



Clothworkers Centenary Concert Hall  
Sunday 23rd November 2025

A circular inset image showing a classical painting of St. Cecilia. She is depicted from the waist up, wearing a white lace-trimmed blouse and a yellow corset and skirt. She is seated at an organ, with her hands on the keys. A scroll of music lies on the organ console. The background is dark and indistinct.

# A concert for St Cecilia

## Programme

 @LEEDSBAROQUE  
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 LEEDS BAROQUE CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA  
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Henry Purcell:  
Welcome to all the pleasures (22 November 1683)  
words by Christopher Fishburn

William Boyce:  
The Charms of Harmony (1737/8)\*  
words by Peter Vidal



## Interval



George Frideric Handel:  
From harmony, from heav'nly harmony (22 November 1739)  
words by John Dryden

\*New performing edition supported with funds from FBMV

Philippa Hyde *soprano*  
Francis Gush *countertenor*  
Peter Davoren *tenor*  
Stuart O'Hara *bass*

### **Leeds Baroque Choir**

**Soprano:** Kirsty Bullen, Cecily Graham, Naomi King, Marie Lemaire,  
Ava Lewis, Caoimhe Mallon, Nicki Sapiro, Mhairi Sharp  
**Alto:** Amelia Goulty, Catherine Haworth, Chris Johnson,  
Emma Page, Caroline White  
**Tenor:** Zachary Kleanthous, Steve Muir, John Scholey, Mike Webb  
**Bass:** Roger Brock, Osman Hamed-Fontanilla, Alan Hardwick,  
Bryan White

### **Leeds Baroque Orchestra**

**Trumpets:** Chris Parsons, Lucas Houldcroft  
**Timpani:** Steve Muir  
**Flute:** Sarah Moore  
**Oboes:** Sarah Devonald, Simon Denison  
**Bassoon:** Maggie Bruce  
**Violin 1:** Asuka Sumi, Jocelyn Slocombe, Sue Horridge,  
Anthony-Ben Constantine, Simon Feather  
**Violin 2:** Derek Revill, Sue Marshall, Caroline Goddard, Felicia McCormick  
**Viola:** Stephen Robinson, Josie Bryan, Peter Rose  
**Violoncello:** Catherine Strachan, Naomi Meredith, Catherine Carr  
**Bass viol** Andrew Kerr  
**Violone:** Andrew Kerr, Jillian Johnson  
**Lute:** Sam Brown  
**Theorbo:** Sam Brown, James Logan  
**Organ:** Chris Roberts

Directed by Peter Holman *harpsichord*

In the last two decades of the seventeenth century St Cecilia's Day (November 22) emerged as one of the most important days in the London musical diary. In Catholic Europe it had long been celebrated by musicians, both with liturgical music for St Cecilia's feast, and with competitions for which motets in her honour were composed. In Protestant England no such tradition developed, so it is exceptional that in 1683 Henry Purcell set a poem by Christopher Fishburn in praise of St Cecilia to be performed on 22 November. Fishburn's poem is studiously secular in subject matter; Cecilia is not mentioned until the final lines of the poem, which are otherwise focused on the praise of music. Fishburn took as his model the panegyric poetry of the court ode written for Charles II, replacing praise of the monarch with that of music and Cecilia. Purcell likewise set Fishburn's poem in the manner of the court odes he had composed annually since 1680. 'Welcome to all the pleasures' is a multi-movement work for strings, soloists, choir and continuo. It opens with an ingenious symphony, the first section of which is a double canon: the first and second violins present two distinct musical lines that are imitated two bars later at the interval of a fourth below by the viola and bass respectively. This learned musical technique was probably a nod to the 'great assembly of Apollo's race' to which Fishburn addressed his poem. The most memorable movements of the ode, however, are songs. 'Here the deities approve' is a superb ground bass solo for countertenor, which Purcell subsequently arranged and published for keyboard. Equally striking is 'Beauty thou scene of love', a minuet song for tenor solo and continuo, which is richly harmonised in the subsequent ritornello for the strings. We do not know where 'Welcome to all the pleasures' was performed, but it seems to have been a success. It was published in the following year (the only one of Purcell's odes to appear in print in his lifetime) and it initiated an annual celebration held at Stationers' Hall on St Cecilia's Day until 1700. It was for this occasion that Purcell composed 'Hail, bright Cecilia' and in 1692 and John Dryden wrote Alexander's Feast (set by Jeremiah Clarke) in 1697.

