



EVENT PROGRAMME

INTERNATIONAL
CONCERT SERIES
2025-2026

Department of Music

Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences

**ROYALHOLLOWAY.AC.UK/
MUSIC/EVENTS**





DISCOVER **VOX HUMANA: THE 2025-26 INTERNATIONAL CONCERT SERIES AT ROYAL HOLLOWAY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON. A YEAR OF WORLD-CLASS MUSIC DEDICATED TO THE POWER OF THE HUMAN VOICE, CONTINUING A CELEBRATED VOCAL TRADITION THAT BEGAN IN 1886.**

This season, curated by Dr Nathan James Dearden in his 10th year, celebrates two major milestones: the 20th anniversary of Rupert Gough as Director of Choral Music, whose leadership has shaped the acclaimed Choir of Royal Holloway, defining choral excellence at the university, and the upcoming launch of the Choral Academy in May 2026. This legacy inspires a diverse programme - from intimate solo song, transcriptions for violin, guitar, to soprano saxophone, to dramatic scenas, orchestral vocalise, folk explorations, and the collective power of choral music - showcasing the breadth and depth of the human voice.

THE ART OF SONG (AND MORE)

We are proud to continue our partnerships with the London Mozart Players and the Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT), and to welcome world-class artists including the sublime soprano Ruby Hughes, pianist Huw Watkins, the ground-breaking Emily Francis Trio, and the peerless vocal ensemble VOCES8. The series also shines a light on the phenomenal rising stars of our time: saxophonist Rob Burton, pianist Mark Rogers, Duo Melus, and American mezzo-soprano Hayley Meth.

CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY

Most proudly, we provide a platform for our own extraordinary alumni, welcoming back trad singer and uilleann piper Seb Stone, operatic tenor Thomas Elwin, and debut the exciting new vocal choir, Omnium Ensemble, under the direction of Olivia Earl.

The 2025-26 International Concert Series at Royal Holloway promises an exciting line-up of world-class performances, showcasing renowned musicians and rising talents from around the globe, and the community of students and researchers right here at the University. Set within our stunning campus, the series brings together a wide range of genres, from classical and jazz to contemporary and global music, offering something for every taste.

We look forward to welcoming you and showcasing the exceptional musical life that makes Royal Holloway so special.

Dr Nathan James Dearden

Curator of the International Concert Series and Arts Festivals



EVENT PROGRAMME

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Sunday, 16 November 2025, 8.00pm

Picture Gallery, Founder's Building

Omnium Ensemble

Olivia Earl Conductor

EVENT REPERTOIRE

John Tavener (1944-2013): *Song for Athene*

John Tavener: *Funeral Ikos*

William Harris (1883-1973): *Bring Us, O Lord God*

Frank Ticheli (b. 1958): *There Will Be Rest*

Richard Rodney Bennett (1936-2012): *A Good-Night*

Matthew Coleridge: *Abendlied*

John Tavener: *Mother Of God, Here I Stand*

Judith Weir (b. 1954): *My Guardian Angel*

Uģis Prauliņš (b. 1957): Gloria (part 1) from *Missa Rigensis*

Will Harmer: *Three Madrigals*

Millicent B James: *Finding Your Home*

John Rutter (b. 1945): *It Was a Lover and His Lass*

There will be no interval during this evening's event

Estimated event finish time: 9.00pm

Please no flash photography or visual/audio recording throughout the event.

For news about our future events, please visit royalholloway.ac.uk/music/events

PROGRAMME NOTES

JOHN TAVENER (1944-2013)

Song for Athene

Tavener's *Song for Athene* was written as tribute to a Greek actress and family friend, Athene Hariades who died in a tragic accident. Notably this work was performed at HRH Princess Dianna of Wales' funeral in 1997. Tavener is known for his spiritual music rooted in Christianity.

Alleluia, Alleluia
May flights of angels sing thee to thy rest
Alleluia, Alleluia
Remember me O Lord, when you come into your kingdom
Alleluia, Alleluia
Give rest O Lord to your handmaid, who has fallen asleep
Alleluia, Alleluia
The Choir of Saints have found the well-spring of life and door of
paradise
Alleluia, Alleluia
Life a shadow and a dream
Alleluia, Alleluia
Weeping at the grave creates the song Alleluia
Come, enjoy rewards and crowns I have prepared for you
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

JOHN TAVENER (1944-2013)

Funeral Ikos

Funeral Ikos was written in 1981 when Tavener was 37. It is a serene setting of words which are probably unfamiliar to most of us and which a simple statement of the reward in Paradise for the Righteous Ones. The music shows the influence of Stravinsky, who used a similar homophonic style for some of his religious settings, but Tavener's music is, in this piece, much simpler harmonically. Indeed much of it is in unison allowing the full impact of the words to shine through.

Why these bitter words of the dying, o brethren
Which they utter as they go hence?
I am parted from my brethren
All my friends do i abandon and go hence
But whither i go, that understand i not
Neither what shall become of me yonder;
Only God who hath summoned me knoweth
But make commemoration of me with the song:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

But whither now go the souls?
How dwell they now together there?
This mystery have i desired to learn; but none can impart aright
Do they call to mind their own people, as we do them?
Or have they forgotten all those who mourn them and make the song:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

We go forth on the path eternal, and as condemned
With downcast faces, present ourselves before the only God eternal
Where then is comeliness? Where then is wealth?
Where then is the glory of this world?
There shall none of these things aid us, but only to say oft the psalm:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

If thou hast shown mercy unto man, o man
That same mercy shall be shown thee there;
And if on an orphan thou hast shown compassion
The same shall there deliver thee from want
If in this life the naked thou hast clothed
The same shall give thee shelter there, and sing the psalm:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Youth and the beauty of the body fade at the hour of death
And the tongue then burneth fiercely, and the parched throat is inflamed
The beauty of the eyes is quenched then, the comeliness of the face all
altered
The shapeliness of the neck destroyed; and the other parts have become
numb
Nor often say: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

With ecstasy are we inflamed if we but hear that there is light eternal
yonder;
That there is Paradise, wherein every soul of Righteous Ones rejoiceth
Let us all, also, enter into Christ, that we may cry aloud thus unto God:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

WILLIAM HARRIS (1883-1973)

Bring Us, O Lord God

William Henry Harris (1883-1973) was one of the best-loved and most stalwart cathedral musicians of the first half of the 20th century. Professor of organ and harmony at the Royal College of Music from 1921 to 1955, he also became organist at St George's Chapel, Windsor in 1933 and conducted for the Coronation services in 1937 and 1953. The anthem *Bring us, O Lord God* is a comparatively late work, dating from 1959, and setting a religious poem of John Donne that paints a radiant picture of heaven. Harris builds to a grand, resplendent climax but reserves his most mystical page for the concluding 'Amens' and their final cadence.

Bring us, o Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of Heaven, to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears or hopes, but one equal possession; no ends or beginnings, but one equal eternity, in the habitations of thy glory and dominion, world without end.

FRANK TICHEL (B. 1958)

There Will Be Rest

Sara Teasdale is regarded as one of the great American lyric poets. Her lyrical style has its roots in the work of Sappho, Rossetti, and Housman. Haunted by depression in later years, Teasdale took her own life at the age of 48. Many of her poems address the pain that tormented her spirit, but to the end she seemed to draw strength and hope from the stars and their permanent radiance. *There Will Be Rest*, one of her last poems, is a perfect summary of her lifelong concern for the stars and their ancient promise of peace. This choral setting is designed to capture the poem's purity of spirit and delicate lyricism.

Composer Note © Frank Ticheli

There will be rest, and sure stars shining
Over the roof-tops crowned with snow,
A reign of rest, serene forgetting,
The music of stillness holy and low.

I will make this world of my devising
Out of a dream in my lonely mind.
I shall find the crystal of peace, – above me
Stars I shall find.

RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT (1936-2012)

A Good-Night

A Good-Night offers a final secure resting place: sleep. Richard Rodney Bennett sets prose by the seventeenth-century writer Francis Quarles with remarkable warmth, allowing the words to shine by using simple melodic and harmonic gestures. There is a sense of closure as the music returns to the opening material, newly comforting in its familiarity.

Close now thine eyes and rest secure;
Thy soul is safe enough, thy body sure;
He that loves thee, He that keeps
And guards thee, never slumbers, never sleeps.
The smiling conscience in a sleeping breast
Has only peace, has only rest;
The music and the mirth of kings
Are all but very discords, when she sings;
Then close thine eyes and rest secure;
No sleep so sweet as thine, no rest so sure.

