

PETERBOROUGH INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CHORAL FESTIVAL

16TH - 19TH JUNE 2023

PARTICIPATING CHOIRS:

Cantatrice

The Chanterelles

The Decibelles

Elektra Women's Choir

Jubilate

Lemon Tuesday

Paddock Singers

Peterborough Voices

Phoenix Chorus

The Swift Singers



Thomas Caplin, Norway
juror and seminar leader



Shirley Court, UK
seminar leader



Morna Edmundson, Canada
juror and seminar leader



Karen England, UK
juror



William Prideaux, UK
*chair of judging panel
and seminar leader*

SOUVENIR PROGRAMME £6



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Stars Above

AND EARTH BELOW

Peterborough's award-winning choirs present a programme of contemporary choral music for equal voices, including works by Bob Chilcott, Jaret Choolun, Rihards Dubra, Per Ekedahl, Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Romualds Jermāks, Janet Lanier, Russell Pascoe, Carolyn Pirtle, Marie-Claire Saindon, Joan Szymko, and Nancy Telfer.

Peterborough Cathedral
7.30pm Saturday 7th October 2023
Tickets at www.peterboroughsings.org.uk

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From the Festival Director:

Dear fellow music lovers,

On behalf of the Peterborough International Women's Choral Festival team, it is my pleasure to welcome all of our attending choirs, conductors, accompanists, and the panel of judges and adjudicators to the 2023 inaugural festival.

As well as being the first UK festival exclusively for women's choirs, our festival is unique in its celebration of the works of female composers. We are thrilled that all of the competition entries include pieces composed by women. Additionally, we have commissioned three new works by outstanding female composers which will be premiered at the festival.

Choral singing is not only a beautiful art form, but a powerful means of bringing people together. The 2022 Peterborough Sings/SPARC research paper findings on mental health and wellbeing highlight the importance of choral singing as a powerful instrument for social change. As we unite our voices in song, we must remember the profound significance of our contributions to the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and society.

We would like to thank our sponsors Perkins, Greenwoods and Peterborough City Council, the teams at Peterborough Sings!, Peterborough Cathedral and University Centre Peterborough, and Arts Council England for awarding us the funding to make this festival possible.

We hope that you will enjoy the festival, the music, and the opportunity to connect with other music lovers from around the world.

Warm regards,

William Prideaux BA(Hons) LRAM PGCE ARAM FRSM (he/him)

Festival Director, Peterborough International Women's Choral Festival



*Together,
we power ahead*

For over 90 years, our dedication to thoughtful, focused collaboration, has fuelled our talented team to design and build the engines that matter most to our customers' success.

Good luck to all of the choirs participating in the Peterborough International Women's Choral Festival.

COMPETITION PROGRAMME

10.00AM SATURDAY 17TH JUNE - PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL

10.00am: The Swift Singers

Only You	Words and music by Vincent Clarke, arr. Lorenz Maierhofer
When I Am Silent	Words and music by Joan C. Varner
Bohemian Rhapsody	Words and music by Freddie Mercury, arr. Mark Brymer

10.15am: Paddock Singers

Bobby Shaftoe	Folksong arr. by Robert Latham
Why We Sing	Words and music by Greg Gilpin
Three Fair Maids	Words by Henry Chapman and music by Pauline Viardot
One Fine Day	Words and music by Gerry Goffin and Carole King, arr. Mac Huff

10.45am: Cantatrice

Voice On The Wind	Words and music by Sarah Quartel
O Salutaris Hostia	Liturgical words with music by André Caplet
Everything's Coming Up Roses	Words by Stephen Sondheim and music by Jule Styne, arr. Philip Kern

11.00am: The Chanterelles

Hoj, Hura Hoj!	Words and music by Otmar Mácha
O Love	Words by George Matheson and music by Elaine Hagenberg
Danza!	Words and music by Linda Spevacek

11.15am: The Decibelles

Dies Irae	Liturgical words with music by Z. Randall Stroope
And Mary Said	Words Luke 1:41-42, 45-49 with music by Larry Theiss
By Night	Words by Harriet Spofford and music by Elaine Hagenberg

11.30am: Jubilate

As Torrents In Summer	Words by Henry Longfellow and music by Edward Elgar
The Battle Of Jericho	Traditional arr. Douglas Coombes
I'll Tell My Ma	Traditional arr. Erik Jones
A Woman (Wearing Bloomers)	Words and music by Joanna Forbes L'Estrange and Alexander L'Estrange

11.45am: Lemon Tuesday

Sing A Song Of Sixpence	Traditional arr. Fiona Lander
My Funny Valentine	Words by Lorenz Hart and music by Richard Rodgers, arr. Kirby Shaw
One Fine Day	Words and music by Gerry Goffin and Carole King, arr. Deke Sharon
The Seal Lullaby	Words by Rudyard Kipling and music by Eric Whitacre

12.00noon: Phoenix Chorus

Sing Sing	Words and music by Serena Ryder, arranged by Joey Minshall
In The Wee Small Hours Of The Morning	Words by Bob Hilliard and music by David Mann, arr. Jim Arns
This Can't Be Love	Words by Lorenz Hart and music by Richard Rodgers, arr. David Wright
It Is Well With My Soul	Words by Horatio Spafford and music by Philip Bliss, arr. David Harrington

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GALA CONCERT PROGRAMME

7.00PM SATURDAY 17TH JUNE - PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL

Massed Festival Choir

Long Since In Egypt's Plenteous Land Words and music by Hubert Parry

First Finalist of Festival Choir Challenge

Festival Pop-Up Choir: including singers from Perkins and from Peterborough Latvian Community.

I Can See Clearly Now Words and music by Johnny Nash

You Raise Me Up Words by by Brendan Graham and music by Rolf Løvland

Bēdu Manu Lielu Bēdu Traditional Latvian Folksong, arr. William Prideaux

Second Finalist of Festival Choir Challenge

Peterborough Voices

Premiere: The Jewel Beyond Price Words by Gregory Warren Wilson and music by Cheryl Frances-Hoad
Benedictus Liturgical words with music by Thomas Caplin

Third Finalist of Festival Choir Challenge

Massed Festival Choir

Ave Maria Liturgical words with music by Camille Saint-Saëns

Elektra Women's Choir and Peterborough Voices

Blinded By A Leafy Crown Words by Sara Teasdale with music by Marie-Claire Saindon

The Smoothing Iron Traditional British Folksong arr. William Prideaux

Interval - Refreshments available in the South Transept

The Chanterelles

Premiere: Keeping Time For Joy Words by Sarah Windle and music by Marie-Claire Saindon

Elektra Women's Choir

Kwis Na Xwey Words and music by T. Patrick Carrabré

Ved Rondane Words by Aasmund Olavsson Vinje and music by Edvard Grieg

The Valley Words and music by Jane Siberry, arr. Beth Hanson

Terre-Neuve Words by Annick Perrot-Bishop and music by Marie-Claire Saindon

Jubilate

Premiere: At The Spring Dawn Words by Angelina Weld Grimké and music by Joan Szymko

Results and Presentation of Awards

Peterborough Voices

Ack, Ack Om Det Vore Dag Swedish Folksong arr. Per Ekedahl

Gloria Liturgical words with music by Romualds Jermaks

Somewhere Out There Words and music by James Horner, Barry Mann, and Cynthia Weil arr. Matthew Jones

CANTATRICE

Musical Director: Zoe Peate

Accompanist: Gary Prior

Cantatrice began back in 2004 when the worry of not having enough interest was quickly dispelled as 90 women walked through the door at the first rehearsal in Steyning, West Sussex. Its sister choir in Horsham began three months later.

Over the years we have performed a vast selection of musical styles to suit the varied musical tastes of the members, performing locally in community halls and churches but often travelling further afield to Chichester Cathedral, The Hawth, Crawley and St Clement Danes, The Strand, London.

Workshops from visiting professionals David Lawrence, Brenda Rattray, Jonathan Wilcox & Jeremy Jackman have boosted the choir's confidence and ability with voice craft coaching from Ruth Kerr and Mark Oldfield giving them more insight into their own instruments.



We love working with other choirs, dancers, and instrumentalists and have performed with Worthing Philharmonic Orchestra, Horsham Symphony Orchestra and took part in the Association of British Choral Directors 25th Anniversary Concert at the Dorking Halls.

We regularly compete in competitions in Bath and Bournemouth – the experience and camaraderie being a great draw, though winning a few times is a great boost!

Our most recent programmes - apart from our annual Christmas presentation - have been an all classical concert with a local violinist and a tribute to Stephen Sondheim with soloists and band.

THE CHANTERELLES

Musical Director: Shirley Court

Accompanist: Carolyn Earle

The Chanterelles are a group of young women drawn together by their love of singing, under the direction of Dr Shirley Court. Since 2009 they have impressed both audiences and adjudicators alike with their professional approach and clear enjoyment for the music they sing, with a diverse repertoire which spans genres and showcases the rich sounds they make.



The Chanterelles began singing together in 2009. Its singers are based across the UK and rehearse regionally as well as joining together to rehearse as a full choir in various different locations around the Midlands. The Chanterelles derive much satisfaction from singing together at such a high standard and their professionalism and proficiency is evident in their music.

Many of the members had previously sung together in the Chanterelles' previous incarnation as a youth choir through Leicestershire Arts in Education. This non-auditioned all-girls choir came to an end in 2001 after a decade singing together. Accolades the choir received included a silver medal at the Choir Olympics and trophies from the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod. The youth choir also competed in the semi-finals of Choir of the Year three times.

Their recent achievements include winning the women's choirs sections at the Isle of Man Festival of Choirs 2013, the North Wales Choral Festival in 2011 and the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in 2010. The choir was named 'most entertaining choir' at the final of the Isle of Man Festival of Choirs. In 2016 the choir were crowned the winners of The Manchester Amateur Choral Competition.

