

The Fourth Choir Presents

# *Companions of Angels*



A concert inspired by  
the Order of St John  
and its long history of  
nursing the sick and  
wounded

THE FOURTH  
CHOIR

Associate Director  
Andrea Brown

Saturday 22 October  
Priory Church of the  
Order of St John

# Companions of Angels

Tonight's programme explores common themes of charity and the Order of St John. The music of Hildegard of Bingen starts our evening, doubly significant as the Order was founded in the 11th century and the name of the Fourth Choir comes from Hildegard's notion of 'the fourth choir of angels here on earth'. Inspired by the charitable vision the Order was founded on, we trace a history, sometime political, sometime religious, which has had an inevitable impact on musical composition. With anthems in English, Latin and German, and madrigals in praise of monarchy and other more rustic pleasures, we explore themes common to us all – love, pain, anger and kindness.

The second half of our programme is a meditation on The Great War and its continued influence on us today. With both secular and sacred text we recognise charity, sacrifice, grief and forgiveness. Featuring David Lang's *Memorial Ground*, we interweave texts from our singers' own histories of World War I as well as poetry by the homosexual war poet Wilfred Owen, and passages from the British Manual of Military Law, where homosexual conduct, which amounted to treason, was a court-martial offence.

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## O Gloriosissimi Lux

Music and text: Hildegard of Bingen (1098 – 1179)

*O living light, O angels glorious!  
Below divinity,  
upon the eyes divine you gaze  
within the darkness mystical  
of all creation—  
in yearnings set alight  
where you can never  
be quenched nor satiated:*

*How glorious too are these, your joys  
your form possesses—  
that form that in your number*

*remains untouched by every wicked deed  
that first arose  
in your companion,  
that now lost angel  
who wished to fly  
above, within the hidden  
pinnacle of God—  
then twisted, tortured, he  
was plunged into his ruin.  
But yet, his fall's devices  
by cunning plot he laid against the craft  
of God's creative finger.*

## Ave Verum

Music: William Byrd (1543 – 1623), Text: Pope Innocent VI (1282 – 1362)

*Hail, true Body, born  
of the Virgin Mary,  
having truly suffered, sacrificed*

*on the cross for mankind,  
from whose pierced side  
water and blood flowed:*

*Be for us a foretaste of Heaven  
in the trial of death!*

*O sweet Jesus, O holy Jesus,  
O Jesus, son of Mary,  
have mercy on me. Amen.*

### **Hosanna to the Son of David**

Music: Thomas Weelkes (c1576 – 1623),  
Text: King James Bible (published 1611)

### **Arise, Awake**

Music: Thomas Morley (1557 – 1603) from *The Triumphs of Oriana*, a set of madrigals in praise of Elizabeth I, published in 1601, Text: Anon

### **Draw on, Sweet Night**

Music (and possibly also the text): John Wilbye (1574 – 1638)

### **Die mit Tränen säen**

Music: Heinrich Schütz (1585 – 1672), Text: Psalm 126

*Those who sow in tears will reap in joy.  
He who goes out weeping, bearing seed for sowing  
will certainly come again with joy, carrying his sheaves.*

### **Lord, how long wilt thou be angry?**

Music: Henry Purcell (c.1659 – 1695), Text: Psalm 79

INTERVAL

### **When David heard**

Music: Thomas Weelkes (c1576 – 1623), Text: Second Book of Samuel

### **Memorial Ground**

(in commemoration of the centenary of the Battle of the Somme)  
Music and text: David Lang (b. 1957),  
Additional text: members of The Fourth Choir

### **Rise Up, My Love, My Fair One**

Music: Healey Willan (1880 – 1968), Text: the Song of Solomon

### **O Rex Gentium**

Music: Matthew Martin (b. 1976), Text: anonymous, possibly 6th century

*O King of all nations and the only joy of every human heart,  
the cornerstone that unites us into one with Thee:  
come and save man, whom you formed out of the dust of the earth.*

## Standing as I do before God

Music: Cecilia McDowall (b. 1951), Text: a reflection on the last words of Edith Cavell (1865 – 1915) by Séan Street (b. 1946)

Solo: Annabelle Southern

*I have seen death so often that it is not strange or fearful to me.  
Standing as I do in view of God and eternity,  
I realize patriotism is not enough.  
I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone.'*

*And when the time was close,  
for once her eyes filled, (with tears), then she quietly rose,  
walked silently through the stilled prison, the grey dawn light,  
passed gas flame, tired flowers, out beyond her final night,  
a flame alight in hours before infinity,  
in the presence of death leaving all enmity:  
we are air after breath.*

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## Memorial Ground and the LGBT experience of the First World War

*Memorial Ground* is a new piece of choral music by Pulitzer Prize-winning and Oscar-nominated composer David Lang composed to mark the centenary of the Battle of the Somme in a very special way.

The battle lasted 21 weeks, and in that time more than 1.1 million people from all over the world were killed or wounded. No one text or piece of music can respond to such a scale of loss. Instead David Lang created a piece that enables many different people to voice their own response: singing groups of all sizes and abilities have customised it to make it their own through choosing texts and interpretations of the music according to their own thoughts, resources, location, circumstances and scale. It can be as simple as a few voices singing for three minutes to hundreds singing for an hour or more.

