

THE GLORY & THE DREAM

RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT



VIVALDI GLORIA
PURCELL
DOVE

17TH OCTOBER 2026

7.30PM

REDLAND PARK URC

WHITELADIES ROAD BS6 6SA

BRISTOL
BACH
CHOIR

DIGITAL PROGRAMME

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DETAILED
PROGRAMME
NOTES A FEW
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A PRINT VERSION



PROGRAMME

Henry Purcell (1659 – 1695)

I Was Glad

Hear My Prayer

O God Thou Art My God

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 – 1741)

Gloria

INTERVAL

Jonathan Dove (b. 1959)

Seek Him that Maketh

the Seven Stars

Richard Rodney Bennett (1936 – 2012)

The Glory and the Dream

FULL PROGRAMME CAN BE FOUND
HERE (SCAN OR CLICK THIS QR CODE)





THE GLORY & THE DREAM 2026

Tonight's programme is an exciting mix of the Baroque and the Modern. Whilst there is no single linking strand, themes of nature and the natural world (including that beyond Earth) and the passage of time link the works by Dove and Bennett, and themes of praise and prayer link works by Purcell and Vivaldi.



BRISTOL BACH CHOIR

President: **Brian Kay**

Vice President: **Prof. John Butt**

Hon. Vice President: **The Lord Mayor of Bristol**

Music Director: **David Bednall**

Accompanist: **Nigel Nash**

Bristol Bach Choir is an auditioned mixed voice choir founded in 1967. We sing a wide range of repertoire from early Baroque music to compositions of the 21st century, and we regularly perform the works of JS Bach. We aim for dynamic and vibrant performances which have clarity and precision.

We sing in a variety of venues across Bristol and the surrounding area. We work with soloists and instrumental ensembles with national reputations, whilst also supporting talented younger performers at the start of a promising career.

A smaller group of singers is available to perform at weddings and other events.

SOPRANOS:

Elizabeth Aitken, Julie Borowski, Kathy Gibbs, Alison Grant, Sue Gregory, Margaret Johnstone, Lucy Griffith, Lisa Lewis, Olivia McCormick, George Moriarty, Lydia Mundy, Jinny Swann

ALTOS:

Frances Butt, Michèle Day, Lis Edwards, Steph Hares, Diana Lednitzky, Danni Rochman, Judith Vorley, Margaret Williams

TENORS:

Richard Griffith, Stephen Payne, Rob Wallis, Tim Warren

BASSES:

Nick Crane, Marcus Evans, Laurie Haynes, Phil Lawrence, Neil Thomas, Rod Thouless, Reuben West

Are you interested in joining the choir?

We are actively recruiting for singers in all sections. If you are interested and have relevant experience and good sight-reading ability, please apply to:
membership@bristolbach.org.uk



DAVID BEDNALL

David Bednall is recognized as one of the leading choral composers of his generation. He studied for a PhD in Composition with John Pickard at the University of Bristol and is signed to Oxford University Press.

He was Assistant Organist at Wells Cathedral, Sub Organist at Bristol Cathedral and has improvised on live radio, and performed extensively in the UK and abroad, including at Notre-Dame de Paris. He was stunt-organist on Dr Who.

His compositions are widely performed, recorded, and broadcast on BBC Radio and Classic FM.

More information can be found at www.davidbednall.com



NIGEL NASH

Nigel Nash has been a member of Bristol Bach Choir for over 35 years, and since his appointment as the choir's Accompanist in 1998, he has played for the choir in numerous concerts in Bristol, Oxford and Gloucester.

A Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, Nigel is much sought after as an accompanist for choirs across the West Country. He has accompanied Bristol Cathedral Choir and Bristol Choral Society on many occasions, and has given recitals in Bristol Cathedral, St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol University and Bath Abbey. He has also been involved with several broadcasts on national radio and television including HTV's Morning Worship, Carols from Wells Cathedral, BBC Radio 4's *Daily Service*, and *Sunday Half-Hour* on Radio 2.



CHORAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

The Bristol Bach Choir is excited to launch its Choral Scholarship Programme for young singers eager to develop their choral skills in a well-established and respected Bristol based choir.

We're a friendly, auditioned group committed to nurturing the next generation of choral talent. Scholars receive up to £1,000 per annum (pro rata), and all music is provided.

If you have any questions regarding the Choral Scholarship Programme, or if you would like to come to an open rehearsal, please contact our Membership Secretary: membership@bristolbach.org.uk.

We are very grateful for the kind legacy from the late John Huskins, which has helped finance our new Choral Scholarship Programme.