At the Mrs Sunderland Festival in 2018 they won a total of four trophies including the award for the best performance of the festival.

More recently they were awarded first place in the women's choir class at the North Wales Choral Festival in November 2018 and in May 2019 they were once again crowned winners in the folk song category and the female choirs category at the Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts.

In July 2022 they reached the final of the International Choral Festival Cardiff which was held at the Wales Millennium Centre.

THE DECIBELLES

Musical Director: Joshua Daniel

Accompanist: Mark Pescott

The Decibelles were formed in 2018, are based in Kettering, Northamptonshire and currently have just over 40 members.

Since formation The Decibelles have raised money for charities, performed at local events and competitions and most importantly has offered a great opportunity to create long lasting friendships and to bring people together in times of difficulty all with a mutual love of music.

The Decibelles are a fun-loving group of women from all walks of life, with varying abilities and musical experience but there is a common interest - a love for music. We pride ourselves on not being just an average choir, and strive to be the best we can be, competing regularly at choral festivals and competitions. They are proud to be able to say that we are a multi award-winning women's choir. They offer a warm, welcoming and supportive atmosphere to all those who join us.

The choir sings songs from many genres including: sacred, musicals, contemporary, both a cappella and accompanied by our pianist Mark Pescott and directed by our musical director and founder Joshua Daniel.



ELEKTRA WOMEN'S CHOIR

Artistic Director: Morna Edmundson

Guest accompanist: Jane Robertson

Elektra Women's Choir from Vancouver, Canada has been a leader among women's choirs since 1987. Its mandate is "to inspire and lead in the choral art form through excellence in performance and the creation, exploration, and celebration of women's repertoire." Under the direction of Artistic Director, Morna Edmundson, the 45-voice adult choir is known for its adventurous programming, seeking out music written specifically for women and frequently commissioning new works. Elektra is a frequent collaborator and performer with other cultural organizations, festivals, and concert series. The choir is honoured to work with an outstanding pianist, Dr. Stephen Smith.

Elektra delivers its mandate through a highly-acclaimed concert series featuring outstanding guest artists. The choir is a leader in repertoire development, performing worthy music from the past and new works. In its first three decades, Elektra has commissioned and premiered over 100 compositions and arrangements. The choir's recordings extend the reach of its repertoire internationally on a multitude of digital platforms, and its extensive YouTube channel further promotes the choir's repertoire discoveries. Elektra's 17th digital CD, *Fire Flowers*, was released in August 2020. Elektra's website offers a permanent repertoire resource featuring all works programmed by the choir to date and highlighting the breadth of its work with Canadian composers and arrangers.





Elektra's celebrated Community Engagement Programs encourage, train, and mentor the next generation of youth and adults: singers, conductors, and composers. For youth, these include the Choral Encounters festival, the Diane Loomer Choir Program, and the Mira Youth Mentorship Program. Emerging composers interact with the choir through Reading Sessions of New Compositions. From 2016-2019, Elektra created Celebrating Women Composers, an initiative which provided opportunities for and raised the profile of women composers.

A multiple national prize-winning ensemble, Elektra has been honoured to perform at conferences of Choral Canada, the American Choral Directors Association, Chorus America, the International Society for Music Education and the International Federation for Choral Music, where it appeared at the World Symposium on Choral Music in Sydney (1996) and Barcelona (2017). In the summer of 2018, Elektra was one of five choirs from across the country to perform in "...float...", Choral Canada's unique, outdoor, immersive performance experience, funded by the Canada Council's New Chapter program. In 2020, Elektra collaborated with the San Francisco Bay area choir, WomenSing, to produce the groundbreaking digital performance of Shawn Kirchner's *The Light of Hope Returning*, which ultimately garnered over 12,000 views for its YouTube premiere and subsequent broadcast the following year. On the heels of the pandemic, Elektra returned to the concert stage with a live performance of this same work in November 2021. In June of 2022, Elektra released a video, *Snewiyalh t'l'a Stakw (Teachings of the Water)*, with a score commissioned from Canadian composer T. Patrick Carrabré. This 3 year-long collaborative project with Coast Salish First Nations was conceived by Co-Curator and ethnomusicologist, Dr. Jeanette Gallant, and is a musical exploration of water teachings in First Nations cultures.



FOLK SONGS OF THE BRITISH ISLES



7.30pm Saturday 15th July - St John's Church, Peterborough

Tickets available online at www.peterboroughsings.org.uk (fees apply)

PETERBOROUGH
MALE VOICE CHOIR

In aid of Peterborough Singers! Registered Charity Number: 1171950

JUBILATE

Musical Director: Sarah Stroh

Accompanist: Simon Hester

Jubilate was formed in 1999 and currently has around 45 members. Led by professional singer and choral director Sarah Stroh, the choir is known for its entertaining repertoire, high standard of performance and sense of fun. Jubilate's slogan is 'Voices in Celebration', which reflects our love of singing and laughter. We take our singing seriously but not ourselves!

