusha moya Gospoda, i vozradovassya dukh moi o Bozhe Spassye moyem.</i>	My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord: my spirit rejoices in God my saviour.
<i>Chestnyeishuyu kheruwim i slavnyeishuyu byez sravnyeniya serafim, byez istlyeniya Boga Slova rozhdshuyu, sushchuyu Bogoroditsu Tya vyelichayem.</i>	More honourable than the cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, without defilement you gave birth to God the Word.
<i>Yako prizrye na smiryeniye rabyi Svoyeya, sye bo otnyinye ublazhat mya vsi rodi.</i>	He has looked with favour on his lowly servant. From this day, all generations will call me blessed.
<i>Chestnyeishuyu kheruwim...</i>	More honourable...
<i>Yako sotvori mnye vyelichiye Silnyi, i svyato imya Yego, i milost Yego vrodyi rodov boyashchimssya Yego.</i>	The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. He has mercy on those that fear him in every generation.
<i>Chestnyeishuyu kheruwim...</i>	More honourable...
<i>Sotvori dyerzhavu myishtsyeya Svoyeyu, rastochi gordyiya myisliyu syerdtsa yikh.</i>	He has shown the strength of his arm: he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
<i>Chestnyeishuyu kheruwim...</i>	More honourable...
<i>Nizlozhi silnyiya so pryestol, i voznyessye smiryenniya, alchushchiya ispolnyi blag, i bogatyashchiyassya otpusti tshchi.</i>	He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.
<i>Chestnyeishuyu kheruwim...</i>	More honourable...
<i>Vospriyat Izrailya, otroka Svoyego, pomyanuti milosti, yakozhe glagola ko ottsyem nashim, Avraamu i syemyeni yego dazhe do vyeka.</i>	He has come to the help of his servant Israel, for he has remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children for ever.
<i>Chestnyeishuyu kheruwim i slavnyeishuyu byez sravnyeniya serafim, byez istlyeniya Boga Slova rozhdshuyu, sushchuyu Bogoroditsu Tya vyelichayem.</i>	More honourable than the cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, without defilement you gave birth to God the Word.

## The Scottish Chamber Choir

### FINZI: MAGNIFICAT

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour.  
For he hath regarded the lowliness of his hand-maiden.  
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.  
[My soul doth magnify the Lord.]  
For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his name.  
And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.  
He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and meek.  
He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.  
[My soul doth magnify the Lord.]  
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel, as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever. Amen.

### BAX: MATER ORA FILIUM

Mater ora filium	The kings brought Him presents
Ut post hoc exilium	[Alleluja]
Nobis donet gaudium	Gold, myrrh and frankincense.
Beatorum omnium.	To my son full of might.
Amen.	King of kings and Lord of Right.
Fair maiden, who is this bairn	[Alleluja]
That thou bearest in thine arm?	Mater ora filium...
Sir it is a kinges son	Fair maiden,
That in Heaven above doth wone.	Pray for us unto thy Son, sweet Jesus,
Mater ora filium...	That He may send us of his grace.
Man to father He had none	In heav'n on high to have a place.
But Himself God alone	[Allelujah]
Of a maiden He would be born	Mater ora filium
To save mankind that was forlorn.	Ut post hoc exilium
Mater ora filium...	Nobis donet gaudium
	Beatorum omnium.
	Amen.

Since its formation in 1968, the **Scottish Chamber Choir** has performed throughout Scotland and Northern England to great acclaim. Each season the choir presents four concerts in Edinburgh, climaxing with an appearance at the Festival Fringe. These are usually supplemented by a Christmas concert and guest appearances at local Music Societies and Festivals throughout the year, keeping members quite busy!

As you will see from the list of forthcoming concerts in this programme, the choir sings shorter items from the chamber choir repertoire as well as more extended works – for example, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, which occupied the whole programme at our Summer concert, and the Bach *B minor Mass*, which we will present at our Festival Fringe concert in August 2001. Whilst some concerts are given *a cappella*, at others we are joined by a variety of instrumental forces, making possible an exceptional freedom of programming and great interest for both participants and audience.

The choir's hallmark has always been its breadth of repertoire, encompassing a wide range of music from the 16th century to the present day, with music by living composers featuring in programmes during most seasons. Often there is a thread linking a series of concerts, encouraging regular attendance. The highly successful and critically praised Silver Jubilee season in 1993–4, for example, concentrated on 20th century British music, and was recognised by an Enterprise Award from the Performing Right Society – one of only three such awards in Scotland.

From time to time, vacancies occur in all sections of the choir, and any singer interested in obtaining further details should contact Bill Wood, the President, on 0131 339 7663. Rehearsals are held on Monday evenings in the Ian Tomlin School of Music at Napier University's Craighouse campus.