MATTHEW COLERIDGE (B.1980)

Abendlied

Abendlied was commissioned by The Oriel Singers, Cheltenham, in memory of Katharine Welchman - a friend of the choir, and mother of a dear friend since my early childhood.

As well as the German setting of the text, I've also included a setting in English - to the words "Blessed spirit, one with God above" - which is particularly suitable as an Introit in Anglican churches.

Bleib bei uns,
denn es will Abend werden,
und der Tag hat sich geneiget,

*Stay with us,
for it is getting late,
and the day is drawing to a close.*

JOHN TAVENER (1944-2013)

Mother Of God, Here I Stand

Set to the words of celebrated Russian poet Mikhail Lermontov, *Mother of God, Here I Stand* is a reflective prayer to the Virgin Mary. In this piece, the speaker expresses a wish to venerate the mother of God without seeking anything in return. The performance direction that the piece is to be sung with “infinite tenderness” sets the emotional and spiritual tone of the song. This anthem is taken from Tavener’s larger choral work *The Veil of the Temple* which he has described as “the supreme achievement of my life and the most important work that I have ever composed.”

Mother of God, here I stand now praying,
Before this icon of your radiant brightness,
Not praying to be saved from a battlefield,
Not giving thanks, nor seeking forgiveness
For the sins of my soul, nor for all the souls.
Numb, joyless and desolate on earth,
But for her alone, whom I wholly give you.

JUDITH WEIR (B.1954)

My Guardian Angel

First performed on the 23rd of December 1997 by The Joyful Company of Singers, *My Guardian Angel* is based on a short poem by William Blake. The carol often features audience participation in the form of an ‘alleluia’ section whilst the choir sings the four parts around it, however, it may also be performed in 6 parts by just the choir.

The Angel that presided o'er my birth
Said, "Little creature, form'd of Joy & Mirth,
Go love without the help of anything and earth".

UGIS PRAULINŠ (B. 1957)

Gloria (Part 1) from Missa Rigensis

Uģis Praulinš is a Latvian composer and rock musician whose most famous work is the choral piece *Missa Rigensis* (*Riga Mass*), dedicated to the Riga Cathedral Boy's Choir in his hometown. Praulinš has said that his motivation behind the composition was "to retain attention by the singers' voices alone". This is demonstrated in the fusion of contemporary harmony with the melodic lines and contrapuntal textures reminiscent of ancient chants which creates a diverse and complex sound from often a small group of voices.

Glória in excélsis Deo
et in terra pax homínibus bonæ voluntátis.
Laudámus te,
benedícimus te,
adorámus te,
glorificámus te,
grátias ágimus tibi propter magnam glóriam tuam,
Dómine Deus, Rex cæléstis,
Deus Pater omnípotens.

Dómine Fili Unigénite, Iesu Christe,
Dómine Deus, Agnus Dei, Fílius Patris,
qui tollis peccáta mundi,
miserére nobis;
qui tollis peccáta mundi,
súscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserére nobis.

Quóniam tu solus Sanctus,
tu solus Dóminus,
tu solus Altíssimus,
Iesu Christe,
cum Sancto Spíritu:
in glória Dei Patris.
Amen.

*Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.*

*We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God almighty Father.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of The Father,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father
have mercy on us.*

*For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.*

WILL HARMER

Three Madrigals

The *Three Madrigals* by Will Harmer announce a fresh new sound in British choral music. They are written by an experienced young singer also gifted with a rare talent to enliven words with buoyant rhythm and melody. He has caught the spirit and poetry of the Tudor madrigal school in these pieces: the vitality of Morley in the pulsing syncopations of 'Spring in all her glory', the passion of Wilbye in the rapt expression of 'Sweet eyes', and the energy of Weelkes in the dancing beat of 'Sing we at pleasure'. Perfect for mixed historical programmes and a great match with other contemporary styles, they will bring joy alike to lovers of Renaissance and modern music.

I. Spring in All Her Glory

*Anonymous text, as appears in Diprose's Royal Song Book
(London, 1845)*

Now spring in all her glory,
With blessings from on high,
Descends to comfort ev'ry heart,
And gladden ev'ry eye.
Stern Winter, dark and frowning,
Has left us for a-while;
And spring with life and vigorous youth,
Does make creation smile.
The streams no longer frozen,
Their peaceful course pursue;
And buds and opening blossoms
Receive the morning dew.