Our latest competition success was in the 2022 Cardiff International Choral Competition where we won the single voice choir category.

In May 2018 we won four trophies – including the prestigious Gold Cup for most outstanding choir – at the Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts. In December 2017 a track from our Christmas CD was broadcast on Classic FM and we've also been broadcast on BBC Radio 3, singing three pieces composed especially for us by Ailie Robertson as part of Making Music's Adopt a Composer scheme.

We are very much looking forward to coming to Peterborough and meeting likewise women's choirs!



LEMON TUESDAY

Musical Director: Emily Leather

Accompanist: Natalie Bleicher

Lemon Tuesday began in 2005 as a series of lessons for would-be singers. Within six months, we'd formed our own choir and began performing in the local area. For the first few years there were twelve of us performing at local events around Rickmansworth and Watford.

By 2010, we'd grown to a choir of 40 members and decided that that was the optimum number for us. We're all great friends, we all know each other well, and it's important to us that it stays that way. As life moves on and some of us must leave, we like to welcome new members into our community.

We love that we sing a wide range of music: pop always goes down well, show tunes, jazz, folk, the odd classical piece, some acapella, some accompanied. Many years ago, we decided we must always sing without sheet music and we love the connection that allows us with our audience.



We were unbelievably lucky to secure Emily Leather as our musical director in 2017. Her background in opera, her experience in America and her expertise with all sorts of choirs from city-slickers to schools has made her an inspiration. She has a vast repertoire at her fingertips and is a natural at communicating with singers. She somehow manages to push us and make every rehearsal fun at the same time.

We've developed a frame for our year: we love our Christmas concert with mince pies and mulled wine (everyone welcome!), we have a weekend away together, then the Rickmansworth Canal Festival in May, and performing at the Michael Sobell annual commemoration of loved ones in November. To this frame, we like to try all sorts of events, and festivals where we can see other choirs are our absolute favourites. Roll on Peterborough International!

PADDOCK SINGERS

Musical Director: Ruth Kerr

Paddock Singers is a women's chamber choir of around 40 members, based in Lewes, East Sussex and directed by Ruth Kerr. We were formed in 2007 to retain the camaraderie formed by the chorus of a community opera, and several of the original members still sing with us.

We sing in two, three, and four-part harmony, often a cappella, or with piano, organ or small orchestra, and enjoy a broad range of musical styles ranging from traditional folk songs, via operatic and classical repertoire, to contemporary arrangements and musical theatre.



We are also honoured to perform Ruth's original compositions, which were written for our very popular Christmas concerts, and for one of our most memorable participations in the Brighton Festival.

We give regular concerts in Lewes, and at the Brighton Royal Pavilion, and we have provided the choral music for a number of evensong services at Chichester Cathedral. We're not limited to conventional performance venues, however - our more unusual musical experiences include providing flash-mob style entertainment on the Sonnet Walks for the Globe Theatre; a live performance in Trafalgar Square; a swanky recital at a Guild dinner in the Ironmongers Hall; and several more raucous contributions to the Lewes Women's Football Club matches.

We love singing and performing together, both for our own pleasure and for the pleasure of our audiences, and are thrilled to be participating in a competition for the first time.

PETERBOROUGH VOICES

Musical Director: William Prideaux

Guest accompanist: Jane Robertson

Peterborough Voices have collaborated with world-renowned performance partners including the King's Singers, the Central Band of the Royal Air Force, the BBC Concert Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra as well as performing and competing at prestigious venues and festivals in Spain, Italy, Latvia and across the UK.

They were awarded the Jessie Jameson Baton for their performances at the 2022 Huddersfield Mrs Sunderland Festival where they won the Choir Prizewinners' Challenge, also winning the women's voices class at the 2022 Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts. They recently returned from the Riga Sings International Choir Competition (Latvia) where they won the women's voices class and were awarded a coveted gold diploma. Peterborough Voices won the women's voices class at the Huddersfield Mrs Sunderland Festival in 2023 and were awarded the Huddersfield Centenary Trophy for the best single performance of the festival.

Directed by William Prideaux, Peterborough Voices welcomes singers with differing levels of previous experience and aims to be accessible to as broad a demographic as possible, giving women of all ages and backgrounds the opportunity to come together to create something wonderful: the women are united by their shared love of singing and performing and their determination to develop, grow and be the very best they can be. Their repertoire is diverse and wide-ranging, with particular emphasis on contemporary music by female composers.

Together with Peterborough Male Voice Choir, Peterborough Youth Choir and Peterborough Community Chorus, Peterborough Voices is part of the Peterborough Sings! music education charity which supports over 150 singing members as well as an extensive programme of community outreach work which includes delivering the Arts Council England-funded Peterborough Singing Strategy across local primary schools.

Peterborough Voices recently performed with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in a sell-out concert at Peterborough Cathedral, and are delighted to host the Peterborough International Women's Choral Festival welcoming choirs from across the world to the city to work with distinguished choral conductors and practitioners.