**Michael Harris** was appointed as Musical Director of the choir in January 1998, in succession to Philip Sawyer. He is Organist and Master of the Music of St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, a post that is combined with a Lectureship in Music at Napier University.

Prior to coming to Edinburgh, he was Assistant Organist of Canterbury Cathedral and Organist of The King's School, Canterbury, having previously been Sub-Organist of Leeds Parish Church. He began his musical education as a chorister at Gloucester Cathedral, and later became Organ Scholar of St. Peter's College, Oxford. He studied organ with Nicholas Danby.

His work has involved him in numerous recordings and broadcasts, both for television and radio, including the Enthronement of George Carey as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1991. He has also recorded a solo CD, 'The Widor Tradition', of nineteenth and twentieth century French organ music. Together with St Giles' Cathedral Choir he has recently released a CD of music for choir and organ entitled 'Sounds of St Giles'.

In addition to his work with Cathedral and choral music in general, Michael Harris has given many solo organ recitals throughout Great Britain and Germany. During his time in Kent he was also Musical Director of The Canterbury Singers, one of the leading chamber choirs of the area.

## The Scottish Chamber Choir

Philip Sawyer studied at the Royal College of Music and at the University of Cambridge, where he was Organ Scholar of Peterhouse. He won university scholarships for organ studies with Piet Kee in Haarlem and Amsterdam, and a French Government scholarship for a six-month period of study with René Saorgin at the Nice Conservatoire.

Philip Sawyer has given recitals in Britain, the Netherlands and France. Venues have included: Westminster Abbey; Westminster Cathedral; Chester Cathedral; the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews; St Bavo's R.C. Basilica, Haarlem; Monaco Cathedral; Nice Cathedral. In August 2000 he gave one of the Tuesday evening municipal organ recitals on the famous Müller organ in Great St Bavo's Church, Haarlem.

He has broadcast for Radio 3 and for BBC Radio Scotland and has commissioned and given the first performances of a number of new works by composers in England, Scotland and the USA.

From 1987 to 1999 Philip Sawyer was Head of the School of Music at Napier University, Edinburgh and was director of the Scottish Chamber Choir from 1993 to 1997. He is now Director of Music at St Mary's Church, Haddington (to the East of Edinburgh), continuo player with The Banquet of Musick (a period instrument ensemble based in Scotland) and part of the administrative team of the Edinburgh Quartet.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The work of the choir is subsidised by the **National Federation of Music Societies** from funds supplied by the Scottish Arts Council. The Federation, which was founded in 1935, represents the interests of around 1400 societies throughout the United Kingdom and provides them with a range of services and training as well as acting as the leading voice for amateur music. The Federation's patron is HRH The Duchess of Kent, and its current President is Sir Peter Maxwell Davies.



*No part of this concert should be recorded without prior permission*

Sopranos	Jenny Auld Susie Flett Lorraine Fraser Nicola Harrington Anne McAlister	Adriana Skaraas Heather MacLeod Pauline McClellan Erica Schwarz
Contraltos	Fiona Akers Alison Bishop Jean Brodie Myra Brown Alex Hill	Becky Hirst Anna Muschol Sheila Robertson Beatrice Wickens
Tenors	Vic Hodgson Andrew Morley	James Verge Bill Wood
Basses	Adrian Coppola Andrew Firth Scott Harrison	Frank Lucas Hamish Martin Martin Tarr

### Forthcoming concerts

Details of the choir's Edinburgh concerts during the 2000-01 season are given on the back cover. The choir will also be singing at St Mary's, Haddington (see programme opposite) and for the following societies:

Ayr Music Club	7:30pm	Saturday 13th January 2001
Galashiels Arts Association	7:30pm	Sunday 25th March 2001
West Linton Music Society	7:30pm	Saturday 21st April 2001

The unaccompanied music presented at these concerts will include:

*Parry Songs of Farewell; Dempster Tranquil Night; Maxwell Davies Lullabye for Lucy; Britten Hymn to Saint Cecilia; Stanford Seven Part Songs; Vaughan Williams Three Shakespeare Songs; Moeran Songs of Springtime.*

Details for all of these concerts from the President, Bill Wood, on 0131 339 7663.

We hope that you have enjoyed the concert and will wish to hear the choir in our next Edinburgh concerts

8:00pm

**Saturday 17th March 2001**

**St. Giles' Cathedral**

Tallis *Lamentations*, Lotti *Crucifixus*,  
Sanders *Requiem*  
unaccompanied

**Saturday 2nd June 2001**

**St. Giles' Cathedral**

Martin *Mass for Double Choir*,  
Bernstein *Chichester Psalms*  
with organ, harp and percussion

**Sunday 12th August 2001**

**St Mary's Cathedral**

Festival concert

J S Bach *Mass in B minor*  
with soloists and chamber orchestra

Details from choir members or from the President,  
Bill Wood, on 0131 339 7663