

The Fourth Choir  
with the Meridian Sinfonia

# Christmas at Versailles



Saturday 10 December 2016  
St Clement Danes, The Strand

A collection will be taken for the Naz and Matt Foundation. Please give generously.



**NAZ & MATT**  
FOUNDATION  
.org

*"Our mission is to never let religion, any religion, come in the way of the unconditional love between parents and their children"*

THE FOURTH  
CHOIR

Artistic Director  
Dominic Peckham

Welcome to

# Christmas at Versailles

The theme of tonight's concert was inspired by the main work we are singing – Charpentier's beautiful Midnight Mass for Christmas, written in 1694. Christmas at Versailles during the reign of Louis XIV was primarily a religious festival, with few of the traditions that we now associate with Christmas celebrations. For example, gifts were distributed on New Year's Day, not on Christmas Day. Louis spent most of Christmas Eve in church. The first Mass of the day was at 10am, at which he would receive communion (something which he did on only five major feast days during the year). After a second Mass, he touched people suffering from scrofula, a skin disease known as the 'king's evil'. In France and England, it was believed that the touch of an anointed monarch could cure this disease and as many as three thousand people would turn up at Versailles, hoping that Louis' touch could cure them. After dinner, Louis would attend Vespers and, finally, at 10pm he would return to the chapel to hear no less than three masses which would last until long after midnight.

According to the Duc de Saint-Simon, whose gossipy Memoirs chronicle the life and scandals of Versailles in witty detail, these midnight masses were particularly impressive events. "On these occasions the chapel is thronged, all the bays of the gallery are crowded with ladies of the court en déshabillé [meaning that they were not wearing formal court dress but their most fashionable gowns]. All ears are charmed by the orchestra which is far superior to that of the Opéra or any other orchestra in Europe, while all eyes are entranced by the beauty of the spectacle." Not everyone was entranced by the spectacle. Saint-Simon records that one Christmas Eve, Louis' nephew, the dissolute Duc d'Orléans, surprised everyone by reading his prayer book with great concentration throughout midnight mass. On closer inspection however, it transpired that he was engrossed in reading Rabelais, whose scandalously bawdy writings were condemned by the Roman Catholic Church.

The second part of tonight's concert continues the French baroque theme with "Allons Pasteurs", a short movement from "Les Douze Noël's", an arrangement of twelve Christmas carols by Louis-Claude Daquin, a famous organist of the period, and "Away in a Manger", sung to a traditional tune from Normandy. Carols from Spain, Poland, Germany and, of course, England complete our review of European Christmas music.

Joyeux Noël tout le monde!

## Once in Royal David's City

Music: Henry J. Gauntlett (1805-1876), Text: Mrs. Frances Alexander (1818-1895)  
Arrangement: Arthur H. Mann (1850-1929), last verse arranged by David Willcocks (1919-2015), Soloist: Rioghnach Sachs

### **Solo:**

*Once in royal David's city  
Stood a lowly cattle shed,  
Where a mother laid her baby  
In a manger for his bed:  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.*

### **Choir only:**

*He came down to earth from heaven,  
Who is God and Lord of all,  
And his shelter was a stable,  
And his cradle was a stall;  
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,  
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.*

### **Audience joins:**

*And through all his wondrous childhood  
He would honour and obey,  
Love and watch the lowly maiden,  
In whose gentle arms he lay:  
Christian children all must be  
Mild, obedient, good as he.*

### **Audience joins:**

*For he is our childhood's pattern;  
Day by day, like us he grew;  
He was little, weak and helpless,  
Tears and smiles like us he knew;  
And he feeleth for our sadness,  
And he shareth in our gladness.*

*And our eyes at last shall see him,  
Through his own redeeming love;  
For that child so dear and gentle  
Is our Lord in heaven above,  
And he leads his children on  
To the place where he is gone.*

*Not in that poor lowly stable,  
With the oxen standing by,  
We shall see him; but in heaven,  
Set at God's right hand on high;  
Where like stars his children crowned  
All in white shall wait around.*

## Messe de Minuit pour Noël

Music: Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643 – 1704), Text: the Latin Mass  
Soloists: Anna Macham, Hannah Wheeler, Lucy Bingham, James Guy, David Dellaire

The Mass consists of six movements: the Kyrie (in three sections); the Gloria (also in three sections); the Credo (the longest movement, with four sections); an orchestral interlude for the Offertory; a short Sanctus in three sections; and an even shorter Agnus Dei. Charpentier took the melodic material for many of the sections from popular Christmas carols of the time.

INTERVAL – Please join us for a glass of mulled cider and a mince pie

## The Truth From Above

Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), Text: English folk carol  
Soloists: Stella Merz, Rioghnach Sachs, Tracey Button

## O Oriens

Music: Cecilia McDowall (b. 1951), Text: Advent Antiphon

## Nowell, Sing We

Music and Text: Anonymous fifteenth-century English carol

## Allons Pasteurs

Music: Louis-Claude Daquin (1694 – 1772), arranged by Simon Wright

Text: Traditional French Carol, Soloists: Sophia Allen, Leila Stroud, Michaela Caunter

*Wake up shepherds and let us go, God comes down with us to stay.*

*There's no more time for us to sleep, When we see the star today.*

## Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Music: Polish Carol (c. fourteenth century), arranged by David Willcocks (1919 – 2015), Text: Translated by Edith M. Reed (1885 – 1933), Soloists: Hannah Wheeler, Sophia Allen

## Riu Riu Chiu

Music: Mateo Flecha the Elder (1481 – 1553), Text: Anonymous Spanish carol  
Soloist: Gus Cairns

