



CONCERT SEASON 2025 - 2026

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL
Starting at 7.30pm

150 choral voices

Saturday 22 NOVEMBER 2025

DURUFLÉ REQUIEM

ELGAR ENIGMA VARIATIONS

HAYDN INSANAE ET VANAE CURAE

BOULANGER VIEILLE PRIÈRE BOUDDHIQUE

Saturday 6 DECEMBER 2025

HANDEL MESSIAH

in support of
charitable causes



Saturday 21 MARCH 2026

MENDELSSOHN ELIJAH



TICKETS £10 - £29
www.WFCS.online / 0333 666 3366

Worcester Festival Choral Society is a Registered Charity No 506826

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FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

I am writing this while listening to the *St Matthew Passion* conducted by Sir Stephen Cleobury, which has prompted me to thank you all for the hard work that you are putting into preparing for our performance of this masterful piece.

This season has been a real success, not only in terms of our performances but also in the number of people who have attended our concerts and the pleasing critiques that have been written. Our committee and our extra helpers have all worked hard along with Sam and Nick to achieve this. So, my sincere thanks to everyone in our extended team.

There has been much work by your committee behind the scenes over this last year. One new idea is looking to start a 'Friends of WFCS' scheme for those people interested in supporting choral music in Worcestershire, but who don't wish or are unable to commit to attending every concert. If you know someone who may be interested in this there is more information on our Patrons leaflet (now the Patrons and Friends Guide – see page 9). Another idea is rationalising the audience seating to use the North and South aisle to our best advantage for our concerts, and revise our ticketing structure. And of course, our new and exciting partnership with the Worcestershire Community Foundation at our *Messiah* concert. See more information in Anne Renshaw's article on page 6.

The organisation for our popular and important fund-raising opportunity – namely our ‘Come & Sing Day’ – on Saturday 12 April is well underway (see page 10). We are very happy to welcome Sam back for the day to wield his baton alongside our wonderful accompanist Nick, and to delve into Bernstein’s *Chichester Psalms* and Vaughan Williams’s *Serenade to Music*. We are looking forward to another successful event. We would be happy to receive home-made cakes for sale at the event and if anyone could offer a couple of hours to help on the day, it would be much appreciated. My thanks to our small sub-committee who run and plan the day.

As many of you are aware, prices in every sphere of living are rising. There is now a charge for using the Cathedral for weekly practices, and the price to hire the venue for concerts is being significantly raised, alongside rising costs of soloists and the orchestra. The Chapter are kind enough to continue to offer us a significantly reduced ‘charity rate’ for our concerts, but after much deliberation, it has been decided that to cover this extra expenditure, it is necessary to raise our annual subscription by £5 to £140 per annum from September 2025. We have managed to keep the subs stable for three years but we hope you will understand the need to make this change now.

A large choir such as ours is open to constant changes in membership as people join us and leave us. We have been lucky enough to welcome many new members to the choir this season and conversely, we are sad to lose some members. We send our good wishes to those who are leaving and offer our thanks for their service in the choir.

So, for those of us going on to join the Three Choirs Festival Chorus in Hereford this summer and those of us taking part in The Elgar Festival, I hope everyone has a joyful time full of fun and wonderful music. For those of us swinging off to warmer climes, or helping with family and relatives, enjoy your time together and we look forward to seeing you bright-eyed and bushy-tailed in September.



Sue White (S)
Chairman

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

The autumn concert of our 2024–25 season was an important milestone, for me, at least. We were due to perform the exact same programme (Mozart’s Overture to *The Magic Flute* and the *Solemn Vespers*, Fauré’s *Cantique de Jean Racine* and the *Requiem*) in autumn 2021, in what was to be the first concert back after the bleak shutdown period brought about by the pandemic. We were rehearsed and ready to go, but disaster struck the very night before our concert, when a pinnacle fell from the main tower of the cathedral in storm Arwen. While we couldn’t go ahead in 2021, we decided to programme the same repertoire for our 2024 autumn concert, and so this concert represented for me the final step in getting back on our feet after those difficult years of cancellations and challenges.

