

ALTRINCHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

President: Roger Shelmerdine

Steven Roberts Conductor

Lancashire Chamber Orchestra
Leader Anne Heaton

Jonathan Scott Organ

Lydia Bryan Piano

Tom Scott Piano

Sarah Ogden Soprano

Christopher Turner Tenor

Philip Smith Bass

Choir of Cronton Sixth Form College

The Trebles of St Mary's

Church Choir, Bowdon

ALTRINCHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

Brenda Adams	John Greenan #	Neville Oates
Joy Anderson	Helen Greig	Terence Oddy
Sara Apps	Pauline Griffiths	Frances Provost
Pat Arnold *	Jane Hardman	Ian Provost
Ann Ashby	Caroline Harris	Eleanor Reeves
Kate Barlow	Dudley Harrop	Linley Roach *
Janet Bedell	Gill Hayes	Doris Robinson #
Frances Broad #	John Hayes	Kate Robinson
Anne Bullock	Bill Hetherington	Christine Ross
Stephen Campbell	Jane Hollinshead	Jenny Ruff
Anthony Campion	Catherine Horrocks *	Stephen Secretan
Helen Cash	Valerie Hotter	Fiona Simpson
John Charlton #	Gail Hunt	Susan Sinagola
Barbara Clift *	Rosemary Hurley	Colin Skelton *
Barbara Coombs #	Karen Jarmany	Audrey Smallridge #
Michael Cummings	Elizabeth Jones #	Audrey Taylor #
Adrienne Davies	Melanie-Anne Jose	Brian Taylor *
Jacqueline Davies	George Kistruck *	Elizabeth Taylor
Marie Dixon	Elisabeth Lawrence	Malcolm Thomson
Jean Drape *	Keith Lewis	Pamela Thomson
Kathy Duffy	Annie Lloyd-Walker	Jean Tragen
Richard Dyson	Emma Loat	Gill Turner
Frank Estcourt	Rosie Lucas *	Elaine Van Der Zeil
Wendy Estcourt	Sarah Lucas	Joyce Venables ++
Liz Foy	Gavin McBride	Catherine Verdin
Joyce Fuller	Helen McBride	Christine Weekes
Rima Gasperas	Hazel Meakin	Geryl Whitaker
Trevor Gilmore	Cathy Merrell	Brian Whitehouse
Estelle Goodwin	Catherine Mottram	Helen Whitehouse
Bryan Goude *	Pamela Moult	Kath Whyte *
MaryGraham	John Mulholland	Julia Williamson
Ann Grainger	Jessica Murrills ++	Brenda Wood
John Grainger	Julian Mustoe	Andrew Wragg *
Margaret Greaves *	Norma Nock	John Yates

* Denotes 20 years or more

Denotes 30 years or more

++ Denotes 40 years or more

ALTRINCHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

www.altrincham-choral.co.uk

Altrincham Choral Society prides itself on offering a diverse, innovative and challenging programme of concerts, including many choral favourites.

We are a forward thinking and progressive choir with a strong commitment to choral training and high standards, so providing members with the knowledge, skills and confidence to thoroughly enjoy their music-making.

Rehearsals are on Monday evenings at Altrincham Methodist Church, Springfield Road, Altrincham. Car Park entrance off Barrington Road. Satnavs please use WA14 1HF.

We are only 5 minutes walk from the train/metro/bus station.

Rehearsals are from 7.45 to 10.00 pm

For more information you can contact us in a variety of ways:

E-mail: info@altrincham-choral.co.uk

Telephone: P Arnold (Secretary) 01270 764335

Or go to our web-site where you can find more information about the choir, future plans, and photographs from previous concerts including Verona and Florence. You can also add your name to our mailing list to keep up to date with forthcoming concerts and events.