ALAN FARNILL FUND | APPEAL

The Bristol Bach Choir Foundation Trustees are appealing for £2,500 to restore the Alan Farnill Fund which was formed in 2014 to help support younger singers with their music and membership costs. The Fund was created by the Trustees in memory of Alan who had been a co-founder of the Choir and was an original trustee of the Foundation.

The Trustees are most grateful for donations already received totalling more than £1000. If you would like to support The Alan Farnill Fund, please make a donation (with Gift Aid if possible) to the Bristol Bach Choir Foundation whose trustees are Gareth Dodds, Rupert Handley, and Rod Thouless.

Email bbcfoundationtrustees@gmail.com

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Mrs G A Lewis

David Mander

Elizabeth Mildner

Carolyn Morgan

Eve Nash

Tony & Alison Peck

Valerie Shelton

Dave Vorley

Karen Warren

Colin Williams

Robin & Aurelie Wright

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PROGRAMME NOTES

Henry Purcell (1659-1695): *I was Glad*

Before Parry, there was Purcell's *I Was Glad*. And an excellent piece it is, with 17th rather than early 20th century pomp. It is usually stated that this anthem was written for, and first performed at, the coronation of King James II in 1685. Some scholars however believe that Purcell's other setting of these words, which is longer, and has an orchestral accompaniment, was used on that occasion. From the evidence I've seen, I like the claims of the present piece. It's a full anthem (no solos or orchestral interludes) for choir in 5 parts. Listen for the quieter middle section *O pray for the peace of Jerusalem*, after which the music perks up with the word plenteousness. The final doxology (Glory be to the Father...) is one of Purcell's best. Note the descending 4-note motif on *World without end*, which is used all over the place, at three different speeds.

Henry Purcell: *O God, Thou art my God*

Judging by the number of surviving contemporary copies, this was one of Purcell's most popular compositions. It probably helps that it's not that hard, and ends with a really good tune. Written 1680-1682; words from Psalm 63. The sections for full choir are leavened by lighter-textured interludes for three voices – listen for these. Also see if you can hear examples of Purcell's word-painting: chromatic intensity on *My soul also longeth after thee*, the touching simplicity of *For thy loving-kindness*, and a rising phrase on *and lift up my hands*. The final *Alleluia* is the source of the hymn tune Westminster Abbey.

Henry Purcell: *Hear My Prayer, O Lord*

Written around 1682. Words: Psalm 102, verse 1. Choir in 8 parts – 2 each of SAT&B, unaccompanied by instruments. Purcell's manuscript of this short but magnificent piece is followed by several empty pages, leading to the suggestion that it might have been intended as the first movement in a longer anthem. If so, the subsequent music has been lost; my thought is that Purcell realised that the piece could not be followed by anything quite as perfect. Two things to listen for: 1) the control with which Purcell builds tension and intensity from the start all the way through, leading up to a very dissonant knot just before the end; and 2) miraculously, almost

all of the music consists of just two phrases: one with the words Hear my prayer O Lord, and the other And let my crying come unto thee. These are continually varied, and occasionally used upside-down. One of the great penitential pieces.

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741): *Gloria in D RV589*

Two settings of the Gloria by Vivaldi survive: this is much the better known. It was probably written in 1714-15 for the *Ospedale della Pietà*, the orphanage-cum-music-academy in Venice where Vivaldi was employed. There are twelve movements, each of them a gem:

1 *Gloria in excelsis Deo*: Glory to God in the highest. Well-known energetic bouncy opening. Note that the music for choir and that for accompaniment are completely different, but they fit together well and share the same mood.

2 *Et in terra pax hominibus*: And on earth peace... For my money Vivaldi's most beautiful piece, with slowly-unfolding overlapping melodies over imaginative harmonies. Just enjoy.

3 *Laudamus te*: We praise you... Duet for two sopranos Bright and lovely, with an irregular start – a 17-bar phrase.

4 *Gratias agimus tibi*: We give you thanks... Short: six bars of simple homophony leading to:

5 *Propter magnam gloriam*: Because of your great glory. Concise fugal movement. In just one minute of music, you'll lose track of how many

times the main theme, or variations of it, appears.

6 *Domine Deus*: Lord God, heavenly King... Aria for soprano in the rhythm of a Siciliano – slow dance in 12/8 time. Where's my thesaurus? – I need more words for 'lovely'. Your task (if you wish to take it on) is to find in the bass part echoes of the first movement.

7 *Domine Fili Unigenite*: O Lord, the only begotten son... Chorus again. Infectiously bouncy. Note: in this one the choir does share the melodic material of the accompaniment.