And what a concert it was! The Fauré *Requiem* is a favourite at the best of times, but how it is brought to life with its full scoring, and with such passionate and committed singing! Our annual *Messiah* brought with it another full and appreciative audience, and our final concert of the year, Bach’s epic *St Matthew Passion* is just round the corner. The hard work of every member of the chorus is already paying off, and with the last few rehearsals still to go, I know this is going to be a memorable and powerful performance. For this, and for support of our chorus in so many ways, I thank everyone at WFCS. What a privilege it is to share this choral journey with you!



Samuel Hudson
WFCS Director of Music & Conductor /
Worcester Cathedral Director of Music

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

As we near the end of our active singing season for 2024-25, we currently have 144 members. This includes our two choral scholars, Ciara Millington (S/A) and David Turner (B), and organ scholar, Jack McCabe (B).

During this year we have welcomed a total of 19 new members. At the start of the 2024-25 season there were 17 new members, and a further 2 joined us in January this term.

12 people left us at the end of the 2023/24 season, and after our March 2025 concert we will say farewell to Colin Archer (T1) after more than 20 years. We will also say farewell to one other tenor, one soprano, one alto and a bass. If you know you are leaving, now is the time to get in touch on membership@wfcs.online. Also, we desperately need tenors – we only have 17 and there must be more out there! Please do try to recruit some new men into the chorus.

The busiest time of year in my role is usually August into September, as members leave the chorus and I try to allow as many new members in as possible. This year, in September I am aware of two new ladies who hope to join us. As yet, there are no tenors or basses on the waiting list, so please do talk widely about WFCS and encourage all your family, friends and colleagues to think about joining us if they sing tenor or bass. The

application form is on our website at www.wfcs.online.

Auditions are now completely up to date, thanks to Sam being able to do a couple of sessions at the end of February 2024 on weekdays, and a Saturday morning session at the start of September. However (and you all knew there was a 'but' coming...) there will be around 35 auditions needed before the start of next season, so please prepare yourself for that email you know is coming if you were in the big session of auditions that took place in January 2022. I have a list, and if you want to know if your audition is due, just let me know. There are some big differences in numbers within the voice parts, e.g. there are 30 first altos and only 15 second altos, so if you are willing to move if requested or want to move voice part, this is your opportunity so just let me know, please.

Wishing you all a very happy summer break and looking forward to seeing you all again in September. If you are leaving us, we hope to see you at our concerts.

Alison Riddell (S)
Membership Secretary



Messiah concert - 7 December 2024

Goodbye from Colin Archer

I have decided that the March concert will be my last with WFCS. I would like to thank everyone for over 20 years of great performances by the best choral society in the country, in one of the finest cathedrals in the world.

MARKETING UPDATE

It has been a particularly busy year for marketing efforts, with the aim of bringing our concerts and the Society to the attention of music lovers across the region, and selling as many tickets as possible. Achieving that is vital to ensure we can afford to continue sharing the joy of choral music long into the future!

It's also been a tribute to the efforts of every chorus member in recent months, and to our unique choral offering, that our ticket sales overall have been quite strong this year. There has recently been a huge rise in the number of concerts/tribute bands (often 'by candlelight') at the Cathedral and other local venues, which in some ways compete with us for audience spend. We need to continue all our efforts into next season!

Our concerts and dates for our next season can be seen on page 1, and will be added to our website soon. Tickets for all those concerts will be available from mid-July, when our 2025-26 Box Office opens: www.wfcs.online / 0333 666 3366.

Meanwhile, here are your online resources for seeing and sharing our news far and wide, over the summer:

- Website: www.wfcs.online
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/WorcsChoral
- X (Twitter) www.twitter.com/worcschoral
- Instagram: www.instagram.com/worcschoral

WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING

Here is an outline of this season's marketing initiatives – all chosen to be either no cost or low cost, to ensure overall affordability:

- Concert and Come & Sing posters (including Worcestershire Arts Network flyer displays)
- Concert programmes (including securing paying advertisers)
- Direct marketing e-mailers to audience database
- High Street and Parkway digital ad hoardings (examples below)
- New lighting / candle displays for concert staging
- News releases to regional media
- Corporate sponsorship package opportunities
- Online event listings
- Patrons' literature & new approaches
- Promotional bookmarks
- Pull-up banners
- Radio interviews
- Reciprocal ads / proms with orchestras/choirs
- Revamped website
- Roadside banners and correx boards
- Social media
- WFCS wall calendar (fund-raising)
- WFCS tree in Worcester Cathedral's Christmas Tree Festival
- Window displays in Crowngate Centre (example below)



MARKETING THANK YOUS

Immense thanks to:

- All chorus members who last December ordered a 2025 WFCS wall calendar, featuring some of Michael Whitefoot's excellent photos from our past concert season. Your orders raised more than £250 profit towards WFCS funds!
- Those chorus members who have provided particular support or lent their time to various aspects of our marketing in recent months. They include: Anne Renshaw, David Haddock, Leon Joynes, Catrin Meredith, Sally Rees, Alison Riddell, Sue White, Claire Horacek, Deirdre Myers, Anne Fardon, Mike Fardon, Mary Kenchington, Carol Sandys, Kirsty Bowie-Jinks, Judy Jenkins, Alison Kemp, John Kemp, Helen Butler, Rachel Lambert, Susan Reeve, Karen Gorman, David Meachem, Ellie Peberdy and former member Gabrielle Bullock.
- Photographer Michael Whitefoot, not only for producing our WFCS wall calendar, but also for once again taking super concert photos at our concerts free of charge, giving us invaluable marketing visuals to help us stand out

Michelle Whitefoot (S)
Marketing & Publicity Officer



PLAY THE WORCESTER COMMUNITY LOTTERY



Did you know that you, your friends and family can help support WFCS funds by buying tickets for the Worcester Community Lottery? Thanks to Worcester Community Lottery tickets bought by a small number of loyal supporters to date, more than £400 has once again been raised towards WFCS funds through this route in the past year. But with even more players supporting us, we could raise so much more. Several of our supporters have also won money and extra free Lottery tickets along the way and **a while back one of our members was lucky enough to match 5 numbers and scoop the £2,000 prize!**

- Worcester Community Lottery is a weekly online lottery that aims to raise money for local charities and good causes
- Every ticket costs £1. Of this 50p goes directly to the local charity selected by the player. A further 10p goes to other local charities
- The draw takes place every Saturday night at 8pm
- The top prize is £25,000 if 6 numbers are matched, £2,000 if 5 consecutive numbers are matched, and so on.
- The average odds of winning a prize are estimated at 50:1
- Minimum purchase is 1 month (5 wks') worth of tickets (£5 spend)
- Tickets are purchased online at www.worcesterlottery.org

HOW TO PLAY

1. Buy your tickets at www.worcesterlottery.org
2. Choose WFCS from the list of charities you wish to support
3. Check the winning numbers online each Saturday, 8pm

Thank you to all players and
GOOD LUCK!

So please consider playing, and telling your friends. Simply choose Worcester Festival Choral Society as the charity you want to benefit, to help contribute to staging our wonderful concerts.

A NEW DEVELOPMENT FOR WFCS MESSIAH

WFCS's tradition of performing Handel's *Messiah* every year will take on new purpose from 2025!

Inspired by *Messiah*'s philanthropic origins, WFCS will re-purpose its annual performance as a major fund-raising concert in support of local charitable causes, particularly those associated with education, health and well-being. We are proud to announce a partnership with the **Worcestershire Community Foundation** www.worcscf.org.uk.

Handel premiered his *Messiah* in Dublin in April 1742, benefiting several local charities and inspiring the creation of The Rotunda Hospital, the world's first purpose-built maternity hospital, still in operation today.

In London, Handel continued this charitable association by conducting annual performances of *Messiah* at the Foundling Hospital (below), a charitable institution for abandoned children. These concerts raised substantial funds and increased public awareness of the hospital's mission, while Handel oversaw the musical education of the children in its care.



Honouring this legacy, we will harness music's power to inspire and engage, strengthening the connection between philanthropy and the arts to serve the local community. We will promote the charitable aims to generate sponsorship and donations, and to bring new audiences to the magic of *Messiah*.

Continuing Handel's educational purpose, we will offer opportunities to schools, including our new

'*Hallelujah!*' project to encourage and support the participation of a number of young people in the chorus. Over time we will introduce further initiatives to stimulate community engagement and involvement. 'Handel' himself is likely to make pop-up appearances along the way!

