



Credit: Andrew Wilkinson

# Eamonn Dougan

## Programme Sheets

### 2026-2027-2028



Credit: Alex Rickard

## Bach Lutheran Masses

### Soloists

Eamonn Dougan, *bass/director*  
Julia Doyle, *soprano*  
Martha McLorinan, *alto*  
Mark Dobell, *tenor*

with Choir and Orchestra

### Programme

J.S. Bach A major Mass *BWV 234*  
J.S. Bach F major Mass *BWV 233*  
J.S. Bach G major Mass *BWV 236*  
J.S. Bach G minor Mass *BWV 235*

*The cantatas on which the masses are based can also be interspersed into the programme, to give context to the musical material, as required.*

Bach's masses mark a fascinating intersection between the master composer's deeply held Lutheran convictions and his developing ideal of the High Catholic Mass. The two doctrines are not mutually exclusive and it can be argued that Bach's initial explorations of the Catholic form of the mass led to his ultimate masterpiece, the Mass in B minor. The four settings, commonly referred to as the "Lutheran" Masses are a remarkable collection of individual movements, each setting only the Kyrie and Gloria. While Bach reworks some material from pre-existing cantatas, he does so with immense care, ensuring that the meaning and expression of the text is foremost and the old music given new and entirely appropriate life. The masses vary enormously in style and form, and are equally demanding of singer and instrumentalist. They are particularly well-suited to one-per-part forces, allowing individual musical personalities to shine through, while not suffering from the balance issues which can be a challenge when performing other works by Bach in this chamber set up. These works remain relatively little performed, yet they stand comparison with his very best works and the opportunity to hear them all seems to be one which audiences appreciate greatly.

These masses work well in all combinations: be it two in one evening (ideally a 70 minute programme, without interval) or all four performed in close proximity (e.g. two each on consecutive days).

# Sleight of Hand

## *Explorations of texture in choral music*

Eamonn Dougan leads the audience through an exploration of how composers of choral music have used different textures within their works.

The programme traces a journey from plainsong and the birth of polyphony, moving through contrasts between simple homophony and richly layered textures, including dense harmony and cluster chords. It explores the interplay between high and low voices, as well as polychoral works for three choirs, revealing how composers across different centuries treat the same text. The programme finishes with Caroline Shaw's origami-inspired "How to fold the wind", a folded, complex soundscape.

### Programme

Tomas Luis da Victoria - O quam gloriosum

Asprillio Pacelli - Gaudent in caelis

Diogo Melgas - Salve Regina

Robert Schumann - Die Lotosblume &

Die Capelle

Gerald Finzi - I praise the tender flower

John Joubert - There is no rose

J. MacMillan - Sedebit Dominus Rex noster

Eric Whitacre - Sleep

Anna Semple - If ye love me\*

Eoghan Desmond - Remember not, Lord\*

Caroline Shaw - How to fold the wind

\*Country premieres available





# The Grand Tour

Not the motoring show with Clarkson, Hammond and May, but a journey through the great European centres of polyphony during the 16th and 17th centuries. The English ardour of Tallis, Byrd and Gibbons, the Italian perfection of Palestrina and Anerio, the French élan of Du Caurroy and Manchicourt, the Flemish complexity of Josquin and De Wert, the German devotion of Isaac and Senfl and the Spanish passion of Victoria, Morales and Guerrero. All this in one programme, mirroring the sophistication and appreciation for antiquity which the original Grand Tour promoted.

