

PRESS RELEASE

New music at Hereford Three Choirs Festival 2015

Seven new works have been commissioned for this year's 300th anniversary Three Choirs Festival, taking place in Hereford 25 July – 1 August. Full listings are at the bottom of this release.

The Three Choirs Service, a new setting of the *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* by **Bob Chilcott**, will be premiered at a service of Choral Evensong in Hereford Cathedral on 20 June, when it will be performed by the Three Cathedral Choirs of Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester with organist Peter Dyke, conducted by Geraint Bowen, artistic director of Hereford Three Choirs Festival. It will be performed again during the festival on 29 July. Bob Chilcott was himself a boy chorister and choral scholar in the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, and spent 12 years as a tenor with the King's Singers before leaving to concentrate on conducting and composing. He is now one of the most widely-performed composers of choral music in the world, writing both large- and small-scale works underpinned by his commitment to writing music that is both singable and communicative.

A Swift, Radiant Morning by the Welsh composer **Rhian Samuel** is a setting of texts from the correspondence and poetry of Charles Hamilton Sorley, who was killed at the Battle of Loos in World War 1. It will be performed by baritone Roderick Williams and pianist Susie Allan in their recital in Holy Trinity Church, Hereford, on 25 July. The commission is supported by the Britten-Pears Foundation.

Hereford Cathedral Voluntary Choir conducted by Peter Dyke will perform **A Prayer of Thomas Ken** by **George Arthur** during Choral Evensong in Hereford Cathedral on 26 July. This was the winning entry in the Three Choirs Festival 300th Anniversary Choral Composition Competition, supported by the Friends of Hereford Three Choirs Festival. Entrants were invited to write a short introit, setting appropriate words of their choice; from 81 entries five were chosen to be rehearsed by the voluntary choir for 15 minutes each at a workshop afternoon. Judges Professor Paul Mealar of Aberdeen University, Jonathan Wikeley of publishers Novello Music Sales and Peter Dyke took the opinions of the choir into consideration in reaching their decision that George Arthur's piece should be performed at the festival and published by Novello.

Stargazer by **Alec Roth** will be premiered by classical chart-topping vocal ensemble Voces8 in their concert entitled 'Three Centuries in One Afternoon' at St Francis Xavier Church, Hereford, on 28 July. 'My very first time away from home by myself was to attend the Three Choirs Festival, and as an impressionable teenager the experience had a profound and lasting impact on me,' says the composer. 'So it has been a special pleasure as well as an honour to be commissioned to compose a new work for this year's festival.' Texts for his sequence of four songs are by Elsie Harriet Rospin, James Thompson, W H Davies and Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Please consider helping to safeguard the future of the Three Choirs Festival by remembering us in your Will. For further information please contact the Development Manager.



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Registered Charity No.: 204609
Company Registration No.: 580176

Organist John Scott will perform *O Gott, du frommer Gott* by Hereford-based **Anthony Powers** in his recital in Hereford Cathedral on 31 July. The commission is supported by Sounds Inspired and is part of the international Orgelbüchlein Project, which aims to fill in the 118 missing pieces from J S Bach's 'Little Organ Book', for which the composer had noted the titles but never completed the music. This will be the latest contribution to a growing collection of new works by different composers, written in their own individual musical styles but paying homage to Bach.

The German composer **Torsten Rasch** completes a trilogy of works for successive Three Choirs Festivals with **A Welsh Night**, setting texts by Alun Lewis, probably the best-known Welsh poet of World War Two, who was born in 1915 and died on active service in 1944. The song cycle will be performed by mezzo-soprano Sarah Connolly and pianist Joseph Middleton in their recital on 1 August in Holy Trinity Church, Hereford. It follows a set of four songs premiered by Roderick Williams and Susie Allan at the Gloucester Three Choirs Festival in 2013 and *A Foreign Field* premiered by soprano Yeree Suh, Roderick Williams, the Three Choirs Festival Chorus, boys of the Three Cathedral Choirs and Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Baldur Brönniman at the Worcester Three Choirs Festival in 2014.

Echoes: A Song of Poland by **Pete Churchill** has been commissioned for the final concert of the festival, to be given by members of local community choirs and choral societies under the banner of The Gathering Wave, with soloists Jenny Frost, soprano, and Njabulo Madlala, baritone, and musical directors Hilary Smallwood and Jon Watson. The project is run by Hereford's community music charity The Music Pool and supported by Arts Council England, the Gibbs Charitable Trust and The Very Reverend Michael Tavinor. *Echoes* takes as its theme the experiences of the Polish Community who lived at Foxley Resettlement Camp near Hereford in the years after World War Two.

HEREFORD THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL PREMIERES 2015

20 JUNE

Bob Chilcott *Three Choirs Service* Choirs of Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester Cathedrals, Peter Dyke, organ, Geraint Bowen, conductor, Hereford Cathedral, 5.30 pm Second performance and broadcast premiere with the same forces 29 July, Hereford Cathedral, 5.30 pm

25 JULY

Rhian Samuel *A swift, radiant morning* Roderick Williams, baritone, Susie Allan, piano, Holy Trinity Church, Whitecross Road, Hereford, 2.30 pm

26 JULY

George Arthur *Prayer of Thomas Ken* Hereford Cathedral Voluntary Choir, Peter Dyke, conductor, Hereford Cathedral, 5.30 pm

28 JULY

Alec Roth *Stargazer* Voces8, St Francis Xavier Church, Broad Street, Hereford 2.30 pm

31 JULY

Anthony Powers *O Gott, du frommer Gott* John Scott, organ, Hereford Cathedral, 10.30 am

1 AUGUST

Torsten Rasch *A Welsh Night* Sarah Connolly, mezzo-soprano, Joseph Middleton, piano, Holy Trinity Church, Whitecross Road, Hereford, 2.30 pm

Pete Churchill *Echoes: A Song of Poland* Jenny Frost, soprano, Njabulo Madlala, baritone, The Gathering Wave community choir, Hilary Smallwood, Jon Watson, musical directors, Hereford Cathedral, 7.45 pm

NOTE TO EDITORS:

1. The **300th anniversary Three Choirs Festival** takes place in Hereford 25 July – 1 August 2015. The **Philharmonia Orchestra** is in its fourth year of residency at the festival. Guest artists and ensembles include singers Sarah Connolly and Roderick Williams, pianists Steven Osborne and Gwilym Simcock, conductors Paul Daniel, Sir Andrew Davis and Jac van Steen, vocal trio Juice, Voces8, the Orlando Consort, the Wihan Quartet and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Full details of the programme can be found on the festival's website **www.3Choirs.org**

For more information about any of these pieces or performers, interview requests, press tickets for performances and a selection of high-resolution images please contact:

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