Like us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/altrinchamchoral

Or Tweet us @acs1945

Cronton Sixth Form College

Chorus Master

David Lloyd-Mostyn

Rachel Alguacil-Mellor	Joe Connolly	Kirsty O'Grady
Gudith Alionye	Jill Greenhalgh	Matthew Plant
Rebecca Aspinall	Matthew Hignett	Lauren Price
Neil Atherton	Luke Howard	Jessica Thickitt
Adam Baker	Rachel Jardine	Sophie Thornton
Rebecca Burke	Barbara Jennion	Ryan Walmsley
	Karen Lowrie	

Cronton Sixth Form College enjoys a national reputation for its Centre of Excellence for Performing Arts. The Centre of Excellence is a unique programme that enables students the opportunity of performing in large scale extra-curricular performances that sit entirely outside the timetabled academic studies. Recently the college has won praise for their productions of Phantom of the Opera in November 2012 and Sweeney Todd in March 2013, and they look forward to an extended run of Les Miserables in November 2013.

The Trebles of St Mary's Church Choir

Chorus Master

Catherine Smith

Katy Allen	Olivia Dow	Nathan Ng
Olivia Bashir	Liz Fraser	Alice Preece
Ciara Booker	George Howling	Catherine Read
Jess Cooper	Hannah Howling	Caroline Sinagola
Sophie Drape	Ruby James	Emily Stewart

The Choir is affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music and young members are encouraged to work for awards promoted through that body, which reflect a chorister's progress both musically and spiritually.

The Choir enjoys a happy social atmosphere and outings are arranged during the year, which include a holiday singing for all the services in a Cathedral for a week.

***Britten
St Nicolas***

- I. Introduction
- II. The Birth of Nicolas
- III. Nicolas Devotes Himself to God
- IV. He Journeys to Palestine
- V. Nicolas Comes to Myra and is Chosen Bishop
- VI. Nicolas from Prison
- VII. Nicolas and the Pickled Boys
- VIII. His Piety and Marvellous Works
- IX. The Death of Nicolas

Interval

***Ralph Vaughan Williams
Fantasia on a theme of Thomas Tallis***

***Fauré
Requiem***

- I. Introit - Kyrie
- II. Offertorium
- III. Sanctus
- IV. Pie Jesu
- V. Angus Dei
- VI. Libera Me
- VII. In Paradisum

Fauré Requiem

I. Introit - Kyrie

Rest eternal give them, Lord,
and let light always shine on them.
It is right to hymn you, God, in Sion
and to you will be made a vow in Jerusalem.
Hear my prayer, to you all flesh will come.
Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.

II. Offertorium

O Lord, Jesus Christ, King of glory
free the souls of the dead
from the punishment of hell and the deep pit.
O Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,
deliver the dead souls from the mouth of the lion,
so they are not swallowed by hell and do not fall into darkness.
Sacrifices and prayers to you, Lord, with praise we offer.
Receive them for those souls
whom today we remember.
Make them, Lord, from death cross over to life
as once to Abraham you promised and to his seed.

III. Sanctus

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts.
Full are the heavens and earth with the glory of you.
Hosanna in the highest.

IV. Pie Jesu

Merciful Jesus, Lord, give them rest.
Give them rest, eternal rest.

V. Agnus Dei

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
give them rest.

Let light eternal shine on them, Lord,
with your saints for eternity,
for you are merciful.

Give them eternal rest, Lord,
and let light always shine on them.

VI. Libera Me

Free me, Lord, from death eternal
on that day of dread
when the heavens will be shaken and the earth
while you come to judge the world with fire.

I am made to shake, and am afraid,
awaiting the trial and the coming anger.

That day, day of anger, of calamity and misery,
that day, the day of great and exceeding bitterness,

VII. In Paradisum

Into paradise may angels draw you,
On your arrival, may the martyrs receive you
and lead you into the holy city Jerusalem.

May the chorus of angels receive you,
and with Lazarus, once a beggar,
may you have eternal rest.

Benjamin Britten (1913 - 1976)

Benjamin Britten was born in Lowestoft on 22 November 1913 – St Cecilia's Day. His father was a dentist and his mother, a talented amateur musician who sang with the Lowestoft Choral Society. Benjamin was the youngest of their four children, and it was his mother who first taught him piano and notation. From an early age his musical gifts were obvious. His first attempts at composition were made at the age of five.