## **Programme to Include:**

Thomas Tallis: Sancte Deus

William Byrd: O sacrum convivium

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina: Pater noster

Giovanni Francesco Anerio: Sicut liliun

Eustache Du Caurroy: Ave virgo gloriosa

Pierre de Manchicourt: Osculetur me

Josquin des Prez: Ave Maria

Giaches de Wert: Gaudete in Domino

Heinrich Isaac: Optime Pastor

Ludwig Senfl: Media vita

Tomás Luis de Victoria: Salve Regina

Cristóbal de Morales: Parce mihi Domine

Francisco Guerrero: Sanctissima Maria

Programme ideal with 12 voices, possible with 8

# The Green Road

The Green Road explores the beauty of nature and our connection with the environment in which we live. Works from Cecilia McDowall, Kenneth Leighton, Bernard Hughes, and Cipriano de Rore marvel at the magnificence and wonder of the natural world, while considering how humanity has mistreated and abused its relationship with the planet.

The main work is Eoghan Desmond's, Guthanna ar an gCnoc (Voices on the Hill). This setting of 6 Irish language poems by Ceatí Ní Bheildiúin takes the listener on a climb up Mount Brandon; a spiritual journey away from the modern, industrial world, returning to a state of harmony with nature, and beginning "a new life" on "the green road". This programme ideally requires a choir of 18 high-standard singers, but is possible with 16.

## Programme

The Skies in their Magnificence - Cecilia McDowall (UK, 1951)

God's Grandeur - Kenneth Leighton (UK, 1929-1988)

Precious Things - Bernard Hughes (UK, 1974)

Descendi in hortum meum - Cipriano de Rore (Belgium, 1516-1565)

Guthanna ar an gCnoc - Eoghan Desmond (Ireland, 1989)\*

\*Country premieres available



# The Part Song Papers

*In the 19th and 20th centuries, part songs were a central component of the musical diet of any singer, professional or amateur. Composers of the stature of Mendelssohn, Schubert and Schumann in the 19th century, and Stanford, Elgar and Britten in the 20<sup>th</sup>, were making substantial contributions to the form. However, despite containing some of these composers' finest work, they became unfashionable and have largely slipped from the public eye. This programme seeks to redress the balance, allowing these two national styles to complement each other in close proximity.*

## **Programme to include:**

**Franz Schubert:** An die sonne; Des Tages Weihe; Die Geselligkeit

**Robert Schumann:** Beim abscheid zu singen; Der König von Thule; Am Bodensee

**Edward Elgar:** The Fountain & The Shower, op.71

**Charles Villiers Stanford:** Settings by Mary Elizabeth Coleridge, op.127

*12 voices with piano, also possible with 8 with piano*



# Love's Four Seasons

*Experienced through the music of Barbara Strozzi, Claudio Monteverdi, Carlo Gesualdo and contemporary English composers Jonathan Dove, Bernard Hughes, Howard Skempton, and Kim Porter.*

## **Spring: Longing and Courtship**

Claudio Monteverdi - Sfogava con le stelle

Barbara Strozzi - Pietosissimo amore\*

Howard Skempton - He wishes for the cloths of heaven

Carlo Gesualdo - Ardita zanzaretta

## **Summer: Passion and Fulfilment**

Howard Skempton - Rise up, my love

Carlo Gesualdo - Deh, coprite il bel seno

Barbara Strozzi - Godere e tacere\*

Claudio Monteverdi - Volgea l'anima mia

Jonathan Dove - My love is mine

Claudio Monteverdi - Si ch'io vorrei morire

## **Autumn: Doubt and Separation**

Barbara Strozzi - Consiglio amoroso\*

Carlo Gesualdo - Se tu fuggi, io no resto

Claudio Monteverdi - Longe da te

Kim Porter - Flow my tears

Carlo Gesualdo - Ardita zanzaretta

Barbara Strozzi - Liberta\*

## **Winter: Loss and Mourning**

Claudio Monteverdi - Voi, pur da me

Barbara Strozzi - Gli amanti falliti\*

Carlo Gesualdo - Resta di darmi noia

Bernard Hughes - Perhaps

Claudio Monteverdi - Piagn'e sospira

**c. 70 minutes music**

**Six singers; Two days or Four sessions of rehearsal needed**

**All works by Strozzi require accompaniment e.g. theorbo**

# Hymne a la Vierge

Texts in praise of the Virgin Mary have provided a constant source of inspiration to composers across the ages, but few have dedicated as many works to the Blessed Virgin Mary as Marc-Antoine Charpentier.

This programme, exploring his Marian devotion, is centred around two substantial works: Pro omnibus festis B.V.M, (a dialogue between men and angels, the former asking questions to which the latter respond, praising the Virgin's infinite virtues) and the most perfect of his nine settings of the Litanies de la Vierge. Both pieces were composed while he worked at the court of the great patroness of the Arts, Mademoiselle de Guise, for whose funeral service Charpentier may have composed his Courtes Litanies de la Vierge.

Also included is his cycle of Marian antiphons for the liturgical year and instrumental works by Francois Couperin, Marin Marais and Robert de Visée.



## Programme

### **Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704):**

Ave Regina H.45

Litanies a la Vierge

Pro omnibus festis BVM H.333

### **Francois Couperin (1668-1733):**

Concerto Royale No.1

*Prelude - Allemande - Sarabande -*

*Gavotte - Gigue - Menuet en trio*

### **Charpentier:**

Pulchra es a3 H.52

### **Monsieur de Saint-Colombe (1640-**

**1700):**

Les Pleurs

### **Charpentier:**

Regina Caeli H.46

*Interval*

### **Charpentier:**

Alma Redemptoris H.44

### **Marin Marais (1656-1728):**

Pieces de viole, Livre III, Suite No.7 in G,

*Allemande le Magnifique & Double*

### **Charpentier:**

Prelude a Salve Regina H.23

Salve Regina H.47

### **Robert de Visée (1650-1725):**

Prelude Allemande La Royale

### **Charpentier:**

Litanies a la Vierge H.83

c.75 minutes music. 9 singers  
(SSSAATTBB), 2 Violins, Viola da gamba,  
Theorbo, Organ & Harpsichord

# Featured Ensembles

## *Britten Sinfonia Voices*

The professional choir of the renowned chamber orchestra, Britten Sinfonia. Founded and directed by Eamonn Dougan, the Voices, like the orchestra, push boundaries by performing music ranging from Leonin, J.S. Bach through Schubert, Sibelius to MacMillan and MacDowall.

Projects have included world premieres by composers John Tavener, Nico Muhly, Eriks Esenvalds, Roderick Williams and Joby Talbot, recording Beethoven's 9th Symphony with Thomas Ades and Delius' Hassan with Jamie Phillips. They have given performances across Europe and the UK, including St. John Passion (J.S. Bach) at the Concertgebouw, Desert Music (Steve Reich) at the Barbican, Savitri (Gustav Holst) at Snape Maltings, and Messiah (G.F. Handel) at Teatro de la Maestranza, Seville.

Britten Sinfonia Voices is recommended for the **Sleight of Hand, The Green Road, The Part Song Papers**, and **Love's Four Seasons** programmes



*Britten Sinfonia Voices performing  
Steve Reich's 'The Desert Music'*

# Featured Ensembles

## *Excelsior Collective*

Excelsior Collective gave its debut performances at the 2026 Valetta International Baroque Festival at the express invitation of Festival Director Kenneth Zammit Tabona. Their first project presented a rare opportunity to hear all four of Bach's Lutheran masses, performed one-per-part.

Focussing on both major works and lesser known discoveries, the group specialises in music of the Baroque period, with a particular focus on the works of J.S. Bach, presented in a chamber fashion. The members are established experts in their fields, being principal players and soloists with elite period-instrument orchestras and vocal ensembles around the globe.

The ensemble was founded by bassoonist Sally Jackson and is directed by conductor / baritone Eamonn Dougan.

Excelsior Collective is recommended for **The Grand Tour, Bach Lutheran Masses**, and **Hymne a la Vierge** programmes.



*The group at Valetta International Baroque Festival, January 2026*