Through our annual performances of *Messiah* we aim to make a lasting impact in Worcestershire, not only by the funds generated to support those most in need, but also by fostering the spirit of generosity and compassion in our community that *Messiah* will inspire!

Anne Renshaw
Development Officer



WHO ARE THE MERIDIAN SINFONIA?



*The Meridian Sinfonia period instrument group at our WFCS Messiah 2016 concert
(Richard Thomas top left)*

As I sit behind the group of musicians who so excellently accompany our concerts I have often wondered who they are, where do they come from and exactly what goes into providing an orchestra for each of our performances?

With this in mind I decided to ask their coordinator, Richard Thomas, if he would provide an article for our newsletter and he kindly agreed to answer my questions. I hope you find the following informative and interesting [Ed.]

How did the idea for MS come about, when was it founded, where is it based?

Meridian Sinfonia (MS) was London-based in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, so the name came from the Greenwich prime meridian. It occurred to me about fifteen years ago that my freelance orchestral fixing was so successful that establishing a named ensemble would cement my reputation as a fixer, the reputation of the group of players who work for me most regularly and give assurance to the quality & professionalism of the ensemble.

Where do your musicians come from (locations and which other orchestras)?

The MS players are generally drawn from around London and Birmingham; however, the driving principal is quality, experience and professionalism. I am always striving to get the best person for the job. There are modern players from the BBC, Covent Garden and Opera North as well as highly accomplished freelance/session players from England and Wales.

How extensive is the area you cover; do you ever play abroad?

MS operates nationally. I have taken ensembles abroad but not with the MS name, for no other reason than I haven't been asked.

How do you decide which musicians to contact about a concert?

The first availability check is with the leader. For many years this has been Cathy Scott-Burt with Matthew Scrivener filling that role more recently. After the leader, the percussion section considerations are next (the requirements might be extensive/expansive), and then the harp, if needed. After those, there is a core group of string/woodwind/brass players whose availability will be checked, depending on the orchestration of the pieces.

How much advance notice do you and your musicians need?

As much as possible! This Lent term I am aware of two Bach *B Minor Masses* occurring on the same day, let alone the orchestral tours which peak at around Easter.

How do you organise an orchestra for little-known or new works such as Jonathon Dove's *There was a Child* which WFCS performed in 2014? Do they require prior rehearsal?

With recent commissions the first things to check are the orchestration, is the music available, then the music hire fee. Once that is checked and confirmed, I set a delivery date for when the leader is to receive the sheet music for bowing up the string parts. There is a published catalogue which is invaluable for checking scorings, permutations, publication dates etc. There is also an online resource which the music publishers subscribe to, which will list more up-to-date commissions. Once the overall orchestral forces are known a decision also has to be made about how many string players are needed (are there any divisi parts which need accommodating) and I need to obtain a quote from the principal percussionist for delivering the specified percussion. Prior rehearsal is a rare luxury in the UK, so the players will ask for practice scans/pdfs in advance. The first, and only rehearsal, is on the day, much as we would like more time.

How does the ensemble prepare for the better-known works? Does Sam issue special instructions?

For better-known works, there are often conventions which can be followed, so in familiar works it's pretty simple to say 'yes we are' / 'no, we're not' doing xyz this time...it's like a shorthand which means we can quickly and uniformly adapt. Occasionally there are instructions which Sam sends out before the day, but generally, with familiar pieces, a few words in the rehearsal are enough.

What happened during Covid?

The simple answer – not much. Teaching seemed to continue online, but colleagues also found other things to do such as taking jobs as delivery drivers and Covid volunteers, others created online content for 'music minus one' downloads etc. Sourdough experts were created...

WFCS stands out as having been hugely supportive to professional musicians.

Is there a concert you consider to be the highlight of your performances?

I always enjoy the annual WFCS Messiah...the choir is always in good voice, the cathedral looks great, there's a collegiate atmosphere amongst all the performers and the audience loves it.

Could you tell us about a concert that was particularly difficult to arrange?

There haven't been any huge disasters with snow etc, but the recent Fauré concert (Nov 24) was a relief to perform given it was postponed in Covid, then cancelled on the day in 2021 when the weather dislodged masonry on the cathedral.

