

THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL 2026

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DRAMATIC
THRILLING
MAGNIFICENT

FIVE ENJOY A JOLLY GOOD JOURNEY



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ADVENTURES START HERE

It is a privilege for me once again to introduce a Three Choirs Festival programme.

I have, quite deliberately, centred it on magnificent choral works. I feel sure this will be popular with artists and audiences alike and bring great joy to the Gloucester 2026 Festival.

The week will begin with a performance of Walton's boisterous cantata *Belshazzar's Feast*, and end with a performance of Elgar's masterpiece *The Dream of Gerontius*. I am delighted that we can book-end the week with these thrilling works!

We are paying homage to Edward Elgar throughout the week; for many his work remains the soul of the Festival, and the Elgar Society will be celebrating their 75th anniversary with us. Works of Elgar during the week include his thrilling First Symphony, *Sea Pictures* (sung by that wonderful friend of the Festival, Roderick Williams), and *Cockaigne*.

In 2026 the Cathedral is being blessed with a new organ 54 years after the previous one was installed. The brilliant American virtuoso Katelyn Emerson plays Poulenc's Organ Concerto, followed by Janáček's breathtaking *Glagolitic Mass*. The incomparable young French virtuoso Thomas Ospital will give the Celebrity Organ Recital. Such things are not to be missed!

Three Choirs Festival Limited

Charity No 204609
Company Number 00580176
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Registered Office
7c College Green, Gloucester GL1 2LX

Three Choirs Festival Leadership Team:

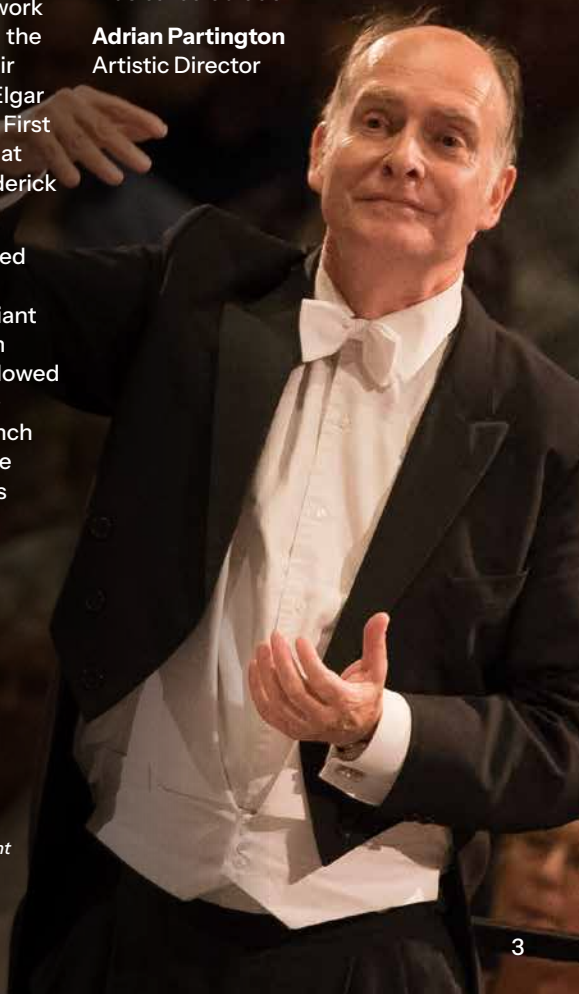
David Francis *Chief Executive*
Lucy Potter *Artistic Planning Manager*
Robert Convey *Head of Sales and Development*
Bethany Alexander / Jessica Robson-Hill
Production Manager

Supporting the work of contemporary British composers is one of the most important functions of the Festival, and we are pleased to be able to programme pieces by Cecilia McDowall, Ian Venables, and Festival Associate Composer Gavin Higgins.

We will also be performing the following choral-orchestral masterpieces, which need little introduction: Mozart's dramatic Requiem, Beethoven's magnificent Mass in C, and settings of Vespers texts by both Monteverdi and Rachmaninov.

I look forward to welcoming you to Gloucester to share in our joyful musical celebration!

Adrian Partington
Artistic Director



Welcome to the 2026 Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester. Adrian has put together a programme built around great choral works, so I know we are in for a thrilling week of music.

As the leading festival for choral music, the Three Choirs Festival has always been committed to the future of choral music, and has enjoyed enduring relationships with some of the UK's most celebrated composers for over 300 years. 2026 is a special year for us because we are welcoming Gavin Higgins as our inaugural Associate Composer.

In imagining the Associate Composer Programme, my aim was for the Three Choirs Festival to once again support – and be synonymous with – a cohort of British composers who not only receive commissions and performances of their work but who come to know and love the Festival, are advocates for choral music, and become part of the Three Choirs Festival community. Building relationships takes time, which is why this is a three-year programme; 2026 is the first of three Festivals during which we will be commissioning and enjoying Gavin's music.

We will welcome other Associate Composers to join Gavin as the Programme develops, so over time we'll establish a cohort of composers whose exciting voices in choral composition will be heard at the Festival. Our Associate Composers will be part of our community and will keep in touch with us throughout the year through e-news, social media, and our member magazine. This means that we can all feel connected and share in their success beyond the Festival itself.

Gavin will be at the entire 2026 Festival so please make him welcome – maybe take the opportunity to inspire him with your favourite commissioning or world-premiere stories from the Festival and beyond.

I must acknowledge and thank the LG Harris Trust and a generous sponsor who prefers to remain anonymous for their inspired support of the Associate Composer Programme.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if we can help in any way with your booking. The whole team look forward to seeing you in Gloucester for a magnificent Three Choirs Festival...

David Francis
Chief Executive, Three Choirs Festival

Hello, I'm Gavin Higgins and I am the Associate Composer of the Three Choirs Festival from 2026–2028.

This year, I am thrilled to announce that the Gloucester Festival will feature the world premiere of my Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, composed for SATB choir and organ, alongside the UK premiere of *Fanfare Americana*, for orchestra. I started my musical life in Gloucestershire playing and arranging scores in the Forest of Dean Brass Band with my grandfather, and having my works performed in Gloucester Cathedral is an enormous honour for me and my family. Alongside works for choirs and orchestras I am very fortunate to have been commissioned to write music for brass

bands and brass instruments, percussion ensembles, string quartets and quintets along with a wide variety of solo instruments.

All of my scores are published by Nimbus Music Publishing and several albums are available on CD, streaming platforms, and for download, including chamber music works on *Ekstasis*, my cantata *The Fairie Bride*, and my Horn Concerto with Ben Goldscheider which have all been released by Nimbus Records and Lyrita.

For more information and to see my complete catalogue of works, scan the QR code below or head to

www.wyastone.co.uk/nimbus-artists/gavin-higgins or email publishing@wyastone.co.uk

A portrait of Gavin Higgins, a man with long, wavy brown hair, a full beard, and glasses. He is wearing a dark blue corduroy jacket over a white t-shirt. The background is dark with a blue light wash.

The logo for Nimbus Music Publishing, featuring a stylized red graphic of three interlocking loops above the word "NIMBUS" in a bold, red, serif font, with "MUSIC PUBLISHING" in a smaller, red, sans-serif font below it.

NIMBUS
MUSIC PUBLISHING

Opening Service

10 – 11 am

Gloucester Cathedral
FREE (no ticket required)

Three Choirs Festival Chorus
Gloucester Cathedral Choir
Gloucester Cathedral St Benedict's
Singers and Trinity Singers
Jonathan Hope *organ*
Adrian Partington *conductor*

Walton Coronation Te Deum
King Jubilate

David Bednall Sing Praises to God

Mark Blatchly Psalm 150

Join us as we open the Festival in style, filling the Cathedral with joyful and dramatic music. Be wowed by Walton's spectacular Te Deum, composed for the Coronation of Elizabeth II and sung at the King's Coronation in 2023, and former Gloucester organ scholar and Acting Director of Music David Bednall's wonderful *Sing Praises to God*, sung by the joint forces of the Festival Chorus and Gloucester Cathedral choirs.

The civic procession will enter at 9.45 am

**Supported by the
DG Albright Charitable Trust**

Festival Reception

11.30 am – 12.30 pm

St Mary de Crypt
£20

Enjoy drinks and canapés with fellow Festival-goers as Gloucester Chair **Allen Prior** welcomes you to this year's Festival.

VOCES8

12.45 – 2 pm

Gloucester Cathedral
£36, £31, £26, £11

VOCES8

Programme to include:

Holst Nunc dimittis 4'

Eric Whitacre All seems beautiful to me 5'

Morten Lauridsen O nata lux 5'

Howells Salvator Mundi from Requiem 3'

Vaughan Williams Rest 4'

Irving Berlin Cheek to Cheek 3'

Travel through soundscapes of faith, beauty, and belonging in this thrilling choral journey with internationally acclaimed choir VOCES8. Celebrating the 250th anniversary of American Independence, their recital explores the vocal styles of Britain and America, from spirituals and sacred works to jazz classics. Music from Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Howells celebrates their important association with this centuries-old Festival in the magnificent setting of Gloucester Cathedral, the birthplace of *The Star-Spangled Banner's* well-known tune. From the serenity of *O nata lux* to the swing of *Cheek to Cheek*, this is music that leads heart and spirit home.