Few new Cecilian odes were composed in the early decades of the eighteenth century. In 1730, however, the genre was given new life when

Maurice Greene set Alexander Pope's Ode for Musick for the Cambridge Commencement; it was subsequently performed in London on 19 November. Handel took note and, capitalising on the success of his English-language oratorios Esther and Deborah, set Alexander's Feast in 1736. It was a great success, and it spurred a rash of competing Cecilian settings by Michael Festing and William Boyce for the London Apollo Society. 'The Charms of Harmony', probably composed between 1736 and 1739, was the first and more modest of Boyce's two Cecilian odes. It sets a poem by the Revd Peter Vidal (c. 1702-1741), who provided Boyce with verses in a modern style divided into air, recitative and chorus, with each section in a regular metre and rhyme scheme, quite unlike the Pindaric form of earlier Cecilian odes. Boyce responded with thoroughly modern music. The work begins with an overture in four sections: after an allegro for the full band, a brief linking passage leads to a minuet that frames a delicate duple-time section for a pair of solo violins in dialogue with tutti strings. Two grand choruses, informed by Handel's style, provide bookends to a series of solo movements. The countertenor air 'If the hopeless lovers hear' contrasts lovesickness—a doleful D minor triple-time—with the healing powers of harmony—a vivace duple-time in the parallel major. A delightful trio follows in which treble, countertenor and bass are skilfully alternated and combined. 'In wars fierce alarm' draws on the well-worn trope of the martial bass aria, but Boyce withholds the obligatory trumpets until the second section, while the first section, accompanied by unison strings, channels the operatic rage aria.

'The Charms of Harmony' was prelude to 'See fam'd Apollo', which Boyce composed on a grand scale. Its first performance may have been on 21 November 1739 at the Apollo Society's regular Wednesday meeting. The next day Handel premiered his own new ode at Lincoln's Inn Fields, a setting of Dryden's 'From Harmony, from Heav'nly Harmony' written for St Cecilia's Day 1687. Whether or not Handel knew of, or wished to upstage Boyce is not certain, but he clearly wished to build on the success of Alexander's Feast, which had been published in full score in 1738. A Song for St Cecilia's Day, 1687 is on a somewhat smaller scale than Alexander's Feast—the poem is shorter though more complex in structure. After an introductory French overture and minuet, Handel set the majority of the first stanza as an

expressive accompanied recitative for tenor. At the return of the opening line of text the choir enters with block homophonic chords, then breaks into scales at the mention of ‘through all the compass of the notes it ran’. Stanzas two to six are set with arias featuring each of the instruments named in the text. A cello takes the role of Jubal’s ‘chorded shell’ in stanza two. In stanza four, the flute shares the stage with the lute, for which obligato solos are provided. Handel must have relished setting stanza six, which opens with a larghetto for strings and organ, including ad libitum passages for the latter. Dryden’s poem praises the organ above all other instruments, including the human voice, a fact surely not lost on the composer. Handel may have played the organ himself in the first performance, taking implicitly – since she has yet to be named in the poem – the place of Cecilia whose instrument it is.

Dryden’s final stanza is a single long sentence in which music puts the heavenly spheres in motion and then untunes them at the Last Judgment; it poses a considerable challenge to the composer to encompass its meaning without mutilating its intelligibility. Handel’s conceit was to turn the first seven lines into an exalted exercise in lining-out, the method of eighteenth-century psalm singing whereby a clerk or precentor sings or reads out a line of a psalm to be repeated chorally by the congregation. In Handel’s hands the precentor is the soprano, perhaps Cecilia. She sings each line unaccompanied and the choir repeats to the accompaniment of the band. As the soprano lines out ‘the trumpet shall be heard on high’, the trumpet sounds in an exhilarating musical realization of the text. This act heralds the concluding chorus, in which the final two lines of the poem are heard consecutively in single voices, giving out the two subjects that form the material for the ensuing fugue. It is a resourceful solution to the literary and expressive challenge of the stanza enabling the text to be heard clearly, the trumpet to sound in an unforgettable manner, and the work to conclude with an elaborate contrapuntal chorus.