Do the musicians travel to a venue independently? How do they cope with the larger Instruments?

Yes, the musicians travel independently from wherever they happen to be on the day of the concert, whether that be from home, a concert the previous day or from abroad. The outsized instruments (harp, percussion and double basses), all have two main criteria which are firstly, a vehicle large enough to accommodate the instrument then secondly, somewhere very close to the venue to unload and park. The percussionist also needs a long get-in time to bring in all the gear, set it up, move the vehicle then grab a bite to eat.

Do the musicians enjoy playing for WFCS in Worcester?

Everyone loves playing for WFCS, it's such a relaxed atmosphere with a well prepared, strong-voiced choir. It is invariably the high tea which gets mentioned in dispatches!

Do you as the MS coordinator have a favourite concert you have taken part in with us in Worcester?

There are many occasions when I cannot be at the concerts in person and some of the 'big' concerts haven't necessarily included me, so the Verdi *Requiem* in 2014 and the Elgar *Gerontius* in 2023 are two that I am sorry to have missed, as the reports coming back to me were so positive. Maybe the answer to the question "do you have a favourite concert...?" should be "yes...the next one!"

Sally Rees (S)
Editor



CALLING WFCS PATRONS FOR 2025-26

plus **NEW Friends scheme!**

Could you, or a music-lover you know, become an Annual Patron, Friend or Corporate Sponsor of Worcester Festival Choral Society?

As an independent, self-funding charity, WFCS relies on income from many directions to help us continue to bring top quality concerts to Worcester. So, if you, a friend or relative love choral music, and would like to help its educational, cultural and wellbeing benefits to continue here in our wonderful city, please consider becoming an Annual Patron or Friend of WFCS for our 2025-26 season!

ANNUAL PATRONS: £145 / season

The traditional way to support what we do, while enjoying whichever concerts you wish, premium tickets included:

- Front Nave ticket at each concert, with priority seat selection (until 30/6/25)
- Complimentary concert programmes
- Interval refreshments with chorus & guests
- Your name in our programmes (optional)
- Biannual WFCS e-newsletter
- Invitations to any WFCS talks & social events
- Open invitation to WFCS rehearsals

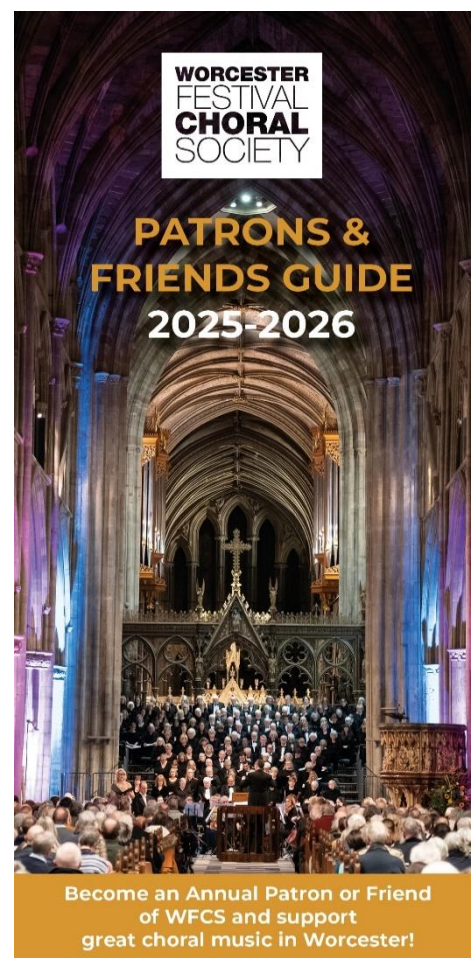
Special note: In addition to our growing number of Annual Patrons, we have been delighted to welcome the following as WFCS Honorary Patrons for the first time this year:

- Beatrice Grant Lord-Lieutenant of Worcestershire
- Charles Moyle High Sheriff of Worcestershire

NEW! FRIENDS: £5 / month (£60 / season)

A new scheme that's an easy way to support Worcester Festival Choral Society, without the commitment of attending concerts, but with the option of priority booking if you do want to buy a ticket. Payable as a single payment, or £5/month installments (min 12 months). In thanks, you'll enjoy:

- Priority seat selection on any bookings (until 30/6/25)
- Your name in our programmes (optional)
- Biannual WFCS e-newsletter
- Invitations to any WFCS talks & social events



WAYS TO APPLY

- Complete a printed copy of our 2025-26 season Patrons & Friends Guide leaflet (available inside every printed programme at our Bach concert on 22 March, from our Patrons Ambassador Brian Boswell or the Ticket Desk on the night, or on request to patrons@wfcs.online.)
- Download a PDF Patrons Guide leaflet from our website Patrons Page <https://www.wfcs.online/pg/become-a-patron/11/>
- Email your interest to our Patrons Ambassador Brian Boswell at patrons@wfcs.online.
- Corporate sponsorship and display advertising enquiries are also welcome. Email David Haddock (B) at sponsors@wfcs.online to enquire.

'COME & SING' BERNSTEIN & VAUGHAN WILLIAMS!



WORCESTER FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY **COME & SING!**
1-day choral workshop
Open to all singers

BERNSTEIN
Chichester Psalms

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
Serenade to Music

Saturday 12 April 2025

St Andrew's Methodist Church
Pump Street, Worcester WR1 2QT


Registration from 9.30am
Workshops 10.15am - 4.45pm

Samuel Hudson conductor

TICKETS £22 adults / £10 students
www.wfcs.online / 0333 666 3366
Local call rate. Booking fees apply.

Worcester Festival Choral Society is a Registered Charity No 506826

Save the date!



Please support our annual WFCS one-day choral workshop on Saturday 12 April – which we host and greatly rely on as our biggest fund-raiser of the year.

Open not only to WFCS chorus members but also other keen amateur singers from far and wide, this year our popular Come & Sing Day offers the unmissable chance to learn two of the 20th century's most inspirational choral works: Leonard Bernstein's exhilarating Hebrew masterpiece, *Chichester Psalms*, plus Ralph Vaughan Williams's romantic *Serenade to Music*. (See article about *Chichester Psalms* on page 11.)

More than 150 amateur singers from across the UK are expected to attend the day, which takes place at St Andrew's Methodist Church, Pump Street, off Worcester High Street. This time we'll be under the inspirational expert direction of our very own Sam Hudson, with superb piano accompaniment from Nicholas Freestone.

Doors open for registration from 9.30am, with the first of several singing sessions starting at 10.15am. Along the way, you can enjoy expert insights about the work, vocal tips and the chance to socialise with other singers. The afternoon ends with an informal concert with soloists at 4pm, which singers' friends and family are welcome to attend free of charge. The day concludes at 4.45pm.

Participants don't need choral experience to take part, but some ability to read music is recommended. A delicious hot or packed lunch can be pre-ordered on booking. There will also be tempting homemade cakes to buy, and a raffle. Tickets are £22 (adults) and £10 (students), including loan of both vocal scores for the day and free teas/coffees (bring your own mug).

It's a wonderful opportunity to bring along your singing friends for an enjoyable day of music-making. Places are limited, so snap up your tickets soon!

Book at www.wfcs.online or call the TicketSource Hotline: 0333 666 3366 (local call rate applies).

THE HISTORY OF THE CHICHESTER PSALMS The Dean, The Organist and the American composer

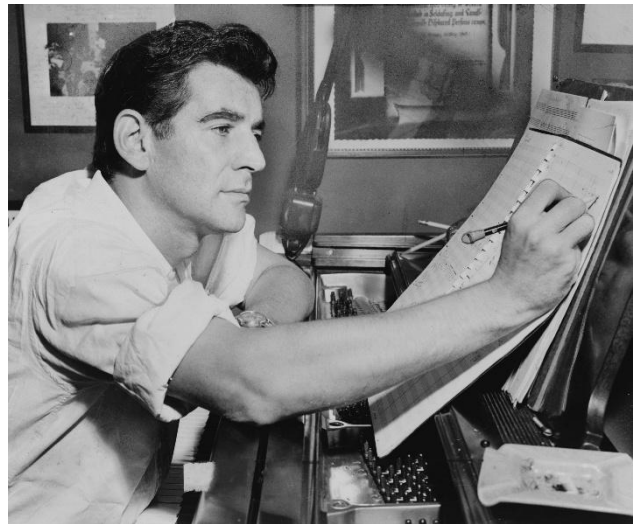
Walter Hussey arrived as Dean of Chichester in 1955 with an already enviable reputation of commissioning great new artistic works as Vicar of St Matthew's Northampton, and this continued throughout his twenty years in West Sussex. The rollcall of composers and artists is as astonishing as it is lengthy: Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland, WH Auden, Benjamin Britten, Lennox Berkeley, Gerald Finzi, Michael Tippett, John Piper and William Walton, to name but a few.