**Supported by a donation to
VOCES8 by Cynthia Bittner**



Gloucester City Walks: Guided Walk of the Historic City

2.30 – 3.45 pm
St Michael's Tower
£10 adults, £4 under 18s

Discover Gloucester's fascinating history from the arrival of the Romans nearly 2,000 years ago.



My Favourite Things

2.30 – 4.30 pm
Chapter House, Gloucester Cathedral
£12 adults, £4 under 18s, under 5s FREE;
to include tea and cake

Discover the joys of singing, creativity, and performance in this brilliantly light-hearted workshop led by renowned music director **Tim Steiner**. Focusing on the song 'My Favourite Things' from beloved musical *The Sound of Music*, you'll have fun singing together and creating new verses based on your own favourite things. You'll also sing through other famous songs from the musical, including 'Edelweiss' and 'So Long, Farewell'.

Suitable for all ages and abilities. We welcome families and no previous experience is necessary.

SATURDAY

Misha Kaploukhii Piano Recital

4 – 5.30 pm

St Nicholas' Church

£36, £28, £15

Misha Kaploukhii *piano*

Beethoven Sonata in A, Op. 2 No 2 **22'**

Gavin Higgins *Urban Fairy Tales* **11'**

Rachmaninov *Études-Tableaux*,
Op. 39 (selection) **14'**

Tippett Sonata No 1 **21'**

Fairy tales and folk songs are brought to life in this lively and skilful recital from award-winning pianist Misha Kaploukhii. Lithe, graceful, and incredibly intricate, Beethoven's Sonata is beautiful and surprisingly modern in its musical twists and turns. Rachmaninov's *Études-Tableaux* weave stories, images, and harmonies together to create vivid pictures in the mind, while Tippett's sparkling Sonata draws inspiration from the Scottish tune *Ca' the yowes*. This will also be your first chance to hear the work of new Festival Associate Composer Gavin Higgins, whose *Urban Fairy Tales* is a set of musical depictions of updated fairy-tale characters living in modern-day London. A brief in-conversation between Gavin and the Three Choirs Festival Chief Executive David Francis will introduce the piece.

Evening Prayer will be said today at 5 pm in the Lady Chapel of Gloucester Cathedral





Belshazzar's Feast

8 – 10.10 pm

Gloucester Cathedral

£66, £61, £51, £39, £21, £16

David Stout *baritone*

Three Choirs Festival Chorus

Philharmonia Orchestra

Adrian Partington *conductor*

Gavin Higgins *Fanfare Americana* 5'

UK premiere

Elgar *Symphony No 1* 52'

Walton *Belshazzar's Feast* 35'

Dramatic, thrilling, magnificent – the Festival is summed up in one concert of music sure to impress. Find yourself on the edge of your seat as you hear how a disembodied hand writes Belshazzar's fate on the wall, sending him to his doom, accompanied by spine-tingling music performed by the Philharmonia Orchestra and Festival Chorus. Elgar's dramatic first symphony was the culmination of more than ten years of planning and received a rapturous response from audiences at its premiere. This powerful piece will, in Elgar's words, leave you with 'a massive hope in the future'. Festival Associate Composer Gavin Higgins' magnificent *Fanfare Americana*, a whirlwind of orchestra and brass, opens the programme.

We would like to thank The Elgar Society for making this performance of Elgar's First Symphony possible, and for supporting performances of his works throughout the Festival

We would like to thank the LG Harris Trust for their support of our Associate Composer Programme

David Stout supported by Joanna Brickell

SATURDAY

Festival Eucharist

10.15 – 11.45 am

Gloucester Cathedral
FREE (no ticket required)

Gloucester Cathedral Choir
Jonathan Hope *organ*
Adrian Partington *conductor*

Rubbra Missa Cantuariensis, Op. 59
Rubbra Up, O My Soul, Op. 108

Celebrate the music of British composer Edmund Rubbra in the 40th anniversary year of his death. His beautiful setting of the mass, written for Canterbury Cathedral, is rarely performed, so don't miss the opportunity to hear it at this year's Festival Eucharist.

Members' Lunch

12 noon – 1.30 pm
St Mary de Crypt
£38

MEMBER
EVENT

Enjoy a delicious lunch with fellow Festival members in the company of **Gavin Higgins**, the Festival's new Associate Composer. Get to know Gavin and his plans for his residency through chatting with him and asking him your questions in this exclusive and intimate event.

Roderick Williams Song Recital

2 – 3.15 pm

Gloucester Cathedral
£36, £31, £26, £11

Roderick Williams *baritone*
Iain Burnside *piano*

Programme to include:

Gurney Black Stichel; Lights Out 7'

Ireland Blow out, you Bugles 3'

Douglas Weiland Six Songs to Poems by the Dymock Poets, Op. 69 15'

Bliss Gone, gone again is Summer; Little Elegy; Siege *from* Seven American Poems 5'

Vaughan Williams The Tree in the Wood *and* The Twelve Apostles *from* Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachian Mountains 6'

Journey in song from the Forest of Dean to the Appalachians in this stunning recital from acclaimed duo Roderick Williams and Iain Burnside. The recital features settings of the Dymock Poets, most notably a song cycle by Douglas Weiland, as well as works by Gurney, Ireland, and Bliss. The programme moves on to settings by British composers of several American poets, including Walt Whitman, and ends with two beautiful Vaughan Williams folk songs gathered from the Appalachian Mountains.

**Supported by the
William A Cadbury Charitable Trust**

**Performance of *Blow out, you Bugles*
supported by the John Ireland Trust**

Meet the Macbeths

3.30 – 4.30 pm

Chapter House, Gloucester Cathedral
£12 adults, £4 under 18s, under 5s FREE

Two of Shakespeare's most dramatic characters are brought to life by actor and musician **Edward Derbyshire** in this immersive show for adults and older children, accompanied by live music and song. Explore the couple's tragic journey into darkness and dare to ask yourself – would I ever be tempted to make the same choices?

WULSTAN ATKINS LECTURE

A Portrait of Composers' Wives

4 – 5 pm

St Mary de Crypt
£15

Join **Allan Ledger** and **Michael Trott** as they examine the lives of four women whose husbands were synonymous with the Three Choirs Festival: Maud Parry, Alice Elgar, Isobel Holst, and Ursula Vaughan Williams. Discover the stories of these composers' wives in this illuminating talk.

Supported by Katharine O'Carroll and Robert and Sherill Atkins



SUNDAY

A photograph of two women in black dresses singing from a book. They are holding lit candles. The background is a dark, stone-walled interior, likely a cathedral. The floor is made of large, light-colored stone tiles. In the foreground, there is a wooden candle holder with several lit candles.

Gloucester City Walks: Music and Poetry

4 – 4.40 pm

South Porch, Gloucester Cathedral
£10 adults, £4 under 18s

This walk takes in Westgate Street and the Cathedral Precincts looking at the buildings associated with musicians, composers and poets, and the odd inventor. Explore stories associated with the history of the Three Choirs Festival, its venues, and Gloucester's rich musical tradition.

Choral Evensong

5.30 – 6.20 pm

Gloucester Cathedral
FREE (no ticket required)

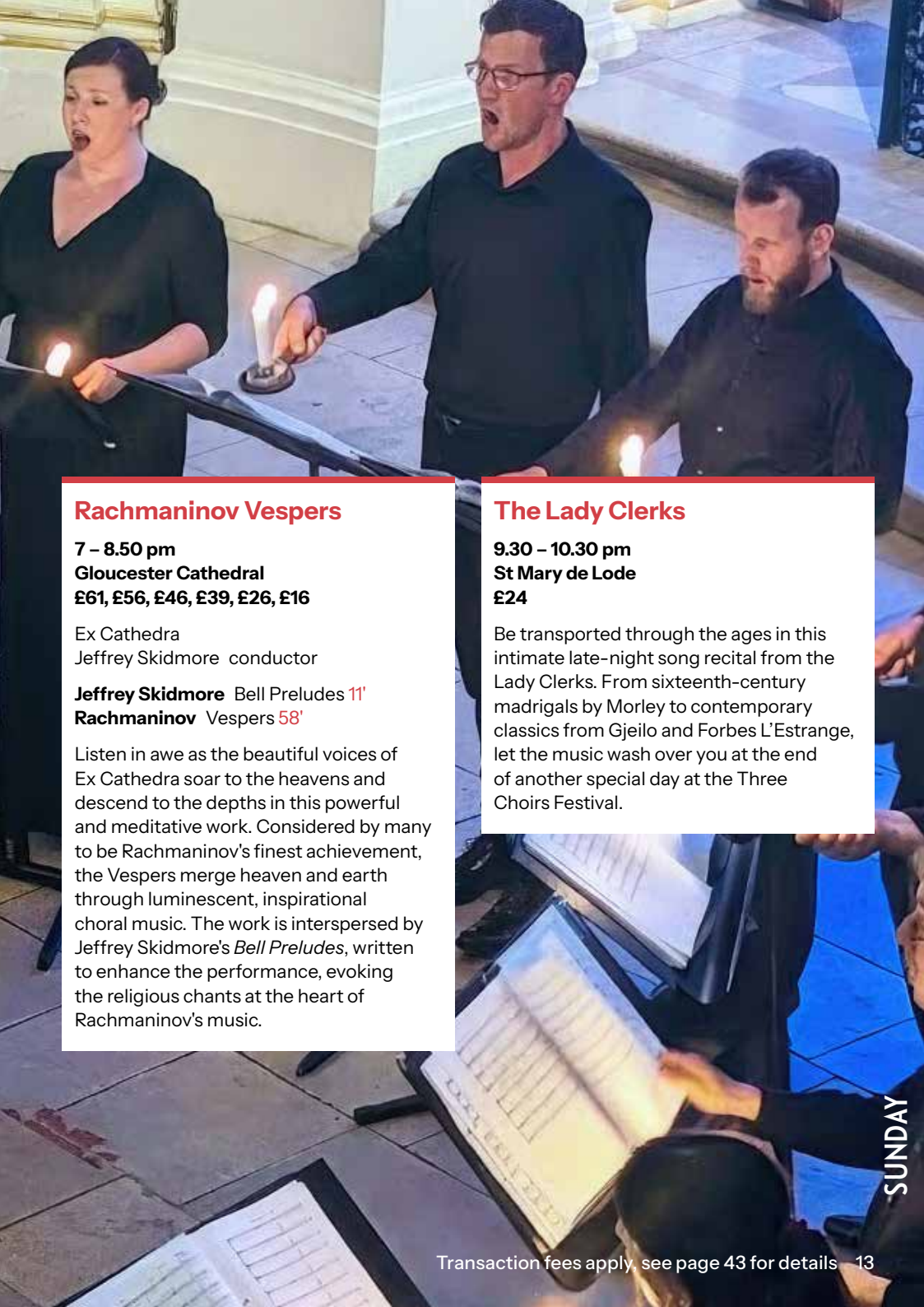
Three Choirs Festival Youth Choir
Peter Dyke *organ*
Charlotte Corderoy *conductor*