An early inspiration for Britten was the music of Frank Bridge, to whom he was introduced in his teens. Bridge took him on as a composition pupil, a few weeks after Britten's 14th birthday.

In 1930, he won a Composition Scholarship to the Royal College of Music and studied under John Ireland and Arthur Benjamin. He was already a prolific composer and some of his student works have survived to stand beside more mature compositions. He first came to public attention in 1934 with the a capella choral work *A Boy Was Born*.

One of Britten's first jobs was composing music for documentary films such as *Night Mail* produced by the General Post Office, starting April 1935. Through this work at the GPO Film Unit, he met W. H. Auden. They collaborated on the song cycle *Our Hunting Fathers* (1936), and subsequently other works. Of more lasting importance to Britten was his meeting in 1937 with the tenor Peter Pears, who was to become his musical collaborator and inspiration as well as his life partner. Early in 1939, Britten and Pears decided to follow W.H. Auden to America. During this period in the United States, Britten produced a number of large-scale instrumental works.

In 1942 Britten and Pears returned to England and Britten completed the *Hymn to St. Cecilia* (his last significant collaboration with Auden) and *A Ceremony of Carols* during the long sea voyage home.

On his return Britten applied for recognition as a conscientious objector and gained unconditional exemption on appeal. He had already begun work on the opera *Peter Grimes* based on the writings of Suffolk poet George Crabbe. the premiere of which in 1945 earned Britten international fame. Over the next nine years Britten wrote six more operas.

His interests as a composer were wide ranging. He wrote important music in such varied genres as orchestral, choral, solo vocal (much of it written for Sir Peter Pears), chamber and instrumental, as well as film music. He also took a great interest in writing music for amateur performers and many of his works had the young in mind - The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra, for example.

Together with Pears and the librettist/producer Eric Crozier, Britten founded the annual Aldeburgh Festival, and was responsible for the creation of Snape Maltings Concert hall. In his last years Britten was the first composer to be given a life peerage.

Saint Nicolas

Britten composed this cantata for the centenary celebrations of Peter Pears' old school, Lancing College Sussex, in 1948. On the first occasion, Britten conducted a combination of choirs from four schools with Peter Pears singing the role of Nicolas.

It was composed with semi-amateur performance in mind, the technical demands of the choral and orchestral writing being appropriately straightforward.

The audience also gets to join in two well-known hymns -All people that on earth do dwell and God moves in a mysterious way. The cantata tells the story of the fourth-century St Nicolas, Bishop of Myra, most famous for being the original 'Santa Claus'. Eric Crozier's libretto draws freely on the legends of Nicolas's life, and recounts some of his most celebrated acts.

Born of wealthy parents in about 250 AD, in Patara, in the country of Lycia, Asia Minor, Nicolas was educated in the Church. Few facts of his life are certain. From childhood, we are told that he showed signs of exceptional grace.

Later, after his parents died of plague, he gave all his wealth to charity and went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. On returning to his home country early in the 4th century, Nicolas was chosen to be Bishop of Myra, in accordance with a revelation made before his arrival.

As Bishop, Nicolas was among many Christians imprisoned under Diocletian during the Persecution of the Martyrs (303-311). It was eight years before he was able to resume his pastoral work among the poor and disadvantaged. In 325 he was one of many bishops to answer the request of Constantine to attend the first Council of the Church at Nicaea, where he is said to have defended the orthodox Christian doctrine.

Nicolas served as bishop for some forty years. Most of the stories of his ministry are concerned with his care for the poor and oppressed, and with his power of appearing from great distances to help those who called on him. He is often depicted holding three golden balls, symbolising purses of gold he secretly gave to rescue three girls from prostitution. From this, the tradition of giving presents on his Feast Day (6 December) became popular throughout Europe.

Perhaps, as a result of the multifarious legends of his life, Saint Nicolas is patron saint of children, sailors, travellers, merchants and even thieves!

Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis

Whilst editing The English Hymnal in 1906 at the request of a clergyman named Percy Dearmer, Vaughan Williams came across the Third Psalter Tune of Thomas Tallis, written in 1567, and used it for hymn number 92 in the Hymnal, 'When, rising from the bed of death'. He sensed, having done that, that he had unfinished business with the tune, and embarked on the exploration of Tudor music and its sonorities that culminated in the composition of one of his most famous and beautiful works, the Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis.

