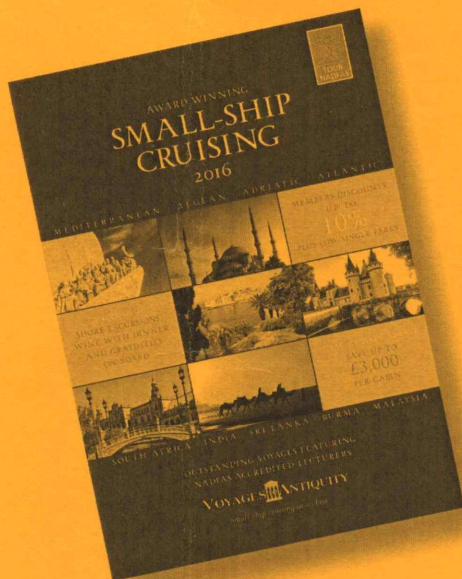


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BRANDENBURG
CHORAL FESTIVAL
OF LONDON

SPRING SERIES
2016

Vivaldi Gloria

by candlelight

Bach Violin Concerto in E
Bach Brandenburg Concerto No.3

Vivace Chorus
Brandenburg Baroque Soloists

Violin - Persephone Gibbs

Conductor - Jeremy Backhouse

Thursday 14 January 2016

7pm

Sponsored by:



Supporting:



Welcome to the Brandenburg Choral Festival

May I wish you a very warm welcome to the fourth concert of the 2016 Brandenburg Choral Festival of London. Just starting our seventh year, the BCFoL is firmly established as a major national choral event and the premier showcase for amateur choirs with professional standards. This year there will be around 80 choirs performing over 60 events in 14 iconic London venues – ‘an excellent programme filled with so many vibrant and stimulating events’, to quote our 2016 Artistic Patron, Bob Chilcott.

There really is something for everyone and alongside the standard classical choral repertoire, you can hear jazz ensembles, gospel choirs and at our Fringe Nights – almost anything goes! We also have three ‘Come & Sing’ events this year which cater for all levels, from the experienced choral singer to the enthusiastic newcomer and – how exciting – the final one is while cruising at sea. Please do pick up a brochure (or a couple and give one to a friend) or have a look at our website www.brandenburg.org.uk to find out about all the events in the Festival.

You can also find out how you can get involved, either as a Friend or Ambassador.

In recent years we have also established links with around 100 small and midsize charitable organisations and many of the concerts in the Festival will be affiliated to at least one charity. Tonight we are delighted to welcome the 4Gs – no, not a new girl band created by Simon Cowell but the Guildford & Godalming Grandmothers' Group. You can read about their excellent work elsewhere in this programme, and we hope you will feel moved to contribute to the retiring collection which will go to help them in their charitable endeavours.

Tonight's first concert presents the Brandenburg Baroque Soloists who play in a historically informed style on period instruments, and features leader Persephone Gibbs in the ever-popular concerto by J. S. Bach. The second half is a real celebration of almost twenty years of music making between the Brandenburg Team and the Vivace Chorus, all conducted by their outstanding director, Jeremy Backhouse.

After this concert you should have just enough time to pop downstairs for a quick glass in the crypt before our second concert of the evening: the legendary Joyful Company of Singers and their director Peter Broadbent are performing Rachmaninov's iconic setting of the *Vespers* – also known as the All-Night Vigil (but don't panic – it only lasts an hour!). Please do join us if you can.

I am sure you will have a lovely time this evening and I look forward to seeing you at another concert soon.

Wishing you all a very Happy and Peaceful New Year.



Robert Porter
Brandenburg Artistic Director

P.S.

Brandenburg Ambassadors and Friends

Our **Brandenburg Ambassadors** are all volunteers who give up some of their spare time to help out at concerts, and I am eternally grateful for their support. You may see them selling programmes, manning the bar, gathering email addresses, or simply saying 'Hello' when you arrive. As well as hearing concerts and rehearsals for free, there are social events during the year and the chance to meet like-minded people. If you would like more information about becoming an Ambassador, please email concert@brandenburg.org.uk.

Alternatively, you might like to become a **Friend of the Brandenburg**. By signing up to our free email service you will receive details of all our activities and events as well as special offers on tickets and priority booking. To sign up simply email brandenadmin@brandenburg.org.uk or you can use the contact form on the website www.brandenburg.org.uk

**BRANDENBURG
CHORAL FESTIVAL
OF LONDON**

SPRING SERIES
2016

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The Brandenburg Choral Festival is a collective of like-minded promoters dedicated to the promotion of high quality choral performance including:

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Programme

Johann Sebastian Bach

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3

Johann Sebastian Bach

*Concerto No. 2 for Violin and Orchestra
in E Major BWV 1042*

Interval

Antonio Vivaldi

Gloria

PROGRAMME NOTES

Brandenburg Concert No. 3

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 calls for three violins, three violas, two or three cellos, plus basso continuo (played here by harpsichord and double bass). It is based on the classic concerto grosso pitting a 'soloistic' group of players or concertino against a background ensemble, called the ripieno or tutti.

The Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 is a concerto in the sense that the word was employed in the Baroque to mean a 'coming together' of instruments. Here the instruments that come together are the strings in an unusual distribution and knowing how fascinated Bach was with numerology, is it merely a coincidence that the Concerto No. 3 should be scored for three sections - three violins, three violas,

three bass instruments? The violinists and violists serve as both concertino and ripieno; in tutti sections the three players of each instrument perform in unison, as a section, but in the contrasting episodes they go their separate ways as three soloists.

The opening Allegro offers a magnificent example of what might be called 'musical choreography,' in which the musical material is tossed from one instrumental group to another like a sonic volleyball. The closing movement, also an Allegro, is a high-spirited fugue that seems to ask the players to push the tempo to the limit, but here the writing is considerably less intricate than that found in the first movement. The two Allegros are connected by a musical mystery: a sequence of merely two chords forming an imperfect (or 'Phrygian') cadence. There is little agreement among musicians and musicologists about whether the chords should be played verbatim or whether they should be understood to close a movement inserted at the player's discretion.

**Concerto No. 2 for Violin and Orchestra
in E major BWV 1042**

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Written while Bach was Kapellmeister at the court of Anhalt-Cöthen, the E major Concerto follows the traditional Italian model of three movements, arranged fast—slow—fast. In the opening movement, the violin is carefully integrated into the texture and melodic working-out of the material. The basic formal plan of the movement is ritornello — i.e., the frequent return in the orchestra of the opening music which is easily discerned in this concerto by the three chords that occur at the beginning of each. The episodic sections between the recurrences of the ritornello see the soloist in dominant mood.

The exquisite second movement derives its style from the operatic world. The basses present a theme, full of pathos, at the outset that is repeated in various keys throughout the movement. Above this rises the touching melody of the soloist as counterpoint and commentary on the orchestral background. The finale, constructed in a strict rondo form, resumes the dancing spirit of the first movement. The opening tutti rondo theme, returns unchanged four times. In between, the soloist embellishes the theme in a variety of ways.

Gloria

Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)

Gloria, probably Vivaldi's best-known sacred work, must surely be counted among his most important contributions to church music. It was probably written for the Feast of the Blessed Virgin in 1713 or 1714. This was the Patronal Feast of the Ospedale della Pietà (the orphanage for young girls) in Venice where Vivaldi was music master and is therefore the most likely reason for its composition. It was not unusual for single mass movements to be set to music, as certain occasions required individual treatment of a particular movement. This was most likely the case for this piece. The work is set in broad dimensions. It is almost like a cantata and is divided into twelve short movements, each of which is well contrasted in tempo, key, scoring and musical style. The conspicuous use of winds (oboe and trumpet) as obligato instruments and its allocation of solo parts exclusively to high voices are typical of the works written for the Pietà.