Rose Preces and Responses

Wood Magnificat and Nunc dimittis
in E flat (No 2)

Wood O Thou the Central Orb

Celebrate the music of Charles Wood in his centenary year in this evening's service sung by the Three Choirs Festival Youth Choir, including the dramatic *O Thou the Central Orb*.



Rachmaninov Vespers

7 – 8.50 pm

Gloucester Cathedral

£61, £56, £46, £39, £26, £16

Ex Cathedra

Jeffrey Skidmore conductor

Jeffrey Skidmore Bell Preludes 11'

Rachmaninov Vespers 58'

Listen in awe as the beautiful voices of Ex Cathedra soar to the heavens and descend to the depths in this powerful and meditative work. Considered by many to be Rachmaninov's finest achievement, the Vespers merge heaven and earth through luminescent, inspirational choral music. The work is interspersed by Jeffrey Skidmore's *Bell Preludes*, written to enhance the performance, evoking the religious chants at the heart of Rachmaninov's music.

The Lady Clerks

9.30 – 10.30 pm

St Mary de Lode

£24

Be transported through the ages in this intimate late-night song recital from the Lady Clerks. From sixteenth-century madrigals by Morley to contemporary classics from Gjeilo and Forbes L'Estrange, let the music wash over you at the end of another special day at the Three Choirs Festival.

SUNDAY

GAM: Singing Together

9.30 – 10.30 am
St Nicholas' Church
£10 adults, £4 under 18s, under 5s FREE

Join Gloucestershire Academy of Music INSPIRE students, Barbican Artists, and special guests Gloucester Dementia Choir and discover the power of music in this concert which celebrates its crucial role in helping mental health, wellbeing, and creating communities.

Gloucester City Walks: Roman Gloucester

10 – 11.15 am
St Michael's Tower
£10 adults, £4 under 18s

Hear why the Romans came to Gloucester, discover Roman walls in the Eastgate Chamber, and meet Emperor Nerva.

Songs of Gloucestershire

11 am – 12 noon
Gloucester Cathedral
£16, under 5s FREE

Gloucester Cathedral Junior Choir and local schools
Jonathan Hope *organ*
Nia Llewelyn Jones *conductor*

Hurd *Swingin' Samson* 12'
Lin Marsh *Songs of Gloucestershire* 35'

A joyful concert featuring the second performance of *Songs of Gloucestershire*, a newly commissioned choral song cycle by Lin Marsh for the Cathedral's new Singing Academy. The programme also features local composer Michael Hurd's beloved choral cantata *Swingin' Samson*, marking the twentieth anniversary of his death – do you remember singing it yourself in school? Performers include Gloucester Cathedral Junior Choir and children from local schools.

Scores of *Swingin' Samson* generously provided by the RCM library

Stanford Society Talk and Lunch

12 noon – 2 pm
St Mary de Crypt
£38

Professor **Jeremy Dibble**, author of a new book on Charles Wood, will discuss Wood's life and work in the composer's centenary year, including some of the works being performed at the 2026 Festival. Enjoy a delicious lunch before the talk.

Charles Owen Piano Recital

3 – 4.45 pm
St Nicholas' Church
£36, £28, £15

Charles Owen *piano*

Chopin Ballade No 1 in G minor, Op. 23 9'

R Schumann Sonata No 2 in G minor,
Op. 22 18'

Janáček In the Mists 15'

Cheryl Frances-Hoad Stones of the Sky
15' *Festival commission*

Schubert Wanderer-Fantasia, D 760 21'

Darkness and light stand in stark contrast in this evocative recital from outstanding concert pianist Charles Owen, which includes a Festival commission from Cheryl Frances-Hoad. Threads of dark drama and dream-like moods are woven through the first half of the programme, from the sweeping passion of Schumann's thrilling Sonata to the brooding intensity of Janáček's *In the Mists*. In vivid contrast, the second half is full of light, warmth, and colour with Cheryl Frances-Hoad's depiction of sparkling Alpine gems in *Stones of the Sky* and Schubert's energetic, affirmative *Wanderer-Fantasia*.

Supported by Revd Terry and Ruth Wilcock

***Stones of the Sky* was commissioned for the Three Choirs Festival by Penny Wright, Andrew Neubauer, and Sally Parkhouse**

Choral Evensong

5.30 – 6.20 pm
Gloucester Cathedral
FREE (no ticket required)

Three Cathedral Choirs
Jonathan Hope *organ*
Andrew Reid *conductor*

Sumsion Responses

SS Wesley Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in E

SS Wesley Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace

SS Wesley Choral Song and Fugue

Join us as we celebrate the work of distinguished church musician Samuel Sebastian Wesley in his 150th anniversary year with the combined forces of the Three Cathedral Choirs. Wesley was a former organist of both Gloucester and Hereford cathedrals, and director of several Three Choirs Festivals. His beautiful *Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace* is a highlight of this evening's service.

MONDAY

Glagolitic Mass

7.30 – 9.30 pm

Gloucester Cathedral

£61, £56, £46, £39, £26, £16

Katelyn Emerson *organ*

Rachel Nicholls *soprano*

Hilary Summers *contralto*

Gwyn Hughes Jones *tenor*

Ashley Riches *bass*

Three Choirs Festival Chorus

Philharmonia Orchestra

Adrian Partington *conductor*

Elgar Cockaigne Overture 15'

Poulenc Organ Concerto 25'

Janáček Glagolitic Mass 40'

Experience the power of Janáček's dramatic Glagolitic Mass as the Festival Chorus and Philharmonia Orchestra bring this magnificent work to life. Listen out for joyful fanfares, vibrant colour, and thrilling organ solos played by young American virtuoso Katelyn Emerson. Gloucester Cathedral's new organ takes centre stage in this evening's concert, and Poulenc's famous organ concerto perfectly showcases this wonderful instrument. Alongside these works sits Elgar's fabulous *Cockaigne* Overture, a sparkling musical portrait of London ending in a blaze of orchestral glory.

Supported by an anonymous donor

The Phantom of the Opera

10.15 – 11.55 pm

Gloucester Cathedral

£24

Jonathan Hope *organ*

Step back in time 100 years to the mysterious world of the Paris Opera House, haunted by the murderous Phantom desperate to win the woman he loves. In the darkened cathedral nave, be prepared for shocks and scares galore as you watch the 1925 black-and-white silent film accompanied by live organ improvisation from Gloucester Cathedral's talented Assistant Director of Music Jonathan Hope. Listen out for the thundering organ as the chandelier falls!

MONDAY



MONDAY

Pascal Bachmann Organ Recital

9.30 – 10.30 am
St Peter's Catholic Church
£15

J S Bach Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C, BWV 564 14'

Brahms Chorale Prelude and Fugue on 'O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid', WoO 7; Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele, Op. 122 No 5; Prelude and Fugue in A minor, WoO 9; O wie selig seid ihr doch, ihr Frommen, Op. 122 No 6; Prelude and Fugue in G minor, WoO 10 27'

J S Bach Fantasia in C minor, BWV 562; Pièce d'Orgue, BWV 572 15'

Our series of recitals by talented young performers from the Royal College of Organists is opened by Pascal Bachmann, organ scholar at St John's College, Cambridge, who presents a masterly programme from two German music giants.

