

PRESS RELEASE



ORGAN RECITALS @ GLOUCESTER THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL 2016

This year's Three Choirs Festival takes place in Gloucester 23 – 30 July.

The **Celebrity Organ Recital** will be given by **Thomas Trotter** in Gloucester Cathedral at 11 am on Saturday 30 July. It is supported by Zyex Limited and the Sanders Society. Tickets cost £23.

Thomas Trotter is one of Britain's most widely admired musicians. He has had a special relationship with the City of Birmingham in England since he was appointed City Organist in 1983 after Sir George Thalben-Ball based at the city's renovated historic Town Hall where he is also Resident Organist of the magnificent Klais organ in Symphony Hall. He is also Organist at St. Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey, in London and Visiting Fellow in Organ Studies at the Royal Northern College of Music. He was organ scholar at King's College, Cambridge, and later continued his studies with Marie-Claire Alain in Paris where he took the Prix de Virtuosit  in her class. Since then he has had an extensive international performing and recording career.

Thomas Trotter has been awarded the Royal Philharmonic Society's prestigious Instrumentalist Award in recognition of his particular achievements as 'one of the foremost exponents of the organist's art', International Performer of the Year Award for 2012 by the New York City Chapter of the American Guild of Organists and, in 2016, the Royal College of Organists Medal.

This year's Three Choirs Festival recital is typically varied and includes works by composers particularly associated with Gloucester, together with contemporary works by Jonathan Dove and Anthony Powers. Bach and Reger represent the great German tradition of writing for organ, while Guillou's arrangement of Prokofiev's Toccata for Piano continues our festival mini-theme of mixing musical media.

The Chorale-prelude *O Gott, du frommer Gott* was written by Anthony Powers as part of the Orgelb chlein project, which aims to complete the 118 missing pieces which J S Bach had planned but not written for his 'Little Organ Book'. A Three Choirs Festival commission, it was premiered by John Scott at his recital in Hereford Cathedral on 30 July 2015, which was sadly to be his last recital in England before his untimely death a few weeks later. Thomas Trotter plays *O Gott, du frommer Gott* in this recital in tribute to Dr Scott.

PROGRAMME: THOMAS TROTTER

Parry Fantasia & Fugue in G

Anthony Powers Chorale-prelude: O Gott, du frommer Gott

J S Bach Chorale-Partita: O Gott, du frommer Gott BWV 767

Double Gloucester: two pieces by former Gloucester Cathedral musicians

Howells Master Tallis's Testament

Sanders Toccata

Jonathan Dove The Dancing Pipes

Reger Fantasia on the Chorale: Straf' mich nicht in deinem Zorn

Prokofiev Toccata for Piano arr. J. Guillou

Jonathan Hope, Assistant Director of Music at Gloucester Cathedral, is this year's Three Choirs Festival Organist, playing for the majority of cathedral services and as orchestral organist in evening concerts with the Philharmonia. He will also play **an improvised organ accompaniment** to a late-night screening of the 1923 film version of **The Hunchback of Notre Dame** at 10.15 pm on Wednesday 27 July. Tickets cost £15.

Before his arrival in Gloucester in March 2014 Jonathan was Organ Scholar of Winchester Cathedral, where he played for the funeral of Sir John Tavener, and before that of Southwark Cathedral, where he was involved in services for the 2012 Olympic Games and for HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee. He is Musical Director of the St Cecilia Singer's, Gloucester, and accompanist to Gloucester Choral Society. He has a thriving solo career and has recently recorded his first solo recording on the organ of Gloucester Cathedral.

The **Organ of Gloucester Cathedral** was originally constructed in 1666 by Thomas Harris and over the next three centuries was extended and modified by nearly all the established organ builders, notably by 'Father' Henry Willis and most recently by Nicholson & Co in 1999 and 2010. It comprises four manuals and pedals and is designed to play to both east and west from its position on the choir screen. It has the only complete 17th-century organ case surviving in the UK.

Two **lunchtime recitals** by young organists chosen by the Royal College of Organists will be given on the Compton Organ of St Peter's Roman Catholic Church, London Road, Gloucester.

Anna Lapwood, currently organ scholar of Magdalen College, Oxford and Director of Music-designate of Pembroke College, Cambridge, is the recitalist on Wednesday 27 July. Anna is a harpist as well as a keyboard player and her career to date has included appearances at the BBC Proms as harpist, organist and pianist with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. She performs with London Contemporary Orchestra and other ensembles both in Oxford and further afield. She has just been made an Associate of the Royal College of Organists, attaining the highest mark in every paper and the prize for the highest overall mark. Anna has also been awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the National College of Music, London.

Daniel Mathieson, Junior Organ Scholar of Worcester College, Oxford and Betts Undergraduate Organ Scholar of the university's Faculty of Music, is the recitalist on Friday 29 July. Born in Norwich, he is a former chorister of York Minster who has studied organ with David Pipe and currently William Whitehead, and is a prize-winning Associate of the Royal College of Organists.

Programmes for the lunchtime recitals are yet to be confirmed. They take place at 1 pm and are supported by Father Michael Thomas. Tickets cost £10.

St Peter's Roman Catholic Church was designed by Gilbert Blount in 1858 and is Gothic in style, built of local Painswick stone and featuring stained glass by Hardman. **The organ in St Peter's** was the outcome of collaboration by the organ builder **John Compton** and Dom Gregory Murray of Downside Abbey. It is an extension type using electrical switchgear to obtain a number of different pitches from a single row of pipes and originally cost £1500. It lasted until 2004 and was then in a poor condition - with many solenoids not working and numerous leaks from the wind chests.

With advice from Dom Charles Watson (a priest and monk from Prinknash Abbey) and Dr John Rowntree, a decision was made to apply for a Heritage Lottery Grant and have the organ restored. Since this was the first Compton pipe organ in the country to be restored, English Heritage insisted that all the existing solenoids be re-used and after a successful faculty application, the work was carried out by Nicholsons of Malvern. New lighting was installed to illuminate and further embellish the painted organ pipes and Dr Roy Massey gave one of the opening recitals.

Full programme details for Gloucester Three Choirs Festival can be found on the festival website. www.3CHOIRS.ORG

General booking opens on 11 April online and via the Ticket Office: 01452 768928

www.twitter.com/3choirs

www.facebook.com/3choirsfestival

More information, press tickets and a selection of high-resolution images from:

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. **The Three Choirs Festival** has its origins at the end of the 17th century in visits by the lay clerks of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester to one another's cathedrals for joint services and informal singing. More formal annual 'music meetings' can be traced back to around 1715 and have continued ever since, interrupted only by the two world wars, making this the oldest continuously running classical music festival in the world. The event rotates between the three cathedral cities on a three-year cycle. The next festival takes place in Gloucester 23 – 30 July 2016 and is the 289th Three Choirs Festival.
2. The **artistic director** of each festival is the director of music of the city's cathedral, currently Geraint Bowen (Hereford); Adrian Partington (Gloucester) and Peter Nardone (Worcester). They work with the chief executive of the Three Choirs Festival Association, an operations director in each city and local voluntary committees to plan and deliver the festival programmes.
3. **The Three Choirs Festival Chorus** is largely drawn from auditioned members of the choral societies of Worcester, Gloucester and Hereford, with the largest contingent each year coming from the host city. Amateur choral singers have been taking part in the festival since the middle of the 19th century to augment the cathedral choirs of boy trebles and male altos, tenors and basses.
4. The **Philharmonia Orchestra** has been resident at the Three Choirs Festival for the past six years. More information about the residency:
http://www.philharmonia.co.uk/concerts/residencies/three_choirs_festival