Tallis was one of the world's leading composers of sacred choral music of his era. The challenge Vaughan Williams set himself was to translate the sounds of choral music into a string orchestra.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 - 1958)

Although born in the nineteenth century Ralph Vaughan Williams is considered to be one of the great English composers of the twentieth century. His educational background was Charterhouse, followed by the Royal College of Music under Charles Villiers Stanford.

After Cambridge, Vaughan Williams returned to the RCM and studied composition with Hubert Parry.

His life as a composer spanned 60 years but developed slowly. He mixed composition with conducting, lecturing and editing other music, notably that of Henry Purcell and the English Hymnal.

It was not until he was thirty that the song *Linden Lea* became his first publication. The next ten years or so were like a long apprenticeship, during which time he discovered English folk songs.

He travelled the countryside, transcribing and preserving many of these folk songs, which he later incorporated in some of his own works. He took a big step forward in his orchestral style, studying in Paris with Maurice Ravel where he found his inspiration in the music of the past. By returning to the ancient modes and applying the techniques and resources of a forward-looking composer, his music formed a bridge across the centuries. The elements of ancient and modern became fused into a style which was not only highly personal, but also intensely national.

Gabriel Fauré (1845 - 1924)

Gabriel Fauré was born in Parmier in the Pyrenean foothills, the youngest of six children. His father was a schoolmaster and Fauré's talents were recognised early in life. From the age of nine he trained as a church musician at the École Niedermeyer in Paris, where he studied under Saint-Saëns.

Fauré graduated in 1865 with a first prize in composition for his *Cantique de Jean Racine*. In due course, he became organist and assistant to Widor at the church of St. Sulpice and for thirty years he held a series of positions connected with church music, finally gaining the honour of being appointed organist at La Madeleine at the age of fifty one.

Fauré began to be known as a composer from about 1873, but his discreet and subtle style was slow to gain recognition. The Requiem, possibly his best-known work, was his first and only large-scale setting of a religious text.

Behind him lay numerous piano works and songs, on which his earliest reputation was built. Ahead were most of his finest achievements including two piano quintets, the opera *Penelope* and later song-cycles. In whichever field he worked, Fauré left the mark of his original inspiration, impeccable taste and fine sensibility.

For thirty years he held a series of positions connected with church music, finally gaining the honour of being appointed organist at La Madeleine at the age of fifty one. In the same year he became a professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire, where his pupils included Ravel and Boulanger. In 1905 he was appointed director of that institution and held the post until deafness forced his retirement in 1920 at the grand age of seventy-five.

Requiem

Fauré began work on his Requiem in 1887 purely, in his own words, 'for the pleasure of it', although the death of his father in 1885 and that of his mother two years later may well have given impetus for the composition.

It is a touchingly beautiful piece, cherished more today than when it was first performed. Fauré was at the time choirmaster of La Madeleine, and though much of his time was taken up with private teaching, which he found uncongenial, he completed his 'first version' of the Requiem early in 1888. Consisting of five movements, Fauré made a personal selection of texts, omitting the Day of Judgement (*Dies Irae*), and laying emphasis on the idea of rest and peace.

Fauré went on to prepare an expanded version for use on grander occasions, which was first given in January 1893 and included two extra movements, the Offertory and *Libera me*, both calling for baritone solo. The third version of the Requiem, the familiar one with full orchestra received its première in July 1900 at the Trocadéro Palace during the Paris World Exhibition.

Programme notes: Elizabeth Jones. Sources: Chambers Biographical Dictionary, The Great Composers; Michael Steen, Simon Heffer; Telegraph article Aug 2010, previous ACS programmes.

Steven Roberts

Steven is Conductor and Musical Director of Altrincham Choral Society, Chesterfield Philharmonic Choir and Honley Male Voice choir, as well as being Musical Director of Sing Live UK, one of the country's largest independent adult singing organisations. He is also an adjudicator member of The British and International Federation of Festivals and regularly adjudicates throughout the United Kingdom as well as being a music mentor for Music for Youth. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Federation.