Supported by Fr Michael Thomas

Gloucester City Walks: Monks, Canons, and Friars

11 am – 12.15 pm
St Michael's Tower
£10 adults, £11 under 18s

Visit a Priory, an Abbey, and two Friaries, and hear about the lives of their inhabitants and their relationships with the local community.

Elgar Society Lecture and Lunch

11 am – 2.15 pm
The King's School Dining Hall
£38

Be one of the first to read the new book *The Importance of Elgar* following today's launch by the Elgar Society as part of their 75th anniversary celebrations. This fascinating book features over sixty essays by composers, conductors, performers, and commentators, including Gloucester Artistic Director **Adrian Partington** and musicologist **Christopher Morley**. Adrian and Christopher will discuss Elgar, his music, and their respective essays, after which you can enjoy a delicious lunch.

The Comedy of Errors

12.30 – 2.30 pm
Old Bishop's Palace Garden,
The King's School
£18 adults, £11 under 18s

Two sets of twins accidentally separated at birth – the two sons of Egeon, both named Antipholus, and their servants, both named Dromio. When one set of twins suddenly washes up on the other's shore, a hilarious tale of mistaken identity unfolds... Join the Festival Players for an afternoon of riotous confusion and laughter.

This is an outdoor performance. It will be relocated only in the event of severely adverse weather conditions.



Ian Bostridge and Fretwork perform Dowland

3 – 4.15 pm

Gloucester Cathedral

£36, £31, £26, £11

Ian Bostridge *tenor*

Elizabeth Kenny *lute*

Fretwork

Step back in time to Elizabethan England in this exquisite recital by viol consort Fretwork, renowned lutenist Elizabeth Kenny, and the superb Ian Bostridge, celebrating the 400th anniversary of lutenist John Dowland. One of the greatest musicians of his age, Dowland's timeless music is full of passion, and this recital features some of his most moving and iconic songs, including *Flow my tears* and *In darkness let me dwell*. Sit back and enjoy an afternoon of delicate beauty in the tranquil setting of Gloucester Cathedral.

Supported by Elizabeth Jacobs

TUESDAY

Choral Evensong

5.30 – 6.20 pm

Gloucester Cathedral

FREE (no ticket required)

Gloucester Cathedral St Benedict's Singers
and Trinity Singers

Jonathan Hope *organ*

Nia Llewelyn Jones *conductor*

Smith Preces and Responses

Iain Farrington Magnificat and

Nunc dimittis (The Blues Service)

King O clap your hands

Tonight's service of Evensong, sung by the talented youth choirs of Gloucester Cathedral, features the challenging and jazzy setting of the Magnificat and Nunc dimittis by Iain Farrington with an anthem by local composer Ian King.

TUESDAY

Songs of the Sea

7.30 – 9.30 pm

Gloucester Cathedral

£61, £56, £46, £39, £26, £16

Roderick Williams *baritone*
Three Choirs Festival Youth Choir
Philharmonia Orchestra
Martyn Brabbins *conductor*

Mendelssohn 'The Hebrides' Overture 10'

Wood Never weather-beaten sail 4'

Elgar Sea Pictures 23'

Sumsion They that go down to the sea
in ships 6'

Cecilia McDowall Ave Maris Stella 12'

Stanford Songs of the Fleet 26'

In anticipation of the forthcoming 200th anniversary of Gloucester Docks, experience the majesty of the sea in tonight's dramatic concert from the Three Choirs Festival Youth Choir and Philharmonia Orchestra. Feel the rolling swell of the Atlantic in Mendelssohn's *Hebrides* Overture and marvel at the sometimes peaceful, sometimes storm-tossed waves evoked in Elgar's ravishing *Sea Pictures*. Listen as the storm subsides into calm waters in Cecilia McDowall's beautiful *Ave Maris Stella* and set sail with the British Navy in Stanford's expressive *Songs of the Fleet*. The rich voice of renowned baritone Roderick Williams will deftly conjure the sea's many moods, from tranquil to turbulent, from angry to awe-inspiring.

Performance of *Sea Pictures* supported by Penny Moore

Performance of *Songs of the Fleet* supported by Professor Jeremy and Alison Dibble

Three Choirs Festival Youth Choir supported by Fr Michael Thomas, Peter and Gillian Kendal, and Pamela White

I Heard a Voice

10 – 11 pm

St Mary de Lode

£24

The Oriel Singers
Ben Sawyer *conductor*

Programme to include:

Eric Whitacre Leonardo Dreams of
His Flying Machine 9'

James MacMillan Invocation 6'

Vaughan Williams Three Shakespeare
Songs 6'

End your day bathed in glorious sound during this feast of thrilling music from The Oriel Singers. Marvel at the incredible harmonies of Whitacre's *Leonardo Dreams...*, the intricacy of Vaughan Williams' *Three Shakespeare Songs*, and the beauty of MacMillan's *Invocation*, written for The Oriel Singers when they won the Choir of the Year award.

The Viennese Mass

9.30 – 10.30 am
St John's Northgate
£15

Paul Ellison explores Mozart's Requiem and Beethoven's Mass in C in the context of the Viennese mass tradition. He will discuss the composition of the Requiem, including its completion following Mozart's untimely death, and its influence on Beethoven. The talk concludes with an examination of the Mass in C, connecting it with settings by Haydn and Mozart, and highlighting elements anticipating the great *Missa solennis*.

APOLLO5

11.15 am – 12.30 pm
St Nicholas' Church
£36, £28, £15

APOLLO5

Programme to include:

Byrd Ne irascaris Domine 5'

Piers Connor Kennedy Strike it up, Tabor 3'

Lucy Walker new work *premiere*

Parry My Soul, There is a Country 4'

Finzi My Spirit Sang All Day 3'

Vaughan Williams The Call 3'

Stanford The Blue Bird 3'

Spend a morning in the company of acclaimed British vocal ensemble APOLLO5 as they lead you on a vivid journey through centuries of English choral and a *cappella* music. Their all-English programme opens in Renaissance splendour with Byrd and Tallis before transporting you into the twenty-first century with some of today's most compelling voices in choral music, including Alec Roth and Lucy Walker. The journey continues with beloved masterpieces by Parry, Finzi, Stanford, and Britten, and concludes with vibrant jazz and pop arrangements, showcasing APOLLO5's expressive range and celebrating the rich musical heritage of their home country.

The Comedy of Errors

1.30 – 3.30 pm
£18 adults, £11 under 18s

See p18 for details



WEDNESDAY

Choral Evensong

3 – 4 pm

Gloucester Cathedral

FREE (no ticket required)



Three Cathedral Choirs

Jonathan Hope *organ*

Adrian Partington *conductor*

Hurd Praise ye the Lord

Janet Wheeler Preces and Responses

Gavin Higgins Magnificat and Nunc
dimittis *premiere*

S Wesley In exitu Israel

Bliss Praeludium

This afternoon's service features a newly commissioned Magnificat and Nunc dimittis from Gavin Higgins, the Festival's first Associate Composer, sung by the joint forces of the Three Cathedral Choirs.

This service will be broadcast live on BBC Radio 3. Please be seated by 2.45 pm

Gavin Higgins' Magnificat and Nunc dimittis commissioned by the Richard Hall Charitable Trust for the Three Choirs Festival in memory of Richard Hall

Performance of *Praise ye the Lord* supported by the British Music Society Charitable Trust

Gloucester City Walks: Saxon Gloucester

3 – 4.15 pm

St Michael's Tower

£10 adults, £4 under 18s

Trace Gloucester's history between the end of the Roman era and the Norman Conquest. Hear about Aethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians, the only woman to rule an Anglo-Saxon kingdom, who revived the town and was buried here in 918.

Three Deans Contest: Bake-Off!

4.30 – 5.45 pm

The Deanery, 1 Millers Green

£16

Join the Deans of Gloucester, Hereford, and Worcester as rivalries are renewed this summer. Who will be the one to win over the judges' hearts (and stomachs) with their tasty treats? Don't miss out on this captivating culinary competition!

Edward Byrne Organ Recital

4.30 – 5.30 pm

St Peter's Catholic Church

£15

Francis Pott Toccata on 'King's Lynn' from Three Hymn Tune Fantasias 5'

J S Bach (arr. **Reger**) Prelude and Fugue in B flat minor, BWV 867 7'

Judith Weir The Tree of Peace 5'

Mendelssohn Organ Sonata in B flat, Op. 65 No 4 14'

J S Bach (trans. **Isoir**) Concerto in A minor for 4 Harpsichords and Orchestra, BWV 1065 (after Vivaldi) 12'

Naji Hakim Antienne from *Mariales* 3'

Reger Introduction and Passacaglia in D minor 8'

Edward Byrne, College Organist and teacher at Marlborough College, is our second talented young performer from the Royal College of Organists. He presents an expressive programme including Mendelssohn, intricate works by J S Bach, and Judith Weir's poignant *The Tree of Peace*.