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**Purcell: Welcome to all the pleasures** - Christopher Fishburn

Symphony

Trio (Philippa Hyde, Peter Davoren, Stuart O'Hara) & Chorus

Welcome to all the pleasures that delight  
of every sense the grateful appetite.  
Hail, great assembly of Apollo's race!  
Hail to this happy place, this musical assembly  
that seems to be the ark of universal harmony.

Air (Francis Gush)

Here the deities approve  
the God of Music and of Love.  
All the talents they have lent you,  
all the blessings they have sent you,  
pleased to see what they bestow  
live and thrive so well below.

Trio (Philippa Hyde, Nicki Sapiro, Stuart O'Hara)

While joys celestial their bright soul invade  
to find what great improvement you have made.

Trio (Francis Gush, Peter Davoren, Stuart O'Hara) & Chorus

Then lift up your voices, those organs of nature,  
those charms to the troubled and amorous creature.  
The power shall divert us a pleasanter way,  
for sorrow and grief find from music relief,  
and love its soft charms must obey.  
Then lift up your voices, those organs of nature,  
Those charms to the troubled and amorous creature.

Air (Peter Davoren)

Beauty, thou scene of love,  
and Virtue, thou innocent fire,  
made by the powers above  
to temper the heat of desire.  
Music that Fancy employs  
in rapture of innocent flame,

Cont'd ...

we offer with lute and with voice  
to Cecilia, Cecilia's bright name.

Solo (Zachary Kleanthous) & Chorus

In a consort of voices while instruments play  
with music we celebrate this holy day.  
lô Cecilia!

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## **Boyce: The charms of harmony display - Peter Vidal**

Symphony (Allegro – Minuet/Gavotte/Minuet)

Chorus

The charms of harmony display  
of Heaven's omnipotence a ray.  
Sovereign queen, o'er human souls  
each care, each passion she controls.  
On earth she every power can quell  
and bring departed ghosts from Hell.

Air (Francis Gush)

If the hopeless lover's heart  
sinks down oppressed with woe,  
deadened by the bleeding smart,  
the stream of life runs low.  
Music's healing voice applied,  
he hears away his pain,  
gently swells the spirit's tide,  
then briskly springs again.

Trio (Philippa Hyde, Francis Gush, Stuart O'Hara)

Where Peace prevails and Plenty flows,  
these blessings Harmony ensures,  
heightens the joy which Peace bestows;  
from Plenty new delight procures

Air (Stuart O'Hara)

In war's fierce alarms  
the bravest she warms.  
by Music elate,

Cont'd ...



nor fearing to die,  
though doubtful their fate  
to battle they fly.  
When the trumpet loudly calls  
to arms, all terror falls.  
Roused up, the very cowards boast  
their fright in courage lost.  
Yet is not Melody confined  
to sooth the breasts of humankind?  
Her piercing sounds can quickly wing  
their flight to the Almighty King.

Chorus

Cecilia sings and strikes the lyre,  
her melting notes with raptures fire.  
Heaven's gates fly open at her plaint,  
and raise the woman to a saint.

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## **Handel: From harmony, from heavenly harmony - John Dryden**

Overture (Larghetto e staccato – Allegro – Minuetto)

Recitative (Peter Davoren)

From harmony, from heavenly harmony  
this universal frame began,  
when Nature underneath a heap  
of jarring atoms lay,  
and could not heave her head.  
The tuneful voice was heard from high:  
'Arise ye more than dead!'  
Then cold and hot, and moist and dry,  
in order to their stations leap,  
And music's power obey!

Chorus

From harmony, from heavenly harmony  
this universal frame began;  
through all the compass of the notes it ran,  
the diapason closing full in man.

Cont'd. ...

