



Music @ St Bartholomew's

<http://www.stbartholomews.ie>

January 2009



- Voice for Life
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Voice for Life

We now have the RSCM's Voice for Life scheme fully up and running for all our Choristers and Probationers. On Sunday 18 January, special ceremonies were held during both services, and more than twenty Choristers received medals and awards of various levels. They are all to be warmly congratulated on this splendid achievement. We also congratulate the three boys who received Silver Awards in the same service. We look forward to further successes!

Light Blue medals were

awarded to Daisy, Sally Anne, Megan, Jeff, Elias, Harriet, Oisín, Aaron, Matthew, and Ronan; Dark Blue to Claire, Jake, Isobel, Hugh, Cliona,



and Kate; and Red to Adam, Roisin, and Liam. The Silver Award was presented to Rupert, Isaac, and William.

Fraser Wilson

Senior Choristers

The boys' choir has a distinguished group of Senior Choristers who assist in the organisation and running of the choir. We are delighted to announce that Roisin, Cliona, Kate, and Isobel have been appointed the first ever Senior Choristers of the girls' choir.

I am sure that they will be strong leaders of the Choristers and Probationers, both musically and personally, and that they will set a great example for the others to follow. We wish them every success in their new roles.

Fraser Wilson

The Clyde Chorale

Supporting the theory that the St Bartholomew's musical universe is ever expanding, a new chamber choir formed in October 2008 and has been sighted across Dublin in the months since.

The Clyde Chorale's first outings were for the All Saints' and All Souls' services at St Bartholomew's, singing Victoria's *Missa Gaudeamus* and Byrd's *Iustorum animae* on Saturday evening; and Chilcott's *Even such is time,*

Tavener's *Funeral ikos* and Rutter's *I am the resurrection and the life* on Sunday morning.

Their début season concluded on 13 December with a Christmas concert at St Patrick's, Dalkey, treating a keen lunchtime crowd to the Irish premiere of Vernon Hoyle's *Cradled in a Manger* and an exceedingly fine selection of carols.

We now look forward to their first full-length

concert, to be held on Tuesday 7 April at 8.00pm here in the church – *Now the end has come*. The programme will feature Parry's much-loved *Songs of Farewell* and Antonín Dvořák's *Five Lenten Motets*.

The Clyde Chorale rehearses in St Bartholomew's on Sunday nights, sustained and inspired by those two marvels, namely, Mr Wilson's energy and Mr McGrath's cooking.

Katie Wink

Past Concerts

A number of concerts have taken place in the church over the past six months.

In July, we hosted the Irish premiere of the earliest surviving Spanish opera, *Celos aun del aire matan*. It was performed by students of the University of Sheffield led by the world-famous early music expert Andrew Lawrence-King. On other nights, seventeenth century madrigals were

performed by four Dublin-based singers and a lutenist in *What is Love?*; forty singers



from Ireland and the Czech Republic raised money for the Jeevodaya Foundation

from a capacity audience; the UCD Philharmonic Choir performed Duruflé's *Requiem* and other suitable works in the splendidly-titled *Music to Die For*; world premieres of solo clarinet repertoire were given; and teenaged Germans played baroque music to great effect. All in all, not a bad start to our regular programme of live music here!

Fraser Wilson

RSCM Service

On Saturday 27 September the RSCM Voice for Life award-winners' service took place at Christ Church Cathedral. Four boys from St Bartholomew's – Isaac, Adam, William and myself – received certificates, along with ten boys from the Palestrina Choir and nine girls from Christ Church Cathedral. We had already been given beautiful bronze medals, which we wore for the service.

That Saturday we all joined the Cathedral Choir to sing Evensong, conducted by the director of music Judy Martin. It was exciting to be part of such a special choir in

such a beautiful building, and we sang great music – Stanford in *A, O thou the central orb* by Charles Wood and Palestrina's *Sicut cervus*.

Later in the service Mr Parshall read out all our names, as we were given our certificates by the Dean of Christ Church. As well as being assistant director of music here at St Bartholomew's, Mr Parshall is co-ordinator of the RSCM in Ireland. The RSCM aims to help choirs understand the music they sing, so that they can make the music sound better.

Fr Andrew was there to

support us and he took part in the service. It was nice of him to come, and we would like to say thank you to him and our families for coming along to the cathedral on that special day.

We worked hard for our awards. Before rehearsals every Wednesday we did music theory and learnt lots about the music we sing with Mr Parshall and Mr Wilson. Each of us also prepared a piece to sing for the examiners. We even had a workbook which we had to do over the summer holiday - what a treat!

Rupert Adams

Harvest Festival Evensong in Kilbride

We set off from the church at approximately 4.30 and after a bumpy trip, we arrived at our destination, Kilbride Parish Church, Co. Wicklow, with minutes to spare. We began our practice after a quick break, going through all the music briefly. When that had ended, we headed over to a room across the road which held tea, biscuits and of course our cassocks. We changed in a frenzy of green robes and lined up neatly outside. After not getting run down while crossing the road, we stood outside the church waiting for the service to begin. We sang Dyson's evening canticles in F and *Thou visitest the earth* by Greene,

which included solos by Kate Somers and Robin Heather. Half-way through the service, Preacher Reverend Harry Lew invited the children from the



congregation to help illustrate his sermon. The church itself was beautifully decorated with fruit and vegetables, which were laid out by some members of the parish. On behalf of the whole choir, we would like to thank the Reverend Nigel

Sherwood for inviting us to sing in Kilbride; Niamh Harty for helping to organise the trip; and Fr Andrew for coming to sing the responses and look after the group. Thanks also to the ladies from Kilbride who made us a meal (which I somehow missed); to the probationers for coming to take part and gain experience from the other choristers; to the parents of all the choristers who drove out and supported us; and to Mr Parshall, who did sterling work with the one-manual antique Bevington organ. Last but not least, a very special thanks to Mr Wilson for putting up with us for half a day.

Cliona Rogan

Epiphany Carol Service in Carnew

On Sunday 11 January, a group of some ten boy Choristers and ten gentlemen braved the elements of driving winds and rain to make the journey from Ballsbridge to the estate town of Carnew, Co Wicklow.

Carnew is situated at the southern tip of Co Wicklow, and is bordered

by counties Wexