

The Choir of Royal Holloway Biography (revised 2023)

The Choir of Royal Holloway is considered to be one of the finest mixed-voice collegiate choirs in Great Britain, with their recordings attracting top reviews from all major music publications. Created at the time of the foundation of Royal Holloway in 1886, the choir was originally only for women's voices. The mixed choir now comprises 24 Choral Scholars who undertake a busy schedule of weekly services, as well as concerts, international tours, recordings and TV and radio broadcasts. They are the only choir to give a weekly concert performance and during an average year give around 40- 50 concerts with a particular specialism in contemporary music.



The choir has one of the busiest recording schedules of any collegiate choir with an extensive discography with Hyperion, Decca, Signum and Naxos amongst others. The choir is renowned for their performances of Nordic and Baltic music, and has recorded works by Vytautas Miškinis, Rihards Dubra, Bo Hansson, Tõnu Kõrvits and Ola Gjeilo to great acclaim. The 2018 release *Winter Songs* with Gjeilo was No. 1 in the UK and US classical charts and they have now recorded a follow-up album with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra for release later this year. During the pandemic the choir have released recordings of the music of Ben Parry and Joanna Marsh, a live-concert recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Thomas Adès and the Britten Sinfonia, a recently-rediscovered mass by Pierre Villette with alumna Sarah Fox and a new oratorio - *As we are changed* by Carson Cooman. Last year's releases include a Requiem mass by American composer Dan Locklair (with the Southern Sinfonia and organist Martin Baker), the choral music of Flor Peeters (with Onyx Brass), and contemporary choral works by George Arthur. Following the death Queen Elisabeth II, the choir recording a number of tracks for a commemorative album released by Decca Classics which was no. 1 in the Christmas Classical Charts..

The choir regularly collaborates with, and performs alongside, many famous ensembles. These have included the King's Singers, the BBC Singers, The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, London Mozart Players, Onyx Brass, Fretwork and the jazz-trio Acoustic Triangle. The group also celebrates the work of living composers, and have commissioned works from Sir James MacMillan, Gabriel Jackson, Richard Rodney Bennett, Cecilia McDowall and Paul Mealar. International performances are also an integral part of the choir's work. They have toured most European countries, and have been broadcast on national television and radio all over the world. A tour of all three Baltic states saw the choir performing in the Latvian Song Festival with the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, in a concert (sung in Estonian) broadcast nationally on the Estonian Day of Independence. Further afield, the group has visited Beijing and numerous tours to the US and Canada.

The choir regularly sing at high-profile events which have included the Annual Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall (live on BBC television), an awards ceremony at Buckingham Palace, and for the Magna Carta 800 celebrations, in which they performed a new work by John Rutter in the presence of HM the Queen and the Archbishop of Canterbury. More recently they sang at the wedding of Ellie Goulding and Caspar Jopling at York Minster.