He has also been conductor of the Dodworth and Skelmanthorpe Male Voice Choirs, the Allendale Chamber Orchestra, the Liverpool Welsh Choral Union and The Huddersfield Choral Society, most notably for concerts with Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and Jose Carreras. He has also been chorus master for 'The Magic of Queen' and the Electric Light Orchestra (ELO), rock classics concerts with the Hallé orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

He is in demand as a choral and voice specialist, but studied piano, brass and voice and has equal extensive experience in each field. He has led choral days and workshops every year since 1993 and continues to inspire singers throughout the country. Steven regularly appears on regional and national radio promoting concerts and talking about the benefits of singing.

He has also trained singers to appear in concerts at the Royal Albert Hall and the Odyssey arena, Belfast as well as the FM Hallam Arena in Sheffield. He has been privileged to conduct in The College Gardens of Westminster Abbey for The Lady Taverners, in St Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, St Mark's Basilica, Venice as well as in Florence, Sorrento, Amalfi, Milan and Austria.

Steven is proud to be a member of The Lord's Taverners – the cricketing charity that raises money to give 'young people, particularly with special needs a sporting chance.'

The Lancashire Chamber Orchestra

The Lancashire Chamber Orchestra was formed in 1969 jointly by John Ashworth, during his time as Head of String Teaching in Lancashire Schools, and by Paul Ward, sub principal cellist in the Hallé orchestra also then a cello professor at the Royal Manchester College of Music. The ensemble, originally called The Lancashire String Orchestra began life with few players, but it has developed over years into the much larger chamber orchestra of today.

After Paul Ward's retirement in the early 1970s, the orchestra has had as its principal conductors Andrew Penny, Richard Vardigans, and, for fifteen years, Robert Chasey.

In 2004 it appointed the young American conductor Kenneth Woods, who during the next eight years introduced a new, challenging-and very diverse, and often rarely performed-repertoire. The many highlights of this period in the orchestra's history include memorable performances of Mozart, Haydn and especially Beethoven symphonies, works by Schumann, Schubert, Britten, the first UK performance of the violin concerto by Hans Gal and in his programmes he introduced players and audiences to a rich seam of 20th century masterpieces.

Many of the orchestra members are string teachers and they are joined by advanced and enthusiastic non-professional players, all of whom demonstrate a huge commitment to the orchestra's increasingly demanding schedule of concerts. Most concerts require wind, brass and percussion players and we are extremely fortunate in being able to call upon an excellent team in all these departments.

Jonathan Scott

Jonathan Scott enjoys a hugely varied performing career on a diverse spectrum of keyboard instruments performing music which spans the entire classical repertoire. In addition to his career as pianist and organist he is a leading authority on the French harmonium d'art and has a busy concert schedule with his pianist brother, Tom Scott, performing as Scott Brothers Duo.

A prizewinner at many International competitions including St Albans Organ Competition and RCO Performer of the Year Competition, Jonathan also won the coveted Worshipful Company of Musicians WT Best Scholarship and gold medal, and is a Freeman of The City of London.

This season Jonathan will be performing solo recitals across the UK as well as mid-Atlantic solo performances on RMS QM2. He will also be appearing in Switzerland, Finland and Germany with trumpeter Håken Hardenberger and has recently completed a series of performances as guest pianist in Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue with English National Ballet at the Royal Albert Hall, London and for their UK tour. Earlier this month Jonathan was soloist with the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland and next month sees the start of his new Lunchtime Organ Recital Series at Bridgewater Hall.

In addition to radio and TV broadcasts, Jonathan recorded the piano music soundtrack for the MIRAMAX film *Brideshead Revisited*, Melvyn Bragg's 'A Reel History of Britain' for BBC and has a solo recording catalogue of over 20 CDs. In collaboration with his brother, Tom Scott, Jonathan has released several CDs to great critical acclaim on the Scott Brothers Duo label. Their discs have received wide international airplay as well as receiving their own special edition of 'The Organist Entertains' on BBC Radio 2.