PHOENIX CHORUS

Musical Director: Lynda Wood

Phoenix Chorus was formed in 1978 by a small group of women who wanted to sing in four-part unaccompanied harmony. We now number around 60 members aged 25–75 from all walks of life living in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and beyond – the one thing we have in common is our huge passion for singing.

Throughout the past 40+ years Phoenix Chorus has won an impressive array of awards and medals both at home and abroad. We work extremely hard to continuously improve our knowledge and skills in the art of acapella singing and we hone our skills via performances to a wide variety of audiences in venues both large and small – from the Royal Albert Hall to the local village hall – and we pride ourselves on our professional approach to all our contests and performances. Our goal in each performance is to create an experience audiences will never forget.

We meet every Tuesday evening at Stratton Upper School in Biggleswade. We have an open door policy and welcome anyone wanting to hear us perform or interested in joining us to drop in and see what we do.



THE SWIFT SINGERS

Musical Director: Tim Rhys-Morgan

Accompanist: Derrick Thompson

The Swift Singers are a fun-loving, women's community choir, based in South Woodham Ferrers in Essex. The choir was formed in 1989 and currently has about 60 members. Some of our founder members still sing with the choir today.

We sing in four parts, soprano, mezzo soprano, first alto and second alto and there is no audition to join. Our Musical Director will give new members a voice assessment after joining, to check they are singing in the right section.

We sing in 2-3 concerts a year in Essex but have also travelled widely throughout the UK and also abroad, including Spain, Germany and France. We sometimes take part in choir competitions and were proud to win the women's choir section of the Isle of Man Festival of Choirs in 2015.

The choir raises money for charity, and we are proud to have raised considerable sums for local charities over the years.

Our repertoire is eclectic and changes at least annually; singing classical pieces, folk songs, secular music, songs from musical theatre, rock and pop songs and acapella pieces as well as Christmas music. There really is something for everyone.

We are very fortunate to be ably directed by the wonderful Tim Rhys-Morgan and accompanied by our talented pianist Derrick Thompson.



INTERNATIONAL JURORS AND SEMINAR LEADERS

Morna Edmundson - juror and seminar leader

Morna Edmundson is one of Canada's best-known choral conductors. Passionate since childhood about choral singing, she obtained degrees and diplomas in vocal music in Vancouver, Bellingham, and Stockholm, Sweden where her teachers included Eric Ericson.

In 1987, she co-founded Elektra Women's Choir with Diane Loomer, a partnership that lasted 22 years. In 2009, Morna became Elektra's sole Artistic Director, continuing the choir's strong leadership role in concert presentation, commissioning, recording, and mentorship.

In addition to her work with Elektra, Morna is the Artistic Director of EnChor, a Vancouver-based, auditioned, mixed choir for mature voices. For 14 years Morna shared her love of quality repertoire with a new generation of singers in her role as Associate Artistic Director of Coastal Sound Music Academy, where she was Music Director of the mixed-voice Youth Chamber Choir.

Morna has adjudicated in North America and Asia, conducted honour choirs in several US states, co-directed the American Choral Directors Association National Women's Honour Choir, and gives frequent workshops with choirs of all ages.



In 2000 she was presented with the Healey Willan Award for outstanding service to the BC Choral Federation, an organisation she serves as a member of the Willan Council. In February 2009 Morna was a recipient of the BC Community Achievement Award, which recognized her organisational talent, leadership by example, and her encouragement of others to pursue their musical and choral goals. In June 2011 Morna received a Vancouver YWCA Woman of Distinction award in recognition of her work with Elektra.

Since 2013, she has served as a Board member of Chorus America, the advocacy, research, and leadership development organisation that gives voice to the choral field. Since 2022 she has been president of Choral Canada.



Thomas Caplin - juror and seminar leader

Thomas Caplin received his education as a singer, conductor and choral pedagogue at the Royal Academy of Music in Copenhagen and at the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm.

Thomas is sought after as a guest conductor and clinician, and as an adjudicator in his native Norway and internationally: since 1994, he has adjudicated in over 30 choral competitions, including the World Choir Games in 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2016.

He is renowned as a specialist in the psychological/pedagogical elements of choral leadership, coupled with the traditional perspectives of choral conducting and the overall running of a choir in all its aspects. His knowledge and understanding of the cross section between classical/traditional leadership and rhythmic choral leadership is also in demand.

Thomas is Professor in music at the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences in Hamar, Norway. He conducts the award-winning Defrost Youth Choir and is the leader and a singing member of the successful vocal group Nordic Blue.

Karen England - juror

Karen England studied at the University of Leeds and at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

She started her professional career working at the Royal Opera House in Wagner's 'Die Meistersinger', and performing extensively with London Voices under Terry Edwards. In 2004 she made her BBC Proms debut under Sir Simon Rattle with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Other roles include Carmen (Bizet, Carmen), Cherubino (Mozart, Marriage of Figaro), Dorabella (Mozart, Cosi Fan Tutti), Dido (Purcell, Dido and Aeneas), Orlofsky (Strauss, Die Fledermaus), 2nd and 3rd Lady (Mozart, Magic Flute) and Flora (Verdi, La Traviata).