8 *Domine Deus, Agnus Dei*: Lord God, lamb of God... Alto solo with gentle chordal choral interjections. Admirable, adorable, alluring, amiable, attractive, beauteous... (found the thesaurus).

9 *Qui tollis peccata mundi*: Who takes away the sin of the world... Shortish chorus, more dramatic and chromatic.

10 *Qui sedes ad dexteram*: Who is seated at the right hand of the Father... Faster aria for solo alto, with a carefully crafted asymmetrical accompaniment.

11 *Quoniam tu solus Sanctus*: For you alone are holy... a shorter version of the music from movement 1, giving the whole piece structural coherence.

12 *Cum Sancto Spiritu*: With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father, Amen. Fugue.

For the finale Vivaldi reworked the last movement of a Gloria for two choirs and two orchestras by the Veronese composer Giovanni Maria Ruggieri (c1665-c1725), written in 1708.

Vivaldi gets credit for consistent musical impetus, but Ruggieri gets credit for the themes, and pretty much all of the first section. Listen for the two themes right at the start, and follow them through the piece – the accompaniment-only sections mostly use the faster second theme. © T J Warren 2026

INTERVAL

Jonathan Dove (b1959):

Seek Him that Maketh the Seven Stars

Jonathan Dove is prolific across many genres of music and has written a considerable number of operas as well as making chamber arrangements of others; this includes a reduced orchestration of *Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen*. He was born in London, and following his time at Cambridge worked for Glyndebourne Opera. His style is distinctive and minimalist, making frequent use of ostinato and small changes of texture to create cross rhythms. His harmonic style is largely diatonic with switches to new keys being a key feature of his style. His body of choral music is large and *Seek Him that Maketh the Seven Stars* is a superb example of his stylistic traits. Setting words from Amos and Psalm 139, it was

commissioned in 1995 by the Royal Academy of Arts. The organ accompaniment is frequently sparkly and provides a glittering backcloth to the choir's words as it depicts the stars of the night sky. The music builds slowly in intensity towards the exuberant joy morning, before returning to the peace of the night sky in the closing pages.

Richard Rodney Bennett (1936 – 2012): *The Glory and the Dream*

Richard Rodney Bennett was an immensely eclectic composer whose teachers included *Howard Ferguson, Lennox Berkeley, Cornelius Cardew* and *Pierre Boulez*. He seemed to have been comfortable writing in a great number of styles and musical languages, whether this be serialism, jazz, film scores, symphonies, or choral music. He said that for him this was writing 'in different rooms, albeit in the same house'. Whilst his earlier works show more of an interest in the avant-garde of the time, his later music turns towards a more tonal language, but one which is nevertheless distinctively his own. He was also a formidable pianist and was a frequent performer in both jazz and classical mediums.

His choral output is finely crafted and his carols are particularly noted. *The Glory and the Dream* of 2000 is a large-scale work for choir and organ and sets the majority of *William Wordsworth's* text *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*. This was a text

which had been set by *Gerald Finzi* previously and contains many wonderful and haunting phrases. It moves through a number of moods, key among these being the regret at the loss of childhood rapture and innocence. Whilst this can never be recaptured, strength can be taken by a more adult appreciation of life, and a sense of optimism is possible through taking strength in what still excites and brings joy. Nature and images of the countryside are also at the heart of this text, even as they inevitably highlight the passing of time. It is in four movements which run into each other without a break. The first and longest movement is dedicated to nature and its joys and is a mix of pastoral reflection and joy in the scherzo section. Loss of innocence is mourned in the second part whilst the third focuses on hope and the indestructible spirit of man and nature's permanence. The final section recalls many of the joys of childhood but now regarding them with adult eyes; the love for such things has not weakened and they are as lovely as ever, but there is also something deeper in this love, as well as a continuing regret for all that is passed. The choral writing is vivid and exciting, whilst also showing a clear awareness of what is practical in the medium. The organ part is highly virtuosic and deeply involved, providing interludes and commentary as well as support to the choir.

It was commissioned by the *New Cambridge Singers* (who gave the premiere) and other choirs

from the USA, UK, Australia, Canada and Iceland. The first performance took place in St John's College Chapel, Cambridge under the direction of *Christopher Brown* with *Peter Barley* at the organ.

The latter is also thanked by the composer for his assistance with registration directions. It is dedicated to the composer's sister, *Meg Peacocke*, who is a poet and one of his frequent collaborators.

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BRISTOL BACH CHOIR this evening**

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