Tom Scott

Tom Scott studied piano at Chetham's School of Music before studying on the joint course at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) and at The University of Manchester, where he gained a first class honours degree in music and also won the Musicales Prize, the Shirley Cattarall Award for piano, the Hargreaves Academic Prize, the Proctor-Gregg Prize for performance and the Sir Thomas Beecham Medal for outstanding achievement.

He completed a Masters degree in electroacoustic composition (Supported by a 2003 PRS Foundation Scholarship) in which he received a distinction. He completed his PhD in electroacoustic composition at The University of Manchester (supported by AHRC funding).

As a composer, Tom's work ranges from instrumental works to acousmatic compositions and audio/visual works. He was awarded the Musiques & Recherches residency prize in Metamorphoses 2006 (Belgium) and his film "The Projection of Dreams" (2007) was screened at the Exposures Film Festival. His work has been performed at festivals in Belgium, Mexico, Spain and Germany. Tom is currently a lecturer in electroacoustic composition at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM).

As a pianist, Tom made his concerto debut at the age of 17 with the Hallé orchestra at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall playing Prokoviev's Piano Concerto No.1. He has had concerto engagements with Chetham's Symphony Orchestra and the RNCM String Orchestra, with performances at The Bridgewater Hall, the RNCM, and at The Lichfield Festival.

Tom has recently completed a UK tour as guest solo pianist with English National Ballet, playing Rhapsody in Blue over forty times in their production of "Strictly Gershwin". Tom regularly appears as a pianist with the Hallé and the BBC Philharmonic orchestras.

Lydia Bryan

Lydia is a graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music where she studied piano, harpsichord, violin and singing. She specialised in piano accompaniment at postgraduate level.

Her professional concert career started as a winner of the North West Arts Young Musicians' Platform and also with concerts awarded through the Live Music Now scheme, founded by Sir Yehudi Menuhin. She won a British Council Scholarship towards concerts and recording work in Hungary, where she gave performances at the University of Budapest, the residence of the British Ambassador and the Kodály Institute.

Lydia has accompanied regularly for master lessons with John Cameron and Peter Pears, and has performed in master classes for Bernard Roberts and Vlado Perlemuter.

She has performed many times at the Royal Exchange Theatre for the Manchester Midday Concerts and also at the Purcell Room, and appeared as concerto soloist at the RNCM as well as recording for BBC radio and television. Lydia has toured extensively as soloist and accompanist in Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, France, Italy and throughout the British Isles.

Her concert repertoire is wide-ranging; she has worked with many eminent contemporary composers and has performed works by Alexander Goehr and David Gow at the Society for the Promotion of New Music. She was also the accompanist for the 'Art of Song' courses at Higham Hall and has been official accompanist and adjudicator for music festivals in both the UK and abroad.

Lydia teaches at Manchester Grammar School and Loreto School in Altrincham and has been resident accompanist to Altrincham Choral Society since December 1996. She has many successful professional musicians amongst her past pupils.

Sarah Ogden

Born near Huddersfield, Sarah has gained a reputation throughout the North of England as an engaging performer. She has a busy schedule as a concert and oratorio soloist, making her Wigmore Hall début in 2012 singing Colin Matthews, *The Island* and has also had the privilege of working with international conductor, Sir Mark Elder as a soloist (1st Fairy) in Mendelssohn's incidental music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Oratorio works include Mendelssohn: *Elijah*, Haydn: *Creation*, Mozart: *Mass in C Minor*, *Coronation Mass* and *Requiem*, Brahms: *Requiem*, Bach: *Magnificat in D*, Dvořák: *Stabat Mater*, Rossini: *Petite Messe Solenelle* and Handel: *Messiah*. Future performances see her return as a guest soloist with the Yorkshire Philharmonic Choir (*Bach Mass in B Minor*) and the Harrogate Festival Choral Course (*Mendelssohn Elijah*). Opera appearances include *Dorabella*, *Cosi fan tutte* and *The Countess*, *The Marriage of Figaro*. In 2012 Sarah toured with Young Opera Venture in performances of their "Opera Appetizers" programme across Yorkshire and again in Spring 2013 as *The Countess* in their production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. She continues to tour with YOV throughout 2013.