For the last 20 years, Karen has been one of the OperaBabes with friend Rebecca Knight. In 2001 her opera career took an unlikely twist: she and Rebecca were spotted busking in London's Covent Garden by a talent executive and booked to perform at the FA Cup Final and the Champions League Final in Milan to an audience of 500 million. Within weeks the duo had signed an exclusive recording contract with Sony.

With the OperaBabes, Karen has performed extensively worldwide and is as comfortable singing on the football pitch as she is performing on stage at the Royal Opera House. The last twenty years have seen her and Rebecca perform with some of the world's leading orchestras including the Philharmonia, the Halle, the BBC Concert Orchestra, The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, The Berlin Symphony Orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra in venues as diverse as the legendary Stardust Casino in Las Vegas, the Herod Atticus in Athens, the LA Opera House, The Royal Albert Hall, The Symphony Hall Birmingham and Leeds Castle.

Karen and Rebecca have been the subject of three major documentaries and have performed on numerous television programmes including Good Morning America, BBC Songs of Praise, GMTV and the Classical Brit Awards. Radio performances include the BBC's Friday Night is Music Night, In Tune, and Woman's Hour.



William Prideaux – festival director and chair of judging panel

William Prideaux works extensively in the UK and internationally as a conductor, choral director and consultant. He studied at Liverpool University, Cambridge University and the Royal Academy of Music, where he studied voice and choral conducting.



William is the director of music education charity Peterborough Sings! and of Peterborough Male Voice Choir, Peterborough Voices, Peterborough Youth Choir and Peterborough Community Chorus. He also leads the Arts Council England-funded schools' singing strategy for Peterborough Music Hub.

He is recognised nationally as a specialist in the equal voices genre and has acted as consultant to a number of choirs. He was a guest speaker at the 2011 International Male Voice Choir Symposium and gave the keynote addresses the UK Male Choir Conferences in 2018 and 2023. He was invited to direct the 2018 Men of Song Choral Festival in Perth, Australia. In 2019 he adjudicated at the Mary Wakefield Westmorland Festival and the Bournemouth International Male Choir Competition. He recently led a nationwide research project of the UK equal voice choral sector with the University of Sheffield.

As guest conductor he has directed the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the BBC Concert Orchestra, the Brighouse and Rastrick, Black Dyke and Grimethorpe Colliery Bands as well as the Central Band of the RAF. He has also worked with the King's Singers, Lesley Garrett, Jon Boden, Blake and Bernie Nolan.

In 2011 William Prideaux received the Conductor's Prize at the Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival and in 2012 he was identified by Creative Peterborough as one of the city's most influential people in the arts. In 2016 he received a Civic Award from Peterborough City Council for his outstanding contribution to arts and culture in the city.

In 2022 he won the Conductor's Prize at the Riga International Choral Competition, and was awarded an Interkultur Scholarship for 2023. He has recently been elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music and received a distinction in the Fellowship examination of the Royal Schools of Music.

Shirley Court - seminar leader

Shirley Court is known nationally for her ability to motivate and inspire young singers of all ages and capabilities and many of her pupils have gone on to sing professionally.

Shirley was conductor of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Senior Girls and Junior Choruses from September 1995 until July 2009 and directed the Cheshire Youth Choir from 2002-2014. She was appointed director of the Halle Children's Choir in 2008 and also conducts the award-winning UK women's choir The Chanterelles.



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Shirley was one of the three adjudicators for the BBC Choir of the Year held at the Bridgewater Hall and is a regular adjudicator at the Manchester Choral Competition.

She is a consultant on many National Singing initiatives and delivers inset courses for teachers. She is the co-writer of the best-selling children's singing books 'Singing Sherlock' published by Boosey and Hawkes. She is Programme Leader for the Halle Orchestra's acclaimed Leading School Choirs programme.

In September 2006 she was awarded with an Honorary Degree (DMus) by the University of Leicester for her work as a conductor of Youth Choirs and Music in Schools. She was awarded a Medal of the Order of the British Empire in 2020.

Jane Robertson - piano

Jane Robertson, a graduate of the Royal College of Music, is a well-established accompanist and teacher of the piano. Jane is an official accompanist for The Mrs Sunderland Music Festival and she regularly accompanies singers and instrumentalists for exams, diplomas, recitals and international competitions including the BBC Young Musician. As a freelance accompanist she has worked with soloists and ensembles at the Royal Northern College of Music, Leeds College of Music and Huddersfield University as well as making recordings and broadcasting live for regional television.

Jane also performs as a soloist and has undertaken several solo concerto engagements, Mendelssohn's 2nd Piano Concerto being a particular favourite.