Supported by Fr Michael Thomas

Beethoven Mass in C

7.30 – 9.30 pm

Gloucester Cathedral

£61, £56, £46, £39, £26, £16

Charlotte Bowden *soprano*
Olivia Ray *mezzo-soprano*
Mark Padmore *tenor*
John Savournin *bass*
Three Choirs Festival Chorus
Philharmonia Orchestra
Samuel Hudson *conductor*

Cecilia McDowall A Song for St Cecilia 11'
version premiere

Rubbra Sinfonia da camera (Symphony
No 10) 18'

Cecilia McDowall Rain, Steam and
Speed 11'

Beethoven Mass in C 45'

A sacred masterpiece – Beethoven's radiant Mass in C speaks from the heart and is a beautiful, deeply personal contemplation of the divine. The intimate feel and yearning of the music is unusually moving and reflects Beethoven's desire for the focus of the work to be on the human experience of being in church, rather than on an all-powerful God. Two vivid pieces by Cecilia McDowall, including her joyful *A Song for St Cecilia*, and Rubbra's expressive *Sinfonia da camera* complete the programme of this impassioned concert.

**Vocal soloists supported by
John Hammond and funds raised by
the Mass in C Come and Sing event**

An Evening with Ivor Novello

10 – 11 pm

Chapter House, Gloucester Cathedral
£24

Jessica Robinson *soprano*
Ian McMillan-Davidson *piano*

David Ivor Davies, aka Ivor Novello, was an apprentice music scholar at Gloucester Cathedral under Herbert Brewer, alongside fellow students Herbert Howells and Ivor Gurney. Join Ian McMillan-Davidson as 'Ivor' at his piano, together with recent Cardiff Singer of the World finalist Jessica Robinson, in this nostalgic, tuneful reminiscence of some of Novello's most-loved songs in the 75th anniversary year of his death.

WEDNESDAY

SATURDAY 25 JULY

WHAT'S ON GUIDE

| | | | |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|----|
| Opening Service | 10 – 11am | Gloucester Cathedral | p6 |
| Festival Reception | 11.30 am – 12.30 pm | St Mary de Crypt | p6 |
| VOCES8 | 12.45 – 2 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p6 |
| Gloucester City Walks: Guided Walk of the Historic City | 2.30 – 3.45 pm | St Michael's Tower | p7 |
| My Favourite Things | 2.30 – 4.30 pm | Chapter House | p7 |
| Misha Kaploukhii Piano Recital | 4 – 5.30 pm | St Nicholas' Church | p8 |
| Belshazzar's Feast | 8 – 10.10 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p9 |

SUNDAY 26 JULY

| | | | |
|--|-------------------|----------------------|-----|
| Festival Eucharist | 10.15 – 11.45 am | Gloucester Cathedral | p10 |
| Members' Lunch | 12 noon – 1.30 pm | St Mary de Crypt | p10 |
| Roderick Williams Song Recital | 2 – 3.15 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p10 |
| Meet the Macbeths | 3.30 – 4.30 pm | Chapter House | p11 |
| A Portrait of Composers' Wives | 4 – 5 pm | St Mary de Crypt | p11 |
| Gloucester City Walks: Music and Poetry | 4 – 4.40 pm | South Porch | p12 |
| Choral Evensong | 5.30 – 6.20 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p12 |
| Rachmaninov Vespers | 7 – 8.50 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p13 |
| The Lady Clerks | 9.30 – 10.30 pm | St Mary de Lode | p13 |

MONDAY 27 JULY

| | | | |
|--|------------------|----------------------|-----|
| GAM: Singing Together | 9.30 – 10.30 am | St Nicholas' Church | p14 |
| Gloucester City Walks: Roman Gloucester | 10 – 11.15 am | St Michael's Tower | p14 |
| Songs of Gloucestershire | 11 am – 12 noon | Gloucester Cathedral | p14 |
| Stanford Society Talk and Lunch | 12 noon – 2 pm | St Mary de Crypt | p14 |
| Charles Owen Piano Recital | 3 – 4.45 pm | St Nicholas' Church | p15 |
| Choral Evensong | 5.30 – 6.20 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p15 |
| Glagolitic Mass | 7.30 – 9.30 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p16 |
| The Phantom of the Opera | 10.15 – 11.55 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p16 |

TUESDAY 28 JULY

| | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------------|-----|
| Pascal Bachmann Organ Recital | 9.30 – 10.30 am | St Peter's Catholic Church | p18 |
| Gloucester City Walks: Monks, Canons, and Friars | 11 am – 12.15 pm | St Michael's Tower | p18 |
| Elgar Society Lecture and Lunch | 11 am – 2.15 pm | The King's School Dining Hall | p18 |
| The Comedy of Errors | 12.30 – 2.30 pm | Old Bishop's Palace Garden | p18 |
| Ian Bostridge and Fretwork | 3 – 4.15 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p19 |
| Choral Evensong | 5.30 – 6.20 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p20 |
| Songs of the Sea | 7.30 – 9.30 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p21 |
| I Heard a Voice | 10 – 11 pm | St Mary de Lode | p21 |

WEDNESDAY 29 JULY**WHAT'S ON GUIDE**

| | | | |
|--|---------------------|------------------------------|-----|
| The Viennese Mass | 9.30 – 10.30 am | St John's Northgate | p22 |
| APOLLO5 | 11.15 am – 12.30 pm | St Nicholas' Church | p22 |
| The Comedy of Errors | 1.30 – 3.30 pm | Old Bishop's Palace Garden | p22 |
| Choral Evensong | 3 – 4 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p24 |
| Gloucester City Walks: Saxon Gloucester | 3 – 4.15 pm | St Michael's Tower | p24 |
| Three Deans Contest: Bake-Off! | 4.30 – 5.45 pm | The Deanery, 1 Millers Green | p24 |
| Edward Byrne Organ Recital | 4.30 – 5.30 pm | St Peter's Catholic Church | p24 |
| Beethoven Mass in C | 7.30 – 9.30 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p25 |
| An Evening with Ivor Novello | 10 – 11 pm | Chapter House | p25 |

THURSDAY 30 JULY

| | | | |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----|
| The Gloucester Organ: A New Era | 9.30 – 10.45 am | The King's School Dining Hall | p28 |
| Celebrity Organ Recital | 11.15 am – 12.30 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p28 |
| Mark Padmore: Winterreise | 2 – 3.30 pm | St Nicholas' Church | p28 |
| Let's Call the Whole Thing Off | 3 – 5 pm | Chapter House | p30 |
| Gloucester City Walks: Music and Poetry | 4 – 4.40 pm | South Porch | p30 |
| Monteverdi Vespers | 7.30 – 9.40 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p31 |
| Chichester Psalms | 10.15 – 11.20 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p31 |

FRIDAY 31 JULY

| | | | |
|--|------------------|----------------------------|-----|
| Members' Breakfast | 9.30 – 10.30 am | St Mary de Crypt | p32 |
| Gloucester City Walks: Guided Walk of the Historic City | 9.30 – 10.45 am | St Michael's Tower | p32 |
| In Town and Country | 11 am – 12.30 pm | St Nicholas' Church | p32 |
| Alastair Stone Organ Recital | 12.45 – 1.45 pm | St Peter's Catholic Church | p33 |
| Come and Sing Mozart Requiem | 1.15 – 4.15 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p34 |
| Choral Evensong | 5.30 – 6.20 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p34 |
| Mozart Requiem | 7.30 – 9.30 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p35 |
| Lay Clerks in Concert | 10 – 11 pm | Chapter House | p35 |

SATURDAY 1 AUGUST

| | | | |
|---|------------------|--|-----|
| England's Britannia: Dame Clara Butt | 9.30 – 10.30 am | St John's Northgate | p36 |
| Beside the Seaside | 9.30 – 10.30 am | Chapter House | p36 |
| Faire is the Heaven | 11 am – 12.15 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p36 |
| Severn Meadows | 1.15 – 2.30 pm | St Nicholas' Church | p37 |
| Come and Sing Evensong Workshop | 3 – 5 pm | Ivor Gurney Hall, The King's School | p38 |
| Gloucester City Walks: Monks, Canons, and Friars | 3.30 – 4.45 pm | St Michael's Tower | p38 |
| Choral Evensong | 5.30 – 6.20 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p39 |
| The Dream of Gerontius | 7.30 – 9.50 pm | Gloucester Cathedral | p39 |

The Gloucester Organ: A New Era

9.30 – 10.45 am

The King's School Dining Hall
£15

The organ in Gloucester Cathedral is at once the oldest and newest in the country. What you see dates from the seventeenth century; what you hear dates from today. **Paul Hale**, who has advised on the organ project and written a new book about the Gloucester organ, has prepared a fascinating talk liberally illustrated with images of the organ throughout its exceptionally long life. Learn about the sometimes-controversial story of this wonderful instrument and enjoy photographs never seen before, showing just what is inside those beautiful historic organ cases.

Celebrity Organ Recital: Thomas Ospital

11.15 am – 12.30 pm

Gloucester Cathedral
£26

Dupré *Symphonie-Passion*,
Op. 23 36'

Ravel (orchestral suite, trans. **Ospital**)
Le tombeau de Couperin 20'

Thomas Ospital Improvisation

Revel in a feast of French music with rising star Thomas Ospital, organist of St Eustache in Paris and one of the world's finest recitalists. Works by Dupré and Ravel are complemented by a unique improvisation on Gloucester Cathedral's new Nicholson organ in this unmissable performance, programmed especially for the Three Choirs Festival.

Mark Padmore: Winterreise

2 – 3.30 pm

St Nicholas' Church
£36, £28, £15

Mark Padmore *tenor*
Christopher Glynn *piano*

Schubert *Winterreise* 75'

Music and poetry combine to stunning effect in Schubert's haunting *Winterreise*, a setting of twenty-four songs charting a traveller's journey through an icy and foreboding winter landscape following his rejection by the person he loves. One of classical music's greatest song cycles, Schubert's devastatingly beautiful music brings the poetry to life and turns summer into winter in this vivid and emotional recital by superb tenor Mark Padmore. Maybe not the most obvious choice for a summer music festival, but we simply couldn't pass on giving our audience the chance to hear Mark's celebrated interpretation.



THURSDAY

Let's Call the Whole Thing Off

3 – 5 pm

Chapter House, Gloucester
Cathedral

£12 adults, £4 under 18s, under 5s FREE;
to include tea and cake

We all love to argue about words: is it 'scone' or 'scon', 'bath' or 'barth'? *Let's Call the Whole Thing Off* is a joyous song all about the differences of pronunciation. In this fun, light-hearted workshop from renowned music director **Tim Steiner** you will sing through the original version, then re-write it for the modern generation. *Let's Call the Whole Thing Off* shares its harmony with many other songs, including *Blue Moon* and *Stand By Me* – you'll sing a few of these then attempt a spectacular choral mash-up.

Suitable for all ages and abilities. We welcome families and no previous experience is necessary.

Gloucester City Walks: Music and Poetry

4 – 4.40 pm

South Porch, Gloucester Cathedral

£10 adults, £4 under 18s

This walk takes in Westgate Street and the Cathedral Precincts looking at the buildings associated with musicians, composers and poets, and the odd inventor. Explore stories associated with the history of the Three Choirs Festival, its venues, and Gloucester's rich musical tradition.

Evening Prayer will be said today at 5 pm in
the Lady Chapel of Gloucester Cathedral



THURSDAY

Monteverdi Vespers

7.30 – 9.40 pm

Gloucester Cathedral

£61, £56, £46, £39, £26, £16

Zoë Brookshaw *soprano*
Daisy Bevan *soprano*
Alexander Chance *countertenor*
Nick Pritchard *tenor*
David de Winter *tenor*
James Geidt *baritone*
Tristan Hambleton *bass-baritone*
Three Cathedral Choirs
La Serenissima
Samuel Hudson *conductor*

Monteverdi Vespers 95'

A dazzling masterpiece full of light and colour, Monteverdi's *Vespers* is at once delicate and magnificent, prayerful and dramatic, heavenly and vibrant. One of the most stunning works of its time, the *Vespers* is known for its grand choruses, thrilling rhythms, and vivid harmonies. Let the music wash over you as the Three Cathedral Choirs bring this extraordinary work to life alongside the Venetian music masters, instrumental ensemble La Serenissima.

Supported by David and Patricia Ball

Chichester Psalms

10.15 – 11.20 pm

Gloucester Cathedral

£24

Tom Lilburn *countertenor*
Piers Maxim *organ*
Cecily Beer *harp*
Jack Redman *piano*
Diggory Seacome, Anna Newman
percussion
Saint Cecilia Singers
Jonathan Hope *conductor*

Ian Venables God be merciful, Op. 51 5'

Bernstein Chichester Psalms 20'

Neil Cox Requiem Canticles 37'

The Saint Cecilia Singers perform a late-night concert alive with vivid drama. The exhilarating *Chichester Psalms*, with its unique blend of rhythm and harmony, will raise the roof with a joyful cry. Written especially to be sung in the echoey nave of Gloucester Cathedral, Neil Cox's beautiful *Requiem Canticles* creates moments of magnificent resonance alongside moments of real intimacy in a moving, expressive work featuring a recording of the bells of Speyer Cathedral.

Members' Breakfast

9.30 – 10.30 am
St Mary de Crypt
FREE (ticket required)

Enjoy coffee and pastries with fellow Festival members and members of the Three Choirs Festival Board and staff.

MEMBER
EVENT

Gloucester City Walks: Guided Walk of the Historic City

9.30 – 10.45 am
St Michael's Tower
£10 adults, £4 under 18s

Discover the City's fascinating history from the arrival of the Romans nearly 2,000 years ago.

In Town and Country

11 am – 12.30 pm
St Nicholas' Church
£36, £28, £15

London Chamber Ensemble *string quartet*

Howells 'Chosen' Tune and Luchinushka *from* Three Pieces for Violin and Piano, Op. 28 (arr. Madeleine Mitchell) 6'

Wood 'Highgate' String Quartet (1893) 30'

Howells 'In Gloucestershire' (earlier version, 1920) 29'

Howells' love of the county of his birth shines through in the glorious music of this intimate recital. His string quartet *In Gloucestershire* was originally written in 1916, but Howells had to work hard to reconstruct the piece after it was lost on the train from Lydney. Undoubtedly, the county's beautiful landscapes dance through the mind in its stirring melodies. 'Chosen' Tune refers to Chosen Hill, where the patchwork of Gloucestershire spreads out below from the Forest of Dean to the Cotswold Hills. Howells' friend and former teacher Charles Wood's evocative 'Highgate' Quartet completes the programme.

This concert is dedicated to the memory of Anthony Boden

Performance of 'Highgate' Quartet supported by Professor Jeremy and Alison Dibble in memory of Pamela and Colin Dibble



Alastair Stone Organ Recital

12.45 – 1.45 pm

St Peter's Catholic Church

£15

J S Bach Prelude and Fugue in C minor,
BWV 546 12'

Rheinberger Organ Sonata No 3,
Op. 88 15'

Brahms Fugue in A flat minor, WoO 8 7'

Elgar Vesper Voluntaries (selection) 9'

Alain Le Jardin suspendu *and* Litanies
from Trois Pièces pour Grand Orgue 10'

Our final talented recitalist from the Royal College of Organists is Alastair Stone, Assistant Organist at Ripon Cathedral. He presents a programme of works by organ masters from J S Bach to Jehan Alain, as well as a selection of wonderful miniatures from Festival favourite Edward Elgar.

Supported by Fr Michael Thomas

Choral Evensong

5.30 – 6.20 pm

Gloucester Cathedral

FREE (no ticket required)

Three Cathedral Choirs
Nicholas Freestone *organ*
Samuel Hudson *conductor*

Radcliffe Preces and Responses
Kerensa Briggs Gloucester Service
Anthem – new work *premiere*
Rory Boyle Toccata

This evening's service features a Magnificat and Nunc dimittis by celebrated young composer and former Gloucester Cathedral Youth Choir member Kerensa Briggs. Afterwards there will be a presentation to the winner of The John Sanders Memorial Competition for Young Composers 2026, whose winning work will have been premiered during the service.

Come and Sing Mozart Requiem

1.15 – 4.15 pm

Gloucester Cathedral

£26

Multibuy Offer: Get 10% off your ticket for this event if purchased alongside a ticket for the evening Mozart Requiem concert

Bethan Evans *soprano*
Zosi Sookanadenchetty *alto*
Matthew Keighley *tenor*
Lucas Maunder *bass*
Jonathan Hope *organ*
Adrian Partington *conductor*

Mozart Requiem

Your chance to sing one of the great choral classics. Mozart's Requiem is one of the very best, and you can experience what it's like to sing this great work in a special workshop led by Gloucester Artistic Director Adrian Partington. The workshop will end with a full, concert-style run-through in the Cathedral nave with exceptional young soloists at the start of their professional careers. The workshop is open to all, and music will be provided if needed.

FRIDAY

Mozart Requiem

7.30 – 9.30 pm

Gloucester Cathedral

£61, £56, £46, £39, £26, £16

Aoife Miskelly *soprano*

Annabella-Vesela Ellis *mezzo-soprano*

Gwilym Bowen *tenor*

Aidan Smith *bass*

Zsolt-Tihamér Visontay *director/violin*

Scott Dickinson *viola*

Three Choirs Festival Chorus

Philharmonia Orchestra

Andrew Reid *conductor*

Mozart Sinfonia Concertante for Violin, Viola and Orchestra 32'

Mozart Requiem 55'

One of the most famous choral works of all time, Mozart's dramatic Requiem is an awe-inspiring work shrouded in mystery. Impassioned and haunting, the piece was composed as Mozart lay on his deathbed, and remained unfinished at his untimely death, being completed by his pupil according to his wishes. Knowing that he was dying, Mozart poured his fear, pain, and grief into his Requiem, and produced unforgettable music of great beauty and power. The Requiem is complemented in this concert by Mozart's celebrated Sinfonia Concertante for Violin, Viola and Orchestra. This expressive work is at times lively, at times sorrowful, but like the Requiem always utterly beautiful.

Supported by the Three Choirs Festival Stewards and Chair's Circle

Vocal soloists supported by Claire Wichbold

Instrumental soloists supported by the Two Clefs Foundation

Lay Clerks in Concert

10 – 11 pm

Chapter House, Gloucester Cathedral
£24

Always a Festival favourite! This year, the lay clerks of Gloucester Cathedral present *The Spirit of the Festival*, a selection of serenades, sonorities and soundscapes spanning the spiritual, sentimental and sensational. Enjoy a summery celebration of all things sung with Gloucester's most suave and sophisticated songsters!