Aside from her solo work, Sarah is the Musical Director of Hade Edge Community Choir and Denby Dale Ladies Choir, is a voice coach and is in demand to give vocal workshops to choirs. Sarah recently completed a Masters in Solo Performance at the Royal Northern College of Music, graduating with distinction.

During her studies at the RNCM, Sarah was awarded the 2011 Dame Eva Turner Scholarship and won the 2010 Bessie Cronshaw Song Cycle Competition. Sarah has been invited to perform in masterclasses with Elly Ameling (part of the Leeds Lieder+ Festival), Dame Felicity Palmer, Roger Vignoles and Julius Drake and was awarded a place on the distinguished 2011 Oxford Lieder Master Course.

Christopher Turner

Born in Birmingham, Christopher Turner read Music at the University of Hull, furthering his studies with Barbara Robotham at the Royal Northern College of Music and at the National Opera Studio, where he was sponsored by the Scottish Endowment Trust and The Friends of Covent Garden. He now studies with Philip Doghan.

Christopher made his professional début as Dr Blind Die Fledermaus for Scottish Opera On Tour before joining the Young Singers Programme at English National Opera where roles have included Robert Wilson (Doctor Atomic), First Armed Man/First Priest (The Magic Flute), Beppe (Pagliacci), Simpleton (Boris Godunov), Spoletta (Tosca), Pong (Turandot) and Messenger (Aida). Since then he has sung Janek (The Makropulos Case) and Esquire (Parsifal-English National Opera), Borsa (Rigoletto-Scottish Opera), Dr Caius (Falstaff-Opera Holland Park) and Don Ottavio (Opera North).

At the RNCM he sang Prunier (La Rondine), Don Ramiro (La Cenerentola), and Sellem (The Rake's Progress). He has also sung Remendado (Carmen) for Longborough Festival Opera and his recordings include Aubrey Maria di Rohan and Keeper of the Tower of Siena Pia de Tolomei for Opera Rara.

He performs regularly in concert in repertoire including Bach: Christmas Oratorio, Magnificat and St Matthew Passion, Beethoven: Symphony No. 9, Handel: Jephtha, Judas Maccabaeus, and Messiah, Haydn: Creation, Mozart: Requiem and Rossini: Petite Messe Solennelle. His performances have taken him throughout the UK, Europe and the Far East.

Recent Operatic highlights include Caius (Falstaff-Opera Holland Park), Don Ottavio (Don Giovanni-Opera North). Future plans include Roderigo (Otello-Opera North) and Damon Acis and Galatea (Iford Festival Opera) and title role Albert Herring (Mid Wales Opera).

Philip Smith

One time zoologist and National Otter Surveyor of England, Philip hung up his waders to study singing with Barbara Robotham at the Royal Northern College of Music, graduating with distinction in 2008. He is the recipient of a number of awards and is a Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme alumnus and Crear Scholar. He continues to have lessons with Robert Dean.

He regularly performs in concerts and recitals across the UK and mainland Europe. Over the last 3 years he has performed at the Uzerche International Festival (France), in Krakow (Poland) and the Making Music Malta Festival, Leeds Lieder+ Festival and the Aldeburgh Festival where he appeared in a recital of Britten Song Cycles with Malcolm Martineau, a concert that was broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

Last year he returned to the Uzerche International Festival as well as making appearances at the Cheltenham Music Festival, the MOMA festival in Wales, the Oxford Lieder Festival and The Kings Place Festival in London as well as performing live on the In Tune programme on BBC Radio 3. Recent oratorio performances include Bach: Christmas Oratorio, Haydn: The Creation, Walton: Belshazzar's Feast, Vaughan Williams: Five Mystical Songs, Tippett: A Child of Our Time, Rossini: Petite Messe Solennelle and Elgar: Dream of Gerontius.

He has been invited to perform at the Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte, Montepulciano twice and last year he made his major European house debut as Sid in Albert Herring (Britten), a production directed by Keith Warner, for Royal Danish Opera, Copenhagen.