Formerly the resident accompanist with the Alan Simmons Mastersingers, Jane currently works with three choirs in West Yorkshire: Huddersfield Choral Youth Choirs, Gledholt Male Voice Choir and Honley Ladies Choir.



Christopher Strange - organ

Christopher began studying the organ with Sean Bowers and David Poulter before attending Chetham's School of Music where he studied with Christopher Stokes. He took up the Sydney Nicholson organ scholarship at Manchester Cathedral in his gap year before beginning studies at the Royal College of Music with Margaret Philips and Sophie-Véronique Cauchefér-Choplin.

Before graduating with a first class honours degree, Christopher held the organ scholarships at Grosvenor Chapel and Chelmsford Cathedral for two years, during which time he obtained the Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists winning all the available prizes.

He is currently Organist at Peterborough Cathedral. Prior to this, Christopher was Assisting Organist at York Minster during which time he shared in the training and accompanying of the Minster Choir.

FESTIVAL POP-UP CHOIR

As part of our strategy for this inaugural Peterborough International Women's Choral Festival to build connections, reach out to new audiences and be more representative of the city of Peterborough we have included a project-based Pop-Up choir in our work. After a short recruitment period, this group – formed just five weeks ago – will be performing in public for the first time at the Festival Gala Concert.



The group includes employees from Perkins and members of the Latvian community in Peterborough, and whilst some have previous singing experience, for many this is their first performance in a choir. They have been rehearsing intensively with Peterborough Sings! director William Prideaux. It is our hope that this will mark the beginning of an exciting and rewarding singing journey for them and we wish them luck!

CONFERENCE SEMINARS

Some Time Saturday 17th June: St John's Church, Peterborough

1.30pm - 2.15pm **Shirley Court:** Practical solutions to choral challenges

With the assistance of The Chanterelles, Shirley Court shares practical solutions to common rehearsal and performance challenges.

10am - 1pm Sunday 18th June: Anglia Ruskin University Peterborough

10am – 11am **Thomas Caplin:** Assessment in/of choirs - subjectivity versus objectivity

In a focussed session for choir leaders, Thomas Caplin explores the role of assessment in choral performance and its contribution to developing performances.

11am – 12noon **Morna Edmundson:** Canadian repertoire for women's choirs

Morna Edmundson and Elektra Woman's Choir present a selection of contemporary and traditional repertoire for upper voices from Canadian composers. Expect to find some gems for your choir to explore.

11am – 12noon **William Prideaux:** Using technology to improve rehearsal and performance

The recent Covid restrictions on choral rehearsals led to an increased interest in using technology in the choral sector. William Prideaux reviews some apps and approaches which can be used to supplement and complement in-person rehearsals.

11am – 12noon **Thomas Caplin:** Norwegian and Swedish repertoire for women's choirs

Thomas Caplin dips a toe into the treasures of Norwegian and Swedish repertoire for women's voices in a interactive session - expect to sing and get involved.

12noon – 1pm **William Prideaux:** UK women's choirs – national research project findings

The recent Peterborough Sings!/SPARC research in to the UK equal voices sector revealed interesting trends and challenges facing women's choirs across the country. William Prideaux presents the findings and explores what this means for the sector in the future.

FESTIVAL COMMISSIONS

Three new works for women's voices by female composers have been commissioned for this festival and will be premiered by The Chanterelles, Jubilate and Peterborough Voices at the Gala Concert on Saturday 17th June in Peterborough Cathedral.

AT THE SPRING DAWN

Music by Joan Szymko and words by Angelina Weld Grimké. Premiered by Jubilate.

*I watched the dawn come,
Watched the spring dawn come.
And the red sun shouldered his way up
Through the grey, through the blue,
Through the lilac mists.
The quiet of it! The goodness of it!
And one bird awoke, sang, whirred,
A blur of moving black against the sun,
Sang again –afar off
And I stretched my arms to the redness of the sun,
Stretched to my fingertips,
And I laughed.
Ah! It is good to be alive, good to love,
At the dawn,
At the spring dawn.*

Angelina Weld Grimké

Joan Szymko (b.1957) is widely regarded as an outstanding choral composer in North America today. Her works consistently display a discerning, stirring marriage of words and music.

The American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) recognized Szymko's lasting impact on the choral arts in North America by selecting her as a recipient of the prestigious Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission (2010) Notably, her music has been sung on stage or in sessions at every national ACDA conference since 2003. A dynamic conductor, Joan has led choirs in the Pacific Northwest for over forty years.

As a visiting artist, Szymko has workshopped her compositions with choirs in academic and festival settings in the US and abroad. As a resident composer and performer with Portland's Do Jump! Movement Theater, she created underscoring for major touring productions, earning praise from the New York Times for her "ethereal vocal music." Szymko's catalog of over 100 choral works can be explored on her website: www.joanszymko.com.



KEEPING TIME FOR JOY

Music by Marie-Claire Saindon and words by Sarah Windle. Premiered by The Chanterelles.