Yet all these great creators were British-based and *au fait* with the Church of England and its liturgies. Just how was Leonard Bernstein added to this list, with the premiere of the Chichester Psalms taking place at the Southern Cathedrals Festival in 1965?

The ambition of Walter Hussey was met by that of his organist, John Birch. The Southern Cathedrals Festival had only recently been revived by Birch (together with his colleagues in Salisbury and Winchester), and he was inspired by the long tradition of pioneering new works at the Three Choirs Festival from leading composers. He wanted a similarly 'knock out' new work at his SCF in 1965, and who better to approach than America's finest?

In late-1963, as Birch and Hussey wrote their proposal to him, Leonard Bernstein was one of the world's leading conductors and composers, with *West Side Story* having given him mainstream success alongside his many concert and stage works. Why would he be willing to write a work for a small English cathedral, not least when he himself was not a Christian?

But the request from Chichester came at the right time. In 1963, having written only one major work in the last seven years (owing to his extensive conducting responsibilities), Bernstein took a sabbatical from his New York Philharmonic post to focus on composing once more. However, this sabbatical did not go as Bernstein intended. The major work he had been working on, a musical entitled *The Skin of Our Teeth*, was floundering and Bernstein was close to pulling the plug.



Leonard Bernstein seated at a piano, making annotations to a musical score 1955

Upon receipt of Hussey's invitation to set Psalm 2 for the massed choirs of Chichester, Salisbury and Winchester Cathedrals and an orchestra, Bernstein was stirred with the context of the commission and saw this as a way to utilise much of the material that he had composed for *The Skin of Our Teeth*, otherwise going unused. Yet, he asked if he could set more than just Psalm 2. He envisaged a suite of psalms, in their original language, saying to Hussey, "I can think of these Psalms only in their original Hebrew".

The piece had the working title of *Psalms of Youth*, reflecting the youthful and rhythmic character of the music. This title was later dropped, with Bernstein deciding that the music was too complex to have a 'youth' badge applied to it. Most of the material is taken from *The Skin of our Teeth*, with one large exception: the dramatic second theme of the second movement, in which Psalm 2 is set, comes from a chorus cut from *West Side Story*. The original lyrics to the music of *Lamah rag'shu goyim?* "Make a mess of 'em! Make the sons of bitches pay"...! (You'll never hear it in the same way again!)

It is infamous that Bernstein never received a fee from Hussey or the organising committee of the Southern Cathedrals Festival – one was never arranged or discussed, and neither party forced the issue, even though Hussey had a (modest) figure in mind. In any case, the publishing and recording royalties meant that Bernstein was plenty rewarded for the work, whilst the Southern Cathedrals Festival were happy to allow Bernstein to premiere the work in New York a few weeks ahead of the UK performance, not least because they were overjoyed that the small city of Chichester had such prominence in the work's title.

Over 50 years later, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* have maintained their place in the repertoire of large-scale choral works (not least through the version that sees reduced instrumentation of organ, harp and percussion, making it more viable for amateur performances), setting texts from the psalms in an approachable manner yet drawn from the original Hebrew text. A triumph for Dean, Organist and Composer – an unlikely scenario that combined against the odds to deliver this wonderful work!

Nicholas Freestone
WFCS Accompanist /
Worcester Cathedral Assistant Director of Music



CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL.

WFCS 100 CLUB

Invitations are extended to any of you who would like to support the Society by joining the WFCS 100 Club. Members pay a quarterly subscription to purchase 'shares' which are drawn thrice annually. There are four winners per draw and at least 30% of subscriptions are paid out in prizes, so the more members, the larger the prizes (this year over £40 each).