Air (Philippa Hyde) with violoncello solo (Catherine Strachan)

What passion cannot music raise and quell?  
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,  
his listening brethren stood around,  
and, wondering, on their faces fell  
to worship that celestial sound.  
Less than a god they thought there could not dwell  
within the hollow of that shell,  
that spoke so sweetly and so well.  
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

Air (Peter Davoren & Chorus)

The trumpet's loud clangour excites us to arms  
with shrill notes of anger and mortal alarms.  
The double-double-double beat  
of the thund'ring drum  
cries: 'Hark! The foes come;  
charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!'

La Marche

Air (Philippa Hyde with flute and lute solos (Sarah McNulty & Sam Brown)

The soft complaining flute  
in dying notes discovers  
the woes of hopeless lovers,  
whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

Air (Peter Davoren)

Sharp violins proclaim  
their jealous pangs  
and desperation,  
fury, frantic indignation,  
depth of pains and height of passion,  
for the fair disdainful dame.

Air (Philippa Hyde) with organ solo (Chris Roberts)

But oh! What art can teach,  
what human voice can reach  
the sacred organ's praise?  
Notes inspiring holy love,  
notes that wing their heavenly ways  
to mend the choirs above.

Air (Philippa Hyde)

Orpheus could lead the savage race,  
and trees uprooted left their place,  
sequacious of the lyre.

Recitative (Philippa Hyde)

But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher,  
when to her organ vocal breath was given.  
An angel heard, and straight appeared,  
mistaking Earth for Heaven.

Solo (Philippa Hyde & Chorus)

As from the power of sacred lays  
the spheres began to move,  
and sung the great Creator's praise  
to all the blest above.  
So when the last and dreadful hour  
this crumbling pageant shall devour,  
the trumpet shall be heard on high.  
The dead shall live, the living die,  
and music shall untune the sky.



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**Philippa Hyde - soprano**

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Philippa commenced her singing studies with Ann Lampard MBE and continued under the tuition of the late tenor David Johnston and Yvonne Minton CBE at the Royal Academy of Music.

She graduated with the coveted Dip. RAM in 1993. In 2001 she was awarded the ARAM, an honour granted to past students of the Academy who have achieved distinction in their profession. Philippa's busy and varied concert, oratorio and operatic career has taken her all over the world, from Helsinki to Beijing, as well as to many of the major concert venues and festivals of Europe. She has performed regularly with The Academy of Ancient Music, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, The Parley of Instruments, The Musick Company, Canzona and the Harmonious Society of Tickle Fiddle Gentlemen, as well as with her own Period Instrument ensemble, Bloomsbury Baroque.

Philippa is married to Richard Tanner, who is Organist and Director of Music at Saint Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue, New York, and she divides her time between

Manhattan, Bloomsbury and East Sussex. In her spare time she enjoys reading, walking, travel and theatre. She has recently completed an MSc in psychology.

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### **Francis Gush – counter tenor**

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With a voice described as ‘bell clear and beautiful’ (The Stage), English-Dutch countertenor Francis Gush is a graduate of the Royal College of Music.

With a burgeoning operatic career, recent roles have included Harold, Disorderly House (Dommett) at the Buxton International Festival, Ixion in Orphée (Charpentier) with Vache Baroque and Tolomeo in Giulio Cesare with Glyndebourne Festival Opera (cover). Internationally, Francis has undertaken the title role Titus in Titus L’Empereur at the Händel Festspiele in Halle with Opera Settecento (Handel) and Spirit in Dido and Aeneas (Purcell) in Barcelona with the Armonico Consort. In 2023 performances included the title role Cesare in English Touring Opera’s Giulio Cesare (Handel) to critical acclaim. Francis has also made his debut with the Orchestra of the Age of the Enlightenment, singing a programme of Purcell and Blow.

Previous operatic engagements include Athamas (cover) (in Semele - Handel) with Opéra de Lille and Arsace (Partenope - Handel) with Hampstead Garden Opera which The Stage reviewed as ‘a blow-away performance’. He has also covered the Spirit (Dido and Aeneas - Purcell) at the BBC Proms with La Nuova Musica, and his performance at the Wigmore Hall with Steven Isserlis was described as ‘a show-stealing turn’ (The Arts Desk).