II. Sweet Eyes

Anonymous text, translation in Nicholas Yonge Musica
Transalpina Vol.2 (London, 1597)

Sweet eyes, admiring you I am left heartless
For when you do leave me
Of my heart you bereave me
Ah let not for pity my grief most hapless, untimely slay me
Left sole without relieving
If you return not, I shall die with grieving.

III. Sing We at Pleasure

Anonymous text, set by Thomas Weelkes in Ballets and
Madrigals for Five Voyces (London, 1598)

Sing we at pleasure,
Content is our treasure.
Fa la la.
Sweet Love shall keep the ground,
Whilst we his praises sound.
All shepherds in a ring,
Shall dancing ever sing:
Fa la la.

MILLICENT B JAMES

Finding Your Home

Millicent B James is an award-winning composer and arranger based in Birmingham, whose works have been described as having “modernist complexity with gospel-ish intensity” (The Telegraph). Written for the National Youth Choir in 2023, Finding Your Home is a celebration of friendship and togetherness which incorporates many musical influences such as classical choral music, jazz (including scat and finger clicking), and gospel. In her own words, James “wanted to create a piece that had two parts: a bold celebratory opening (a realisation and epiphany moment) and a fun little ditty.”

You're part of something in this world
When you build a safe place with your friends,
there's a feeling of joy
And there's light after the dark coming through the
clouds,
After such a long time.
You can be brave.
You have courage in you, so go forth and
You'll finally find your way home
You'll find that you can belong
You'll finally find your way home
You'll find that you can belong
You'll dada find your way home
You'll dadada belong
You'll dada find your way home
You'll find that you can belong
You finally found your way home
You found that you can belong,
you will never be alone
You finally found your way home
You found that you do belong

JOHN RUTTER (B.1945)

It Was a Lover and his Lass

It Was a Lover and His Lass is a song from Shakespeare's comedy "As You Like It" (written 1599). In this vibrant and joyful setting of the text, which is one of his Birthday Madrigals, John Rutter infuses jazz harmonies and rhythm, alongside the use of vocables, into his choral writing which complements Shakespeare's pastoral text from the 16th century.

It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
That o'er the green corn-field did pass,
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

Between the acres of the rye,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
These pretty country folks would lie,
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

This carol they began that hour,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
How that a life was but a flower
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

And therefore take the present time,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
For love is crownèd with the prime
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

As You Like It, Act V, Scene III

EVENT PERFORMERS

OMNIUM ENSEMBLE

Founded in 2024, Omnium Ensemble is a choir comprising the finest emerging professional singers from various backgrounds, including Oxford, Royal Holloway, and the Genesis Sixteen programme. Led by Olivia Earl, we are keen to be a force for good in the choral world by not only producing high-quality concerts but by following the mantra under which we were founded: Spreading awareness of the benefits of singing with others; supporting the work of living composers; and, encouraging healthy singing and promoting wellbeing.

Olivia Earl started out as one of the first ever Girl Choristers at Canterbury Cathedral, and went on to study Music at both Royal Holloway, University of London, and the University of Oxford. In 2022, Olivia graduated from Royal Holloway with First Class Honours and was awarded the Alice Dougherty Chaplin and Woodward Prize for Excellence in Performance. In her capacity as a choral leader, Olivia is Choral Director for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark, was appointed as a National Youth Choir Fellow for 2024, and now works as a Section Coach for the National Youth Choir. She also particularly enjoys delivering singing workshops for Sing Inside and the National Youth Choir's Learning & Engagement programme.

OUR PROGRAMME NOTES

Unless otherwise stated, all of our programme notes have been written by a team of student volunteers enrolled onto the university's Concert Management & Artist Personnel Programme.

This event is presented as part of the International Concert Series 2025-26 - VOX HUMANA - at Royal Holloway University of London



Department of Music

Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences

CELEBRATION FOR ST. CECILIA WITH THE CHOIR OF ROYAL HOLLOWAY

22 November 2025, 6.00pm

Chapel, Founder's Building

Royal Holloway's annual Celebration for St. Cecilia is back and stands as one of the highlights of our season, celebrating the patron saint of musicians, St. Cecilia, and the centuries of wonderful music dedicated in her name.

£15 - FREE

Concessions available; Free for students and staff at Royal Holloway

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