The first movement, 'Gloria in excelsis Deo' (Glory to God in the highest), with its octave leaps in the strings and the subsequent trumpet run is typical of the festive brilliance of Vivaldi's church

music. It exerts an almost hypnotic sense of forward drive in the listener. The second movement, 'Et in terra pax hominibus' (and peace on earth to all men), is a moving and broadly conceived section of music, with its intense chromaticism almost contradicting the meaning of the text. After a light-hearted duet for two solo voices, 'Laudamus te' (we praise Thee, Lord), there follow two contrasting movements in E minor: the 'Gratias agimus tibi' (we give thanks unto Thee), and the magnificent fugal 'Propter magnam gloriam tuam' (for thy great glory Lord).

The next movement, 'Domine Deus' (O Thou our Lord God) is a flowing largo in the style of a Siciliano based on pizzicato lower strings. It is an expressive dialogue between solo soprano and a hauntingly beautiful solo for oboe. After the 'Domini Fili unigenite Jesu' (Lord Jesus Christ), the eighth section 'Domine Deus, Agnus Dei' (Lord God, Lamb of God) is a calm prayer for solo voice with passionate interjections from the chorus. This prayer is echoed by the intensely chromatic choral 'Qui tollis peccata mundi' (Thou who takest away the sins of the world) which is followed by the determined 'Qui sedes ad dextram Patris' (who sittest on the right hand of the Father).

The penultimate movement, 'Quoniam tu solus sanctus' (for Thou alone art holy) draws on the material from the opening Gloria for chorus. The final movement 'Cum Sancto Spiritu' (with the Holy Spirit) is not original work by Vivaldi. He adapted a fugue by the minor Veronese composer G. M. Ruggieri. Vivaldi largely rewrote the piece, adding a virtuoso trumpet part to bring to a glorious conclusion one of the great masterpieces of the choral repertoire.

1. Gloria in excelsis Deo
2. Et in terra pax hominibus
3. Laudamus te
4. Gratias agimus tibi
5. Propter magnam gloriam tuam
6. Domine Deus
7. Domine Fili unigenite Jesu
8. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei
9. Qui tollis peccata mundi
10. Qui sedes ad dextram Patris
11. Quoniam tu solus sanctus
12. Cum Sancto Spiritu

BIOGRAPHIES

Vivace Chorus

Vivace Chorus is a flourishing and adventurous choir based in Guildford, Surrey. We have two aims: to make music of the highest standard and to have fun while doing so.

The choir has come a long way since it began some 67 years ago as the Guildford Philharmonic Choir, gaining over time an enviable reputation for performing first-class concerts across a wide range of musical repertoire. Since

1995, Vivace has thrived under the exceptional leadership of this evening's conductor, Jeremy Backhouse, supported by pianist and composer Francis Pott as rehearsal accompanist.



Our repertoire spans more unusual works such as Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* as well as the great choral masterpieces of Bach, Brahms, Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Verdi, and the more intimate works of Fauré, Tavener, Allegri and Lauridsen. We also actively promote the classics of the future with our 'Contemporary Choral Classics' series, commissioning new works when funds allow.

Particular successes in recent years have included a sell-out performance of Mahler's Symphony No. 8, the 'Symphony of a Thousand', at the Royal Albert Hall, a highly acclaimed performance of Britten's *War Requiem*, and another Royal Albert Hall success in May 2014, when we performed the Verdi's *Requiem*.

Our 2015—2016 season opened in Guildford's concert hall, G Live, with a performance of Orff's well-known *Carmina Burana*, alongside the rarely performed but equally deserving Vaughan Williams' *Five Tudor Portraits*, and will continue on 5 March 2016 with an evening featuring some of opera's best-loved choruses and arias. The last concert of the season, in May, showcases some of the best of French choral music from Massenet, Fauré and Franck.

In addition to our own concerts, we also sing in various charity concerts and are delighted to take part each year, as tonight, in the Brandenburg Choral Festival here in St Martin-in-the-Fields.