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### **Peter Davoren - tenor**

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Peter Davoren received his early vocal training at the Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School in London, before obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Leeds. As a student, Peter was awarded the Alison Silverside Award for his ‘exciting and captivating’ recital of Schubert’s *Die schöne Müllerin* in his first year and in his final the Elgar Prize for his performance as Orbin in the composer’s work *Caractacus*. The Elgar Society stated that ‘his performance was magical and amongst the other soloists from Opera North, he more than held his own.’

Peter was awarded the Dr Ralph Kohn Scholarship to attend the Royal Academy of Music, London. During his time at RAM Peter gained plaudits for his recital singing as a member of the Academy Song Circle. *The Independent* hailed him as ‘excellent’ and singing with ‘a warm, bel canto style.’ Peter’s experience in Oratorio has led to being a regular performer for the Monteverdi Choir with John Elliot Gardiner and he made his BBC Proms debut as a soloist in the Monteverdi *Vespers of 1610*.

He is in high demand as a consort singer, working with many illustrious groups as well as singing at Westminster, Southwark and St. Paul's Cathedrals, St. George's

Chapel Windsor and Westminster Abbey. He also is regularly invited to sing with London Voices on the soundtrack to the latest movies and video games.

Peter is also in demand as a soloist, mainly as an Evangelist in Bach's Passions, working for groups such as Musica Poetica, Leeds Baroque, Irish Baroque Orchestra and many choral societies. Recently Peter has been rediscovering his love for Elgar with frequent bookings as Gerontius in *The Dream of Gerontius*

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**Stuart O'Hara – bass-baritone**

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**Stuart** is a graduate of the Universities of Durham and York and has worked with many distinguished conductors including Mark Elder, Paul Daniel, Robert Hollingworth and Laurence Cummings. Recent highlights include a French tour of Handel's *Theodora* with Ensemble Jupiter, a series of concerts celebrating the 90th birthday of Estonian composer Arvo Pärt with the Carice Singers, and Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* with ENO and the BBC Singers at the BBC Proms.

In 2026, he will return to York Late Music Festival to showcase the best of new British song by Yorkshire poets and composers, and will sing Purcell's *King Arthur* and *Dido & Aeneas* at Suffolk Villages Festival. A full calendar and list of recordings can be found on his website, [stuartohara.wixsite.com/bass-baritone](http://stuartohara.wixsite.com/bass-baritone) This year, he will embark on a tour of the east coast of the USA with the Choir of Westminster Abbey, where he is a lay vicar. He is a founding member of the Liverpool Bach Collective, directed by Philip Duffy, and regularly returns to his home city to perform with them.

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**Asuka Sumi - leader**

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Asuka Sumi is a violinist based in Leeds, specialising in historical performance practice. She holds degrees from the Tokyo National University of Arts and the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, where she studied with Lucy van Dael and Sophie Gent. In 2013, Asuka was awarded the Romanus Weichlein Prize at the Biber Competition in Austria, which led to her solo debut concert at the Vienna Konzerthaus.

Asuka is a founding member of Seconda Pratica (CD Nova Europa), Fons Harmonicus (winner of the Utrecht Fringe Public Prize 2014) and Amsterdam Corelli Collective. With these groups she has been invited to perform in prestigious venues and festivals including the Göttingen Handel Festival and the Sablé and Ambronay festivals in France. Since moving to Leeds in 2015, she has been immersed in developing the early music scene in northern England and participating in the Cambridge Early Music Summer School. She now organises a concert series, Otley Baroque, which brings period instrument performers from across the UK to Yorkshire. Asuka maintains a strong interest in the historical development of violin technique in the seventeenth century and is engaged in continual investigation of the late sixteenth century violin music in Bologna and

Modena. As a teacher, Asuka traces her roots to the well-known Sumi family of violin teachers in Tokyo. In 2021 she was appointed leader of Leeds Baroque orchestra.