England's Britannia: Dame Clara Butt

9.30 – 10.30 am
St John's Northgate
£15

Professional mezzo-soprano **Jacqueline Edwards** discusses and illustrates the life and career of her distant ancestor, the celebrated Edwardian contralto Clara Butt, for whom Elgar composed several works, including his song cycle *Sea Pictures*, the role of the Angel in *The Dream of Gerontius*, and *Land of Hope and Glory*. Learn more about her personality and music in this fascinating and entertaining talk, a must for any Elgar enthusiast.

Beside the Seaside

9.30 – 10.30 am
Chapter House, Gloucester Cathedral
£12 adults, under 18s FREE
Ideal for babies, toddlers, and young children

Join Festival regulars the Lilliput Duo for a selection of musical postcards especially for young children and their families. Let us whisk you away to a range of holiday destinations with fiddle tunes and songs to join in with – and don't forget to come and have a go on a violin yourself at the end!

Faire is the Heaven

11 am – 12.15 pm
Gloucester Cathedral
£36, £31, £26, £11

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs
Jonathan Hope *organ*
Brett Weymark *conductor*

Programme to include:

Parry I Was Glad 5'
Ireland Greater love hath no man 6'
Harris Faire is the Heaven 5'
Balfour Gardiner Evening Hymn 6'
Vaughan Williams The Old One
Hundredth Psalm Tune 4'
Bliss Sing, Mortals! 6'

Brett Weymark and 130 voices of Sydney Philharmonia Choirs present a stirring programme of inspiring hymns and anthems, including Parry's *I Was Glad* and Balfour Gardiner's *Evening Hymn*. These works may have been written for coronations, jubilees, and services in great English cathedrals – but they sound just as transcendent in the cathedral-esque Concert Hall of the Sydney Opera House and churches in the New South Wales countryside, as the choir proved recently in its 2025 season. Now they bring the music 'home' together with UK premieres of works by two celebrated Australian contemporary composers, Joe Twist and Alice Chance, to surprise and delight.

Performance of *Greater love hath no man* supported by the John Ireland Trust



Severn Meadows

1.15 – 2.30 pm

St Nicholas' Church

£36, £28, £15

James Gilchrist *tenor*

Anna Tilbrook *piano*

Peter Sutton *narrator*

Peter Florence *narrator*

A deeply personal performance of music and poetry exploring the life of Gloucestershire poet and composer Ivor Gurney and his friendship with Will Harvey and Herbert Howells. In their younger days before the First World War, the trio spent all the hours they could exploring the Gloucestershire countryside together. Gurney and Howells famously attended the premiere of Vaughan Williams' *Tallis Fantasia* at the 1910 Three Choirs Festival. Their friendship survived the war and Gurney's tragic incarceration in a mental asylum before his untimely death. Celebrated tenor James Gilchrist and pianist Anna Tilbrook perform songs by Gurney alongside readings of his poems in this beautiful and poignant concert.

**Supported by an anonymous donor and
The Ivor Gurney Society**

SATURDAY

Come and Sing Evensong Workshop

3 – 5 pm

Ivor Gurney Hall, The King's School
£20

Nicholas Freestone *piano*
Samuel Hudson *conductor*

Reading Preces and Responses

Stanford Psalm 150

Stanford Magnificat and Nunc dimittis
in C

Vaughan Williams Antiphon from
Five Mystical Songs

Don't miss this unique opportunity to sing a full, traditional cathedral Evensong as part of the Three Choirs Festival. The workshop, led by Worcester Artistic Director Samuel Hudson, will cover the works programmed for tonight's Evensong. All who attend the workshop are invited to form a mass Evensong choir to sing the service at 5.30 pm. The workshop is open to all, and music will be provided.

Gloucester City Walks: Monks, Canons, and Friars

3.30 – 4.45 pm

St Michael's Tower

£10 adults, £4 under 18s

Visit a Priory, an Abbey, and two Friaries, and hear about the lives of their inhabitants and their relationships with the local community.



Choral Evensong

5.30 – 6.20 pm

Gloucester Cathedral

FREE (no ticket required)

'Come and Sing Evensong' Choir

Nicholas Freestone *organ*

Samuel Hudson *conductor*

Reading Preces and Responses

Stanford Psalm 150

Stanford Magnificat and Nunc dimittis
in C

Vaughan Williams Antiphon from Five
Mystical Songs

Ives Variations on 'America'

Tonight's service is sung by the 'Come and Sing Evensong' Choir, and features glorious works from the repertoire of Anglican church music. Why not attend this afternoon's workshop (*see opposite page*) so you can join the choir too?

Supported by the American Friends of the Three Choirs Festival in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence

The Dream of Gerontius

7.30 – 9.50 pm

Gloucester Cathedral

£66, £61, £51, £39, £21, £16

Niamh O'Sullivan *mezzo-soprano*

John Findon *tenor*

David Ireland *bass-baritone*

Three Choirs Festival Chorus

Philharmonia Orchestra

Adrian Partington *conductor*

Wagner Parsifal: Prelude 13'

Elgar The Dream of Gerontius 100'

This masterpiece of British choral music is a work unlike any other. Depicting a man's final hours on earth and his soul's journey to judgement, *The Dream of Gerontius* contains some of Elgar's most moving and powerful music, from the quiet but fervent opening to the sublime 'Angel's Farewell'. Life and death, angels and demons, love and faith, all are explored in heart-rending music that Elgar himself described as 'the best of me'. The concert opens with the Prelude to Wagner's *Parsifal*, a huge musical influence on the composition of *Gerontius*. An unmissable evening and a fitting climax to the 2026 Festival from one of its greatest sons.

Supported by

The Perry Family Charitable Trust

Niamh O'Sullivan supported by Professor Jeremy and Alison Dibble in memory of Mollie Manning

Festival Village

Enhance your Three Choirs Festival experience with a visit to our wonderful Festival Village. Relax between concerts, enjoy a drink in the Festival Bar, grab a hot meal, and meet with friends in the beautiful surroundings of Gloucester Cathedral.

Free Performances on the Festival Bandstand

Providing a lively soundtrack to the Festival Village, local bands and performers take to the stage throughout the week. The perfect free-to-attend entertainment for all ages, whether you're sitting down with a drink or up and dancing at the front!

Free Access to Cathedral Rehearsals

Many of our large-scale rehearsals in the Cathedral are open to the public and are free to attend, so why not join us for a behind-the-scenes view of how concerts are rehearsed whilst experiencing amazing music performed by leading musicians. You can come in at any point and stay for as long as you would

like. Rehearsal times will be available at 3choirs.org/your-visit closer to the Festival week.

The Guilds of Designer Makers and Artists

Members of the Herefordshire, Cotswold, and Worcestershire Guilds will be exhibiting their latest collection of work in the Festival Village. A great opportunity to buy a gift at the Festival from a highly skilled local maker.

Box Office, Shop and Information

There will be a box office and shop located in the Festival Village during Festival week. It will be open daily from 10 am until the start of each evening concert. The box office team will be happy to help with any enquiries or needs you may have.

Volunteer

We're always looking for people to join our wonderful volunteer team who help us deliver the Festival. To find out more, contact our Production Coordinator: production@3choirs.org





GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL A PLACE *for* DISCOVERY

Gloucester Cathedral offers a great day out for everyone! A range of fascinating tours led by expert guides are on offer, including...



HIGHLIGHTS TOUR: Step into 1,000 years of history to discover the fascinating stories and people behind this magnificent medieval building



LIBRARY TOUR: Explore the hidden medieval library and learn about some of the wonderful books and manuscripts in our collection



TOWER TOUR: Climb the 269 steps of our iconic tower to enjoy panoramic views of Gloucester, the Severn Valley and even the Malvern Hills

...and much more!



For more information and to plan your visit, go to the Cathedral website: www.gloucestercathedral.org.uk



Nestled in the Cathedral Quarter in the heart of the city, **The Folk of Gloucester** is a 500-year-old Tudor merchant's house with beautifully preserved original features. Once home to Gloucester Folk Museum, it is now a thriving events venue and community hub run by Gloucester Civic Trust: a charity which strives to protect and promote Gloucester's rich architectural heritage. The building is free to look around with a cosy café and a year-round programme of music, theatre, workshops, and kids' events.

In the Festival Village

Food and drink offerings in the Festival Village include our Festival café, a fully stocked bar, and hot food vendors. There is something for every occasion, whether you're after mid-morning refreshment, a hot lunch, or a drink after the evening concert. You can view all our catering options at 3choirs.org/catering

Elsewhere

Cathedral café The Monk's Kitchen, situated just off the west walk of the cloisters, offers a range of drinks, refreshments, light lunches, and afternoon teas. For further details see gloucestercathedral.org.uk/visit/the-monk-s-kitchen

Situated within a stunning sixteenth-century Tudor building on Westgate Street, The Folk of Gloucester Café is directly opposite St Nicholas' Church and offers a range of delicious home-cooked lunches, cakes, snacks, and hot and cold drinks. The café is open on Tuesdays-Saturdays, 10 am-4 pm, with hot food served until 2 pm. For further details see gloucestercivictrust.org/folk-cafe-bar

Pre-Concert Dining

**The King's School Dining Hall,
6 pm daily (5.30 pm Sunday 26 July)
£32**

You can pre-book a two-course dinner served in The King's School Dining Hall at 6 pm on every evening of the Festival (5.30 pm on Sunday 26 July). The Dining Hall is just three minutes' walk from the Cathedral. All dinners include a main course, dessert, a glass of wine or soft drink, and tea or coffee.