Sopranos

Jacqueline Alderton, Helen Beevers, Mary Broughton, Rachel Edmondson,
Isobel Humphreys, Rebecca Kerby, Alex Nash, Emily Nash, Susan Norton, Margaret Parry,
Kate Peters, Gillian Rix, Joan Thomas, Valerie Thompson, Christine Wilks, Frances Worpe

Altos

Barbara Barklem, Jane Brooks, Liz Durning, Valerie Garrow, Jo Glover, Christine Medlow, Penny
Muray, Gill Perkins, Lesley Scordellis, Carol Sheppard, Prue Smith, Rosey Storey, Hilary Trigg,
Pamela Usher

Tenors

Mike Bishop, Peter Butterworth, Bob Cowell, Simon Dillon, Peter Norman,
Martin Price, John Thornely, John Trigg

Basses

Peter Andrews, Michael Dudley, James Garrow, Stuart Gooch, Neil Martin, Malcolm Munt, John
Parry, Peter Pearce, Chris Peters, David Ross, Philip Stanford, Kieron Walsh

Brandenburg Baroque Soloists

Brandenburg Baroque Soloists is one of the exciting new orchestras playing on period instruments. It was originally created as an offshoot of the highly successful Brandenburg Sinfonia for a performance of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* in 2004. The orchestra is a judicious mixture of regular Sinfonia players who play on both modern and original instruments with some of the finest period instrument specialists drawn from the same pool as the Academy of Ancient Music, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Gabrieli Consort.



The repertoire of the orchestra has expanded steadily to include the standard baroque choral classics including Handel's *Messiah*, the Bach Passions, numerous oratorios and much of the standard instrumental repertoire including Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and of course the *Brandenburg Concertos*.

Violin 1

Persephone Gibbs
Debbie Diamond
Oakki Lau

Violin 2

Magda Loth-Hill
John Rogers

Viola

Stefanie Heichelheim
Marina Ascherson
John Rogers

Cello

Sebastian Comberti
Florence Petit

Oboe

Geoff Coates

Trumpet

Neil Brough

Harpichord

Katie De La Matter

Bass

Jan Zahourek

Jeremy Backhouse – Conductor

Jeremy is one of Britain's leading conductors of amateur choirs. He began his musical career in Canterbury Cathedral where he was senior chorister. In 1980 he was appointed music editor at the RNIB, where he was responsible for the transcription of print music into braille. He has worked for both EMI Classics and later Boosey & Hawkes music publishers as a literary editor, but now pursues his career as a freelance conductor.



Jeremy has been the sole conductor of the internationally renowned chamber choir Vasari Singers since its inception in 1980. Since winning the prestigious Sainsbury's Choir of the Year competition in 1988, the Vasari Singers has performed regularly on the South Bank and at major concert venues in London, as well as in many of the cathedrals and abbeys of the UK. Jeremy and the Vasari Singers have broadcast frequently on BBC Radio 3 and 4, have a discography of over 25 CDs on the EMI, Guild, Signum and Naxos labels, and have recently launched their own label with a recording of Jonathan Rathbone's *Under the shadow of His wing*, which they premiered in 2014.

In January 1995, Jeremy was appointed Music Director of the Vivace Chorus (then the Guildford Philharmonic Choir). Alongside the standard classical works, Jeremy has conducted the Vivace Chorus in some ambitious programmes, including Howells' *Hymnus Paradisi* and Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*, Mahler's 'Resurrection' Symphony (No. 2), Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* and *Ivan the Terrible*, Mahler's 'Symphony of a Thousand' (No. 8) and Verdi's *Requiem* in the Royal Albert Hall with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Britten's *War Requiem*.