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### **Peter Holman** director

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Peter Holman studied at King's College, London with Thurston Dart, and founded the pioneering early music group Ars Nova while a student. He is now director of The Parley of Instruments and the choir Psalmody, is musical director of Leeds Baroque and director of the Suffolk Villages Festival. He has taught at many conservatoires, universities, and summer schools in Britain, Europe, New Zealand and the USA, and was Reader and then Professor of Historical Musicology at Leeds University from 2000, retiring as Emeritus Professor in 2010. He was awarded an MBE in 2015.

Peter is a regular broadcaster on BBC Radio 3 and 4 and is much in demand as a speaker at learned conferences. He spends much of his time in writing and research, with special interests in the early history of the violin family, in instrumental ensemble music up to about 1700, and in English music from about 1550 to 1850. He is the author of five books: the prize-winning *Four and Twenty Fiddlers: The Violin at the English Court 1540-1690* (Oxford, 1993), *Henry Purcell* (Oxford, 1994), *Dowland: Lachrimae* (Cambridge, 1999), *Life after Death: The Viola da Gamba in Britain from Purcell to Dolmetsch* (Woodbridge, 2010), and *Before the Baton: Musical Direction and Conducting in Stuart and Georgian Britain* (Woodbridge, 2020). He has just published *The Purcell Compendium* with Bryan White.

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### **Bryan White** – chorus master

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Bryan White is Professor of Musicology in the School of Music at the University of Leeds where he directs the Clothworkers Consort of Leeds. He is a member of the editorial board of the Purcell Society and of the Web Library for Seventeenth-Century Music. Bryan researches music and culture in Britain from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. He is the author of *Music for St Cecilia's Day from Purcell to Handel* (Boydell, 2019), co-editor of *Musical Exchange Between Britain and Europe 1500-1800* (Boydell, 2020), and editor of Louis Grabu's opera *Albion and Albanus* (Stainer & Bell, 2007) and G. B. Draghi's St Cecilia's Day ode *From harmony, from Heav'nly Harmony* (Stainer & Bell, 2010) for the Purcell Society Companion Series. His most recent book is *The Purcell Compendium* co-written with Peter Holman and published by Boydell earlier this year.



### **Leeds Baroque – Leader Asuka Sumi**

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**Leeds Baroque** (registered Charity 1116610), the city's only period instrument choir and orchestra, specialising in performances of music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Founded in 2000, and

following J.S. Bach's own model, it is made up of professional, student and talented amateur performers and is directed by Professor Peter Holman MBE, an international authority on the performance of Baroque music. Since its foundation, it has earned an enviable reputation for performances covering works from Monteverdi to Mozart and bold explorations of unfamiliar Baroque music including the commissioning of new performing editions.

Most of the members and management are unpaid, believing that this specialist but accessible repertoire should be available to all, and more widely appreciated. In addition to the core membership Leeds Baroque provides paid performance opportunities to up-and-coming young artists at the start of their careers and welcomes a range of professional singers and instrumentalists for special projects. Leeds Baroque is financed solely from its ticket income, modest grant funding and the small, but incredibly supportive Friends of Baroque Music in Yorkshire. In this, our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, we hope you will help us continue to keep Baroque music 'live' in the region by attending our performances, joining the Friends of Baroque Music in Yorkshire, making a donation via our Big Give campaign on our website [www.leedsbaroque.co.uk](http://www.leedsbaroque.co.uk) or sponsoring a performance.

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## Acknowledgements

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A performance of this scale could not be achieved without financial and practical help from the following organisations and individuals:

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- The School of Music for the use of the Clothworkers Centenary Concert Hall
- The team of volunteers who do all the background work in administration, publicity and hosting our guest soloists.

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We look forward to an exciting programme for 2026 & hope you will join us.





# Wanted!

## Voluntary Concert Stewards

As Leeds Baroque expands its list of informal venues, help is sought to welcome the audience, direct people to their seats, help with box office for on-the-door sales etc.

If you think you could help three or four times a year, sparing an extra hour before the performance, please get in touch with the administrator

[administrator@leedsbaroque.co.uk](mailto:administrator@leedsbaroque.co.uk)

Your modest reward will be a free concert pass for all events, whether stewards are required or not.