*“Riu Riu Chiu” is the warning cry that the kingfisher gives when it sees the wolf. It protects the lamb on the riverbank, just as God protected Mary from original sin, allowing Christ to be born whilst a thousand angels sing “Glory in heaven and peace on earth”.*

## O Come, All Ye Faithful

Music: John Wade (1711-1786), arranged by David Willcocks

Text: English translation by Fr. Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880)

### **Audience joins:**

*O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.  
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;*

### *Refrain:*

*O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.*

*God of God, Light of Light,  
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
Very God, Begotten, not created:  
(Refrain)*

### **Choir Only:**

*See how the shepherds, summoned to His cradle,  
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;  
We too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;  
(Refrain)*

### **Audience joins:**

*Lo! star led chieftains, Magi, Christ adoring,  
Offer Him incense, gold, and myrrh;  
We to the Christ Child bring our hearts' oblations.  
(Refrain)*

*Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,  
Fain we embrace Thee, with awe and love;  
Who would not love Thee, loving us so dearly?  
(Refrain)*

*Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, in the highest;  
(Refrain)*

## **Sir Christémas**

Music: Willaim Matthias (1934-1992), Text: Anon. c.1500

## **Sing Lullabye**

Music: Herbert Howells (1892-1983), Text: Will Harvey (1888-1957)

## **Thy Perfect Love**

Music: John Rutter (b. 1945), Text: Anonymous fifteenth century poem

## **Naz and Matt Foundation**

Talk by Matthew Mahmood-Ogston

## **Away In A Manger**

Music: Traditional Normandy tune, arranged by Reginald Jacques (1894-1969)

## **O Little One Sweet**

Music: Traditional German melody arranged by J.S. Bach (1685-1750)  
Text: Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654), translated by Percy Dearmer (1867-1936)

## **Hark! The Herald Angel's Sing**

Music: Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847), Text: Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

### ***Audience sings all verses:***

*Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies;  
With th'angelic host proclaim,  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King!"*

*Christ, by highest Heav'n adored;  
Christ the everlasting Lord;  
Late in time, behold Him come,  
Offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;*

*Hail th'incarnate Deity,  
Pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Jesus our Emmanuel.  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King!"*

*Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings,  
Ris'n with healing in His wings.  
Mild He lays His glory by,  
Born that man no more may die.  
Born to raise the sons of earth,  
Born to give them second birth.  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King!"*

## **Dominic Peckham, Artistic Director**

Dominic is regarded as one of the UK's finest young conductors and an ambassador for choral music both in performance and through his critically acclaimed educational work. He is Artistic Director of The Royal Opera House's 'RM19', Assistant Musical Director of The National Youth Choirs of Great Britain, Artistic Director and Founder of iSingUK – The Schools Workshop Programme, Director of The Ulster Youth Training Choir and Patron and Principal Guest Conductor and Adjudicator of The Voice Festival UK. In demand at home and abroad as a conductor, choral specialist, adjudicator, workshop director, and consultant for a variety of ensembles and choral training programmes, he was guest Vocal Director of the BBC Choir of the Year, Consultant of Trinity Guildhall Teaching Programme and Guest Speaker for 'Sing Up'.

Recent and upcoming posts include Guest Chorus Master at English National Opera; Guest Conductor for Aldeburgh Music; returning as Guest Conductor for Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance; Chorus Master for the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Presenter for the Royal Opera House BP Big Screens. In June 2016 Peckham conducted the London Mozart Players in a unique concert celebrating the Queen's 90th birthday, which marked the orchestra's final concert in their home venue, Fairfield Halls, before its major refurbishment.

## **Naz and Matt Foundation**

Naz and Matt Foundation was set up in 2014 following the sad loss of Matt's fiancé, Naz, who took his own life two days after his deeply religious family confronted him about his sexuality.

Naz and Matt Foundation exists to empower and support LGBT+ individuals, their friends and family to work towards resolving challenges linked to sexuality or gender identity, particularly where religion is heavily influencing the situation. By tackling the problem head on and raising awareness Naz and Matt Foundation hopes to open the eyes of closed minds in communities and families so that they will love the children they gave birth to, for the individuals they were born to be.



Naz and Matt 2008

## 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 on 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.

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

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

## Meridian Sinfonia

The Meridian Sinfonia is a dynamic and highly flexible professional ensemble, drawing on players from both the period instrument and modern orchestral worlds. The players of the Meridian Sinfonia are highly sought after throughout the UK and Europe as performers, soloists and teachers. The range of the orchestra encompasses the Renaissance through to the contemporary, having given first modern revivals of long lost works and the first performances of contemporary compositions. The period instrument branch of the Meridian Sinfonia covers pitches from Renaissance A440 & A465, through the Baroque A415 and the Classical A430. The choice of the instruments used is carefully considered to bring the most authentic realisation of sounds the composers would have expected. The Meridian Sinfonia has had the pleasure of working for the North London Chorus, Waltham Singers, Skolia, Stondon Singers, Southend Festival Chorus, Milton Keynes Chorale and Kings Lynn Festival Chorus.

Hoxton Hall and The Fourth Choir present

# Love Letters

*Friday*  
*17 Feb 2017*  
*8.00 pm*

Artistic Director  
Dominic Peckham

THE  
FOURTH  
CHOIR



A Valentine's Day celebration of love,  
most powerful emotion of all!

- Choral masterpieces from the ages  
- Arrangements of Makaroff,  
Prince (R.I.P.) and Mumford & Sons.

With readings of love letters from  
famous same-sex couples in the past:

- Oscar Wilde in triumph and despair  
- Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf  
- Tchaikovsky having a wild night in Paris

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