



THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL

Press Release

Three Choirs Festival launches new charitable foundation to mark 300th anniversary

The Three Choirs Festival has marked its 300th anniversary with the establishment of the Three Choirs Foundation, designed to help to secure the future of the festival and open doors to wider participation in this unique event. The foundation was launched at a reception hosted by Lord Faulkner of Worcester in the Cholmondeley Room of the House of Lords, London, on 22 January 2015.

The Three Choirs Foundation has several strands of activity, which aim to

Open doors and bring the glory of the Three Choirs Festival to the widest possible audience

Mark the cultural milestone of 300 years of choral performance in Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester

Preserve the continuity of the annual Three Choirs Festival enterprise, by generating annual revenue funding and providing capital support

Champion the Three Choirs Festival brand beyond festival week and encourage celebration of its excellence

Invest in commissioning outstanding new choral works, adding to the canon of repertoire for choirs across the UK, inspiring composers to write for the British choral and church music traditions, supporting the highest standards and working to enable repeat performances

Musicians associated with the Three Choirs Festival lent their support to the Foundation at the launch event. Mezzo soprano Sarah Connolly CBE, who will be giving a recital in the 2015 Hereford Three Choirs Festival including the premiere of a song cycle by Torsten Rasch, said: 'I never take for granted an invitation to sing in one of the three great cathedrals of the Three Choirs Festival; indeed my summer would be incomplete without it. It is an honour to be part of this rich history of music-making which has given a platform to so many musicians within the last 300 years ...The Three Choirs Festival can never be accused of being stuck in a time warp. It is in the good hands of people who are open to many new ideas while being aware that audiences still want to hear what they know.'

Edward Gardner OBE, outgoing Music Director of English National Opera and Chief Conductor designate of the Bergen Philharmonic, took part in the festival as a boy chorister at Gloucester Cathedral and made his Three Choirs Festival conducting debut in 2013. Absent from the launch due to a rehearsal commitment, he sent a speech which was read on his behalf by Adrian Partington, current Artistic Director of the Gloucester Three Choirs Festival. 'Every time you face a new situation, you draw on what you've learned before,' he said, 'Every step building into the next. For me, it was the Three

The world's
finest choral music

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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.

Chairman: Bernard Day
Chief Executive: Dominic Jewel
Registered Charity No.: 204609
Company Registration No.: 580176

Choirs Festival where, as a chorister, I took my very first steps into this amazing international community of classical music. Performing as a youngster alongside the best soloists, the excellent chorus, and singing new works by international composers, opens the eyes like nothing else. What a national treasure is this institution that, year after year, produces night after night of first rate performances of the greatest works in the British choral tradition. The Three Choirs Festival is an asset to the country and involvement with it is a badge of honour everywhere I go.

'I want to express my fullest support for a Foundation which seeks to ensure that choristers of 2115 have the chances I had, and that audiences are still relishing and celebrating our great British tradition for centuries to come. Without the experience gained at the Three Choirs Festival, I would not be conducting at the Coliseum – it's as simple as that.'

Dame Felicity Lott, President of the Three Choirs Festival Society, said: 'Since I became President of the Three Choirs Festival Society, I have attended packed concerts in each of the three cathedrals: glorious performances of the great choral works, making the stones of these beautiful buildings ring with music. Three hundred years is a magnificent birthday. I wish the Three Choirs Foundation a very successful debut.'

Sir Michael Perry, Chairman of the Three Choirs Foundation, outlined its aims. The speakers were introduced by Dominic Jewel, Chief Executive of the Three Choirs Festival.

Lay clerks of the Three Cathedral Choirs, directed by Adrian Partington, performed a plainsong setting of Psalm 122; 'I was glad when they said unto me, "Let us go into the house of the Lord"; 'Vigilate' by William Byrd; and 'Is you is or is you ain't my baby', reflecting both the sacred and the secular origins of the Three Choirs Festival.

Initiatives to be undertaken by the Three Choirs Foundation include:

Three Choirs Voices

The best of the Three Choirs Festival Chorus will be brought together in a small chamber choir format, taking the essence of the festival's tradition beyond festival week and into the wider community

Three Choirs Festival Youth Choir

The Foundation will support the further development of the Three Choirs Festival Youth Choir, which was established in 2010 to engage young people in the event's rich heritage and globally recognised quality

Tercentenary Appeal

Funding Goal: £1m over five years

As the oldest classical choral festival in the world, the Three Choirs Festival is recognised internationally for the range of choral music performed and for the excellent standards achieved each year. Each festival is expected to break even financially and money has to be found to continue the sponsorship of new works, widen appreciation of choral music locally and internationally and develop the organisation in a difficult financial climate.

Launched in the summer of 2014, the Tercentenary Appeal is an invitation to individuals and companies to contribute to underwriting the £1.1m annual cost of the Three Choirs Festival by joining one of seven funding circles and committing themselves to a fixed annual donation (from £100 to £10,000) for a period of five successive years.

Chorister Bursary Appeal

Funding Goal: £50k per year

Three Choirs Foundation Chorister Bursaries will support the training of cathedral choristers in Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester, enabling access to excellence for those with limited means.

Commissioning Appeal

Funding Goal per project: £80k

Donors can assist the Three Choirs Festival by funding one major work for festival chorus, symphony orchestra and soloists every year, helping to keep the world's choral repertoire flourishing in the centuries to come.

Building Reserves

Funding goal: £200k per year

As the Three Choirs Festival continues to safeguard the British choral tradition and provide a spiritual presence at the heart of the UK's national cultural life, it must also keep pace with changing audiences and continue to engage new ones. By bolstering the festival's capital resources, the Three Choirs Foundation aims to keep up to speed with technology and personnel needs, ensuring the seamless delivery of the festival over the next few decades. In this tercentenary year, it has a unique opportunity to build a solid platform for the years ahead.

Three Choirs Foundation Trustees

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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 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. Hereford 2015 is the 288th Three Choirs Festival.
2. **The Three Choirs Festival Chorus** is largely drawn from auditioned members of the choral societies of Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester, 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.
3. **The Three Cathedral** Choirs of boy choristers, girl choristers (in Worcester and in Gloucester Cathedral Youth Choir), choral scholars and lay clerks (professional altos, tenors and basses) continue to be at the heart of the festival. They can be heard in daily liturgical services and the men sing as part of the festival chorus in the evening orchestral concerts, while the choristers provide additional treble lines when repertoire requires. The Three Cathedral Choirs also give one concert on their own in each festival.
4. This is the fourth year of the **Philharmonia's** orchestral residency at the Three Choirs Festival. More information about the residency:
http://www.philharmonia.co.uk/concerts/residencies/three_choirs_festival

More information and a selection of hi-res images available from:

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