In January 2009 Jeremy took up the post of Music Director of the Salisbury Community Choir. His first major engagement with them was the opening concert of that year's Salisbury International Arts Festival, in Salisbury Cathedral, premiering a vast new work by Bob Chilcott entitled *Salisbury Vespers*. In 2013 the choir celebrated its 21st anniversary with a major concert in Salisbury Cathedral, featuring the world premiere of a specially commissioned community work by Will Todd, *The City Garden*, which they subsequently toured to Lincoln (2014) and Guildford (2015).

Catriona Hewitson – Soprano

Catriona Hewitson is an Edinburgh-born soprano who is currently studying for a Masters at the Royal College of Music and is taught by Janis Kelly. Catriona is an RCM Scholar supported by the Emma Rose Memorial Award and is also generously supported by the Josephine Baker Trust, Hope Scott Trust, the James Caird Travelling Fund, the Cross Trust and PS. Catriona was a student at the City of Edinburgh Music School before starting at the Royal Northern College of Music as an undergraduate. During her time at the RNCM, where she studied with Deborah Rees, she gained a first-class degree and a distinction for her postgraduate diploma. She won several prizes while at the RNCM and at the RCM she came second in the Lies Askonas Competition and was awarded the Cuthbert Smith Prize.



She made her debut as a soloist in the Bridgewater Hall singing Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* and has toured Northern Ireland with the Ulster Orchestra. Catriona has performed as part of the Brandenburg Choral Festival twice in St Martin-in-the-Fields singing Mozart's *Requiem*. She sings for the BBC Radio 4 Daily Service Singers, London Voices, the Chorus of Enlightenment, Caledonian Voices, Ludus Baroque and the National Youth Choir of Scotland.

Last autumn, Catriona was working with English Touring Opera, covering the roles of Sophie (*Werther*) and Yniold (*Pelléas et Mélisande*). She has just finished performing the role of Ida (*Die Fledermaus*) with John Copley at the RCMIOS. Other roles at the RCMIOS have included Emmie (*Albert Herring*) and the ensemble of *Giove in Argo* by Handel as part of the London Handel Festival. In the RNCM operas she played Harry (*Albert Herring*), Amore (*Orfeo e Euridice*) and Wife (*Paradise Moscow*). While with British Youth Opera, she performed the roles of Squirrel and First Young Tree (*Paul Bunyan*).

This year Catriona will be performing a lunchtime recital for the Scottish Arts Club and returning to sing with Shrewsbury Choral Society. She will also be performing in opera scenes at the RCM later this month.

Helen Brackenbury – Mezzo-soprano

Helen Brackenbury hails from Nottingham where she began her singing career in the renowned Cantamus Girls' Choir, becoming one of the principal soloists and studying with the choir's late director, Pamela Cook.

Helen gained a scholarship and went on to study at the Royal Academy of Music. As a member of Royal Academy Opera, Helen studies with Elizabeth Ritchie and Audrey Hyland. Before this she completed a BMus and MA degree (distinction) under the tuition of Sarah Walker and Mary Hill.



In recent months, Helen has performed in venues such as the Wigmore Hall, St Paul's Cathedral and at the Oxford Lieder Festival. Helen has also been fortunate enough to sing in the Royal Academy of Music/Kohn Foundation Bach Cantata series in special concert conducted by the internationally renowned, Masaaki Suzuki. She has performed the roles of Mrs Sedley from Britten's *Peter Grimes*,

Mrs Herring from Britten's *Albert Herring*, Bianca from Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* and Eduige from Handel's *Rodelinda* in the Royal Academy's opera scenes. Helen has also performed the roles of La Maestra della Novizie and La Sorella Infermeria in Puccini's *Suor Angelica* and Marcellina in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* performed at the Hackney Empire for Royal Academy Opera.

As a soloist, Helen has sung all over the country in concert and oratorio works, some of which include Elgar's *Sea Pictures* with Harmony Sinfonia Orchestra, Mozart *Requiem* and Vivaldi's *Gloria*.

Future engagements include Opera Holland Park, the role of Stepmother in Rimsky-Korsakov's *May Night* and Arnalta in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* for Royal Academy Opera.

Helen is kindly supported by the Patricia Kris Wolfe Prize, the Josephine Baker Trust, the Countess of Munster Musical Trust, the Chizel Educational Trust, the Winship Foundation, the Split Infinitive Trust and the Pamela Cook Memorial Fund.

Persephone Gibbs – Violin

Persephone's education ran the gamut from studying with violin pedagogue Dorothy DeLay at the Juilliard School, through English and law degrees, to improvising and writing songs with a rock band. Her interest in period performance was cemented while studying with David Takeno and Rachel Podger at the Guildhall School of Music, where she won prizes for chamber music and solo Bach performance.



Hailed by *Time Out* as a 'rising star of the baroque violin,' Persephone is director/soloist in the Brandenburg Baroque Soloists' series of concerto programmes at St Martin-in-the-Fields and leads the group's performances of the major baroque choral repertoire. Persephone also leads Devon Baroque, the Temple Players, Charivari Agréable Simfonie and the Bampton Classical Players, with whom she has appeared as soloist at the Wigmore Hall. She led Opera Theatre Company's productions of *Orlando* and *Alcina* at the Buxton Festival.

Persephone has appeared as soloist and guest leader with Florilegium, the Festive Orchestra of London and the Orchestra da Camera Lorenzo Da Ponte. She was recently a featured soloist with the English Concert in Radio 3's Baroque Spring season.

An interest in early Italian repertoire has led Persephone to work with His Majesty's Sagbutts and Cornetts, the English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble and I Fagiolini. She played the pre-recorded ritornelli for Silent Opera's innovative production of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* this year.

Persephone has co-founded two chamber groups: the Constanze Quartet, which performs the classical and early romantic string quartet repertoire; and Gut Instinct, which explores seventeenth and eighteenth century music for two or, more unusually, three violins and continuo. Both groups enjoy presenting neglected composers in the context of their more famous contemporaries, and Persephone's research has unearthed pieces not regularly performed in centuries.

Persephone regularly guest lectures at City University on historical performance and period string instruments; she frequently directs undergraduate performance workshops there as well.

Persephone is a member of the Academy of Ancient Music, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Gabrieli Consort and the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra.



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The Guildford & Godalming Grandmothers' Group - 4Gs



We are mainly grandmothers ourselves and have come together to express our solidarity with the thousands of African grandmothers who are caring for their AIDS-orphaned grandchildren. Our aim is to support projects appropriate to their needs, whether practical, medical, social or emotional. All projects are agreed in consultation with the grandmothers themselves, respecting their expertise and promoting true solidarity in the fight against AIDS. Projects range from providing seeds for vegetable plots, school uniforms and medication to bereavement counselling.

The Guildford and Godalming Grandmothers' Group was founded in 2011 as the first UK branch of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, which is linked to the Stephen Lewis Foundation, a Canadian organisation seeking to turn the tide of AIDS in Africa and supporting over 300 community projects in 15 countries of sub-Saharan Africa. We organise fundraising events such as stalls at local fetes, quiz evenings, coffee mornings and a Christmas food hamper raffle, raising over £2,000 each year.

We also give presentations to local groups to raise awareness of the plight of the African grandmothers. One of the 4Gs attended Vancouver Tribunal in 2013 with Canadian and African grandmothers and two joined 500 Ugandan grandmothers and 20 Canadian grandmothers for a convention in Entebbe in 2015. They can relate stories of both sadness and hope.

To find out more about us, you can contact us via our website or by email:

www.grandmothers4.org

grandmothers4@hotmail.co.uk

We are very grateful to the Brandenburg Choral Festival for the opportunity to be involved with the concert this evening. As a very small organisation, this opportunity to raise funds for African grandmothers is very much appreciated.

Thank you



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Flash photography, audio and video recording are not permitted.

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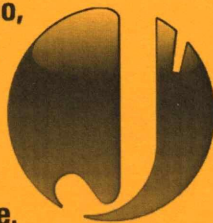
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