The funds raised currently pay for about one and a quarter soloists per year: it would be great to make it two! They are not cheap, and are very necessary to our concerts!

We are incredibly grateful to the 40 members of the 100 Club who currently sing with WFCS, and also to the 18 ex-WFCS members who continue to offer their support in this way. Please contact Kate Harrison (alto) kate.harrisonx@gmail.com if you would like to sign up; shares cost just £1 per month each, and can be purchased either singly or in multiples.

Kate Harrison (A)
100 Club Coordinator



WFCS REHEARSAL DATES 2025-2026 SEASON

8 September 19:30 - 21:30	Start of Autumn Term. Arrive early to allow time to sign in and collect music
27 October	HALF TERM
22 November 19:30 - 21:30	CONCERT: Duruflé <i>Requiem</i> , Haydn <i>Insanae et Vanae Curae</i> , Boulanger <i>Vieille Prière Bouddhique</i> NB compulsory afternoon rehearsal 13:30 - 16:30
24 November 19:30 - 21:30	Start of rehearsals for <i>Messiah</i>
6 December 19:30 - 21:30	CONCERT: <i>Messiah</i> NB compulsory afternoon rehearsal 13:30 - 16:30
5 January 19:30 - 21:30	Start of Spring Term. Arrive early to allow time to sign in and collect music
16 February	HALF TERM
6 December 19:30 - 21:30	CONCERT: Mendelssohn <i>Elijah</i> NB compulsory afternoon rehearsal 13:30 - 16:30

Rehearsals take place every Monday in term time, 19:30 - 21:30.
Any rehearsals not in Worcester Cathedral will be notified later by email.

SUMMER EVENTS

THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL HEREFORD

26 July-2 August

30 WFCS members successfully auditioned to take part in this year's festival where, among other things, they will be singing works by Dvorak, Blackford, Howells, Coleridge-Taylor and Mendelssohn

Full information from
<https://3choirs.org/hereford-2025>

ELGAR FESTIVAL 2025

Sat 24 May – Sun 1 June

A nine-day celebration of the life and music of Britain's greatest composer Sir Edward Elgar.

Join us for almost two weeks of talks, walks, workshops, masterclasses and concerts by some of the UK's finest composers, choirs, soloists, ensembles and orchestras. Culminating in the Gala Concert (in which some of our members will be singing) in Worcester Cathedral on 31 May

[What's On | Elgar Festival 2025](#)

Worcestershire Early Music

6 April 2025

Amyas with Emily Barnes

15 June 2025

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
Students

15:30 - 17:30

Angel Centre

WR1 3QN

<https://www.earlymusicworcs.org>

ELGAR CHORALE

Saturday 5 April at 7.30pm
'God is gone up'

Experience the emotional depths of works by Finzi, Stanford, Walton And Parry.

at
St John in Bedwardine Church Worcester

Saturday 21 June at 7:00pm

Bach B minor Mass in Pershore Abbey

The Chorale joins with a period ensemble and four experienced soloists to present one of the greatest works of music ever created.

For details of all Elgar Chorale events visit
www.elgarchorale.com

Shakespeare in Music Festival

3 May

"Lincoln Consort with Héloïse Bernard"









"A Mermaid on a Dolphin's Back"

Continental influence on music in the time of Shakespeare

The Guild Chapel 12-1 Stratford

<https://www.shakespeareinmusic.org/>

WFCS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

 <p>CHAIRMAN Sue White (S) chairman@wfcs.online 07970 597229</p>	 <p>TICKET SECRETARY Jessica Dormer (A) tickets@wfcs.online 07939 695113</p>
 <p>GENERAL SECRETARY Stephen Greenwood (B) secretary@wfcs.online 07771 971658</p>	 <p>LIBRARIAN Julie Greenwood (A) librarian@wfcs.online 07940 506852</p>
 <p>TREASURER Barbara Ford (A) treasurer@wfcs.online 01386 40246</p>	 <p>DEVELOPMENT Anne Renshaw (S) development@wfcs.online 01905 351736</p>
 <p>MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Alison Riddell (S) membership@wfcs.online 07710 180294</p>	 <p>MARKETING & PUBLICITY Michelle Whitefoot (S) marketing@wfcs.online 07969 818490</p>

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