*Leave your labours, short and long
Your love, and loss, and longing strong
Into the blue, arise anew
As summer's swifts and swallows throng*

*Take wing, embrace infinity
Paths unwritten, flying free
Once subdued, become renewed
Awake your wintering self, and be!*

Keeping time for joy, oh joy! Keeping time for joy

*In willing winds, together dwell
On feathers fine, we swoop and swell
Wayward winging, softly singing
To the earth, for now, farewell*

Keeping time for joy, oh joy! Keeping time for joy

*With the lengthening of the light
We weave and swirl, through fading bright
In colours vast, descend at last
Our wistful hearts fulfilled by flight*

*Surrendered to our rightful rest
Wings weary, whisper at our breasts
Of joys to seek, and find, and keep
While a soaring song sings in our chests*

Keeping time for joy, oh joy! Keeping time for joy

Sarah Windle

Marie-Claire Saindon (b. 1984) is a Franco-Ontarian composer based in Montréal. She began creating in high school, where she wrote and produced her first musical, *Jeanne (Joan of Arc)*. She continued to participate in many collaborations, from choral pieces, to scoring short films and full documentaries, to accompanying dancers, to fiddling in a team of folk musicians on a historical steam train. She sang in the award-winning female vocal ensemble *Concerto Della Donna*, led by acclaimed choral director Iwan Edwards.

Marie-Claire Saindon holds a BMus: Composition from the Schulich School of Music (McGill) and an MMus: Composition - Film and Multimedia music from Université de Montréal.

Winner of the SOCAN Young Composers' National Awards in the vocal category (2013), the Gregg Smith National Choral Composition Contest (2015), the Canadian Choral Composition Competition hosted by Chor Leoni (2018), the Ruth Watson Henderson Choral Composition Competition (2018), the inaugural Eastern Horizon Composition Competition (2018) and the Hong Kong Children's Choir 50th Anniversary Composition Competition (2018), her choral works are published with Boosey & Hawkes, Cypress Choral Music, Hal Leonard Choral, Earthsongs Choral Music, and Alliance Music, and is distributed by MusicSpoke.

Marie-Claire Saindon currently scores films (often with Melki Films), composes choral commissions, and is composer-in-residence for the Montreal upper-voice ensemble *Choeur Adleisia*.



THE JEWEL BEYOND PRICE

Music by Cheryl Frances-Hoad and words by Gregory Warren Wilson. Premiered by Peterborough Voices

*This jewel I'll never relinquish.
Who would want it anyway –
the subtlest of all my gems –
if I chose to give it away?*

*It cannot be possessed or set –
that would be imprisonment;
nor can it be compromised.
Few care, in any event,*

*to value it. But I ... I prize
its unassuming quality
and what it brings to light concerns me –
my jewel of uncertainty.*

Gregory Warren Wilson

Cheryl Frances-Hoad was born in Essex in 1980 and received her musical education at the Yehudi Menuhin School, the University of Cambridge (where she was awarded a double 1st for her BA in Music and a distinction for her MPhil in Composition) and Kings College London (PhD, Composition). Her music has been described as “like a declaration of faith in the eternal verities of composition” (The Times), with “a voice overflowing not only with ideas, but also with the discipline and artistry necessary to harness them” (The Scotsman).

Chosen to be a featured composer on BBC Radio 3's 'Composer of the Week' ('Five under 35', March 2015), her works have garnered many awards, from the BBC Lloyds Bank Composer of the Year award when she was just 15 to more recently the Mendelssohn Scholarship, The Bliss Prize, The Cambridge Composers Competition, The Robert Helps International Composition Prize (USA), The Sun River Prize (China), The International String Orchestra Composition Prize (Malta), The RPS Composition Prize, and three Ivor Novello (formally BASCA) British Composer Awards (for Psalm I and Stolen Rhythm in 2010, and Scenes from the Wild in 2022).



Her recent disc of vocal music (featuring Nicky Spence, Sophie Daneman, Mark Stone and Sholto Kynoch amongst others) was released on the Champs Hill Records label in November 2018. Magic Lantern Tales has been highly praised: “the longer you listen to this beautifully crafted CD (...) the deeper you fall under its spell” (SWR2 Treffpunkt Klassik, Germany), “Frances-Hoad’s Magic Lantern Tales disorientate and delight in equal measure.” (Opera Today). Her 2011 CD of chamber works, The Glory Tree, was selected as “Chamber Music Choice” by BBC Music Magazine.

Recent projects include Your Servant, Elizabeth, commissioned by the BBC Proms for the ‘Platinum Jubilee’ Prom on 22nd July 2022 at the Royal Albert Hall, and in May 2023 Laura van der Heijden will premiere Cheryl’s new cello concerto with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ryan Wigglesworth.

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the lost words: a spell book



The Lost Words written by **Robert MacFarlane**
and Illustrated by **Jackie Morris**.
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Illustrations © Jackie Morris 2017

Monday, June 19, 2023 • 7:30 pm

Key Theatre Peterborough

Tickets at peterboroughsings.org.uk/tickets