Tonight's performance of *Memorial Ground* commemorates the personal family histories of members of the choir and also addresses the experience of LGBT people at the time. Homosexuality remained illegal until 1967, but British paranoia around same-sex relations was particularly heightened at the outbreak of the war after a high-profile scandal in Germany, the Harden–Eulenburg affair, in which a number of senior government and military officials were outed in a series of civil trials and courts martial. Many named in the affair committed suicide or were imprisoned.

In addition to the association of same-sex attraction with Germanness, a British MP, Noel Pemberton Billing, promoted a conspiracy around the existence of a

'black book' of 47,000 British men and women held by a German prince that contained records of their 'moral and sexual weakness'. As the British forces began to incur heavy casualties, Billing insinuated that gay and lesbian activity among senior British officials and their wives was being exploited by German agents to gain an advantage in the war, leading to particularly heightened fears of same-sex attraction.

LGBT themes were suppressed at the time: publisher CW Daniel was prosecuted under the Defence of the Realm Act for publishing a novel entitled *Despised and Rejected* by pacifist author Rose Allatini which addressed the theme of persecution of homosexual and lesbian people as well as critiquing imperialism. In the British Army, 22 officers and over 270 soldiers were court-martialled for homosexual behaviour.



*Wilfred Owen*



*Siegfried Sassoon*

Now celebrated as one of the greatest poets writing on the horrors of trench warfare, Wilfred Owen kept his sexuality secret during his army service. He enlisted in 1915 and was commissioned the following year but a close encounter with a mortar explosion that left him unconscious for days saw him returned to a hospital in Edinburgh for treatment for shell shock. There he met the poet Siegfried Sassoon, for whom he developed a profound affection and admiration and who mentored him in his writing. Many of the details of his life at the time and relationship with Sassoon are unknown as huge volumes of his letters were destroyed by Sassoon and by members of Owen's family who considered the content 'discreditable'.

In 1918, despite strong entreaties from Sassoon, Owen chose to secretly return to active service in France in order to continue to depict the horrific reality of the war. He was killed only a week before the signing of the Armistice and news of his death reached his mother by telegram on Armistice Day as the country celebrated the end of the conflict.

## Andrea Brown



Andrea Brown is a highly experienced Choral Conductor and Artistic Director. Conducting 'with spirit and vitality – always musical integrity at its core', Andrea has devised and directed a number of award-winning festivals and concert seasons.

Andrea is the Musical Director of the Festival Chorus and Associate Conductor of the Fourth Choir. She recently founded Tippett Voices, a professional ensemble with recent concerts at St Georges Cathedral and the Imperial War Museum. Andrea works regularly as conductor and vocal coach with other choirs including the London Oriana Choir, North London Chorus, and the Southbank Centre's Voicelab. As Director of Music at Morley College she led a number of ground-breaking projects with organisations such as the BBC Singers and the Southbank Centre. Highlights include conducting performances with Guildhall, CYM, Sadlers Wells and with the LPO, Voicelab and 400 community choir singers in Tippett's *A Child of Our Time* at the Royal Festival Hall.

She has been the Music Director of Diversity Choir, Morley Chamber Choir, Koruso and the Artistic Director of Various Voices, an international choral festival at the Southbank Centre which was awarded an Inspire mark from the London 2012 Olympics Committee.

Andrea is an accomplished vocal coach and co-founded the award-winning Women Conductors @ Morley programme, designed to encourage, educate and promote women within the conducting profession. She now acts as Consultant with the programme in its next exciting stages with the Royal Philharmonic Society. Andrea is a guest radio presenter, most recently broadcasting on the 'Classical Wandsworth' show at times throughout the year.

## The Fourth Choir

The Fourth Choir was founded in September 2013 by a group of LGBT+ singers aspiring to sing classical and modern choral works to the highest possible standard. Led by Artistic Director Dominic Peckham, one of the UK's finest young choral conductors, our goal is to represent the LGBT+ community in London's world-class classical music scene.

At three years old, the choir is going from strength to strength. We have performed in some of the city's top cultural venues, including Hall One at King's Place, the Royal Festival Hall, the British Museum, St Peter's Eaton Square and the stunning Two Temple Place. This year the choir performed overseas for the first time, singing in Amsterdam's Concertgebouw as part of EuroPride's choir festival and, one week later, staging a re-run of our Spring Shakespeare celebration in Antwerp's Queer Arts festival.

In addition to our own charitable aims, we are proud to support other causes in our music making. We celebrated the legalisation of same-sex marriages in the UK, appearing on Newsnight and singing at an event in 2014 where Sandi and Debbie Toksvig renewed their vows in front of an audience of thousands. Last year we donated proceeds from our Spring concert, raising over two and a half thousand pounds for local migrant support centres.

The choir welcomes experienced singers of all backgrounds and identities. While our members are not all LGBT, we assume that anyone who works with us celebrates diversity and equal rights. To register your interest in singing with us, please see our website.

The Fourth Choir is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England and Wales, number 1156769.



The Fourth Choir  
with the Meridian Sinfonia

# Christmas at Versailles



A choral festive celebration

Messe de Minuit pour Noël by Charpentier  
and a spell-binding evening of Christmas  
choral music including MacDowall,  
Chilcott, and Vaughan Williams

**Saturday 10 December 2016, 7.30**  
**St Clement Danes on the Strand, London**

Tickets at [www.thefourthchoir.com](http://www.thefourthchoir.com)

**THE FOURTH  
CHOIR**

Artistic Director  
Dominic Peckham