Pre-Concert Dinner Menu

Saturday 25 July

- Beef brisket **or** shredded jackfruit (v), mashed potato, roasted carrots, and bacon and mushroom jus
- Apple and rhubarb crumble with custard

Sunday 26 July

- Chicken **or** Quorn (v) parmigiana, mozzarella, penne pasta, and roasted Mediterranean vegetables
- Double chocolate brownies

Monday 27 July

- Salmon fillet **or** butternut squash and goat's cheese tart (v), tender stem broccoli, new potatoes, and tarragon velouté
- Summer berry cheesecake

Tuesday 28 July

- Roast pork loin **or** vegetable Wellington (v), parsnips, Savoy cabbage, roast potatoes, and gravy
- Sticky toffee pudding with custard

Wednesday 29 July

- Turkey jägerschnitzel **or** leek and lentil cobbler (v), green beans, and Parmentier potatoes
- Lemon drizzle sponge

Thursday 30 July

- Smoked haddock and spring onion fishcake **or** sweet potato falafels (v) with house salad
- Belgian waffles

Friday 31 July

- Gloucester bangers **or** veggie sausages (v) and mash, vegetable medley, and onion gravy
- Carrot cake with ginger frosting

Saturday 1 August

- Chicken **or** Quorn supreme (v), spring greens, roasted new potatoes, and white wine sauce
- Raspberry bread and butter pudding

Booking Dates

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Diamond Patrons | from Mon 23 March |
| Ruby Patrons | from Tue 24 March |
| Emerald Patrons | from Wed 25 March |
| Opal Patrons | from Thu 26 March |
| Life Members | from Mon 30 March |
| Gold Members | from Mon 30 March |
| Silver Members | from Wed 1 April |
| Bronze Members | from Tue 7 April |
| General Public | from Mon 13 April |

Book online at 3choirs.org

Book by phone on **01452 768 928**
(10 am – 4 pm Monday – Friday)

Booking Fees and Dispatch

A £2.50 transaction fee applies to each order. We encourage you to have your tickets emailed to you where possible, or tickets can be posted out for an extra £2.

Ticket concessions are available for visitors attending with an essential companion, and on selected events for families and young people. Visit 3choirs.org/booking-information for full details.

On-site Box Office from Wednesday 22 July

The on-site box office will be open for in-person ticket sales in the Festival Village from 10 am to 4 pm on Wednesday 22 and Thursday 23 July, from 10 am to 6 pm on Friday 25 July, and from 10 am until the start of each main evening concert throughout the Festival.

Accessibility

We welcome all visitors to the Festival and aim to assist with access requirements wherever possible. A detailed fact sheet is available at 3choirs.org/accessibility

If you have any access requirements, please contact the box office prior to booking your tickets. Once we have recorded your access needs, you will then be able to book online or over the phone. A very limited number of car parking spaces are available at Gloucester Cathedral for drivers with a blue badge; these must be booked in advance through the box office.

Transport

We are running a minibus service between Ledbury War Memorial and Gloucester Cathedral for the evening concerts on Saturday 25 July, Tuesday 28 July, and Saturday 1 August. This can be booked with your festival tickets.



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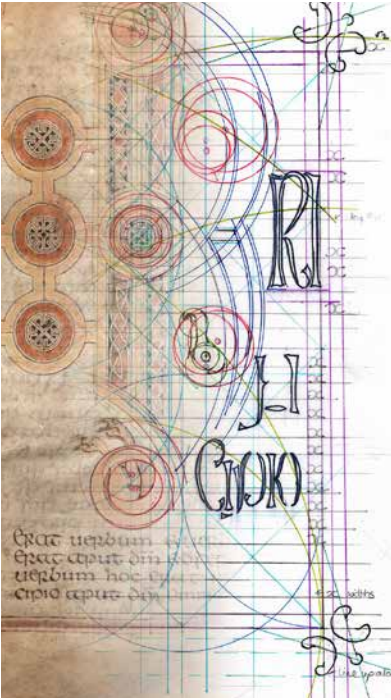
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gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk



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St Mary's Church, Painswick
Saturday 14th March at 3pm
Adam Heron Piano Trio
Works by Haydn, Schumann, Mozart and Adam Heron

Saturday 28th March at 3pm
Mellora Collective
Works by Beethoven, Clementi, Cheetham and Martinu

Saturday 25th April at 3pm
Voces8
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Saturday 16th May at 3pm
Sir Stephen Hough
Works by Schubert, Brahms, Schoenberg, Stockhausen, Beethoven, Schumann, and Sherman/Hough



Concerts 2026



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Cathedral Seating Plan

The performance area will be in front of the organ screen and consist of the tiered Chorus rake and the orchestra laid out in traditional style, with the string section on the flat floor of the Cathedral and other instrumental sections on risers. All evening and recital soloists will also stand on a raised platform.

There will be no tiered audience seating in the Cathedral. The block of seats at the rear of the nave will be on a raised flat plinth.

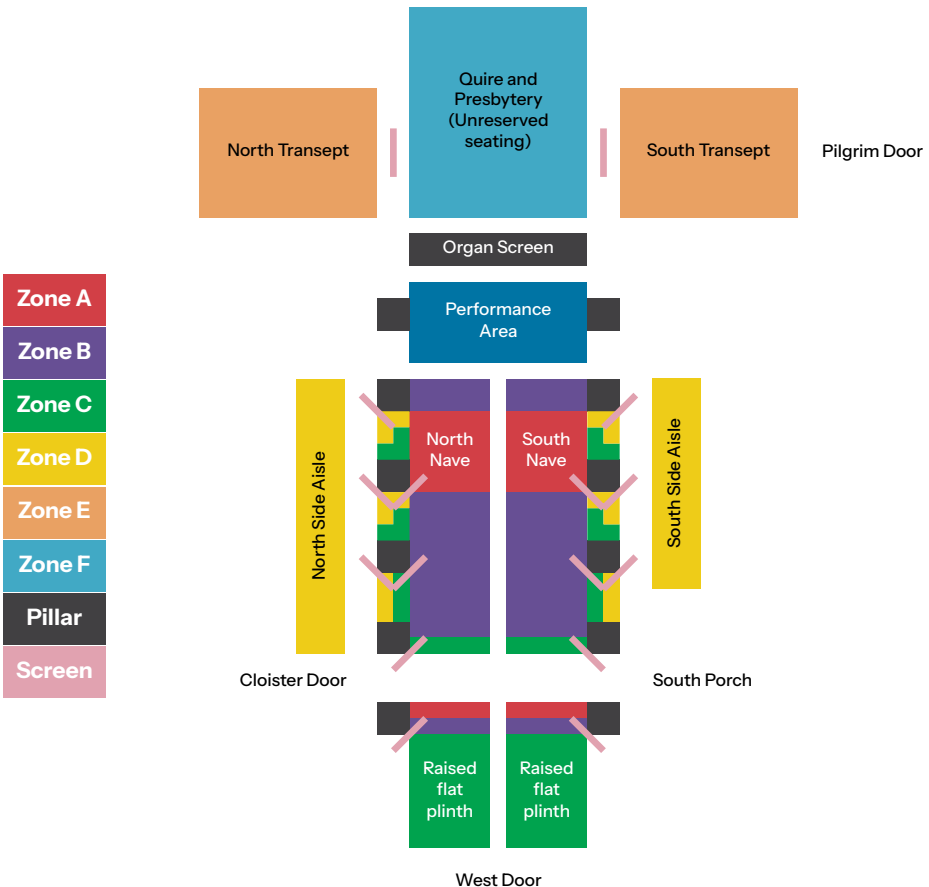
Nave (Zones A, B and C) - Seats will be split into three price bands by sightline with the best tickets at top price and seats towards the rear having a view of a TV monitor.

Side Aisles (Zone D) – Seats will have varying levels of restricted view due to pillars. Almost all will have a view of a TV monitor.

Transepts (Zone E) and **Quire and Presbytery** (Zone F) – Seats will have no direct view of the stage but all will have a view of a TV monitor. In these areas some sound imbalance may also be experienced due to being behind the performance area.

No audio enhancement is in place in any part of the Cathedral.

Please pay attention to the door indicated on your ticket as this will provide the easiest route to your seat.



Festival Village

1. Festival Bar
2. Guilds of Designer Makers and Artists
3. Festival Café & Seating Marquee
4. Festival Bandstand
5. Box Office, Shop and Information Point
6. The Monk's Kitchen Café
7. Cathedral Shop
8. Chapter House
9. Old Bishop's Palace Garden
10. Lady Chapel
11. Deanery
12. Ivor Gurney Hall

Cathedral Entrances

- a. West Door
- b. South Porch
- c. Pilgrim Door
- d. Cloister Door
- e. West Slype
(queue here for Chapter House events)

what3words information giving precise door and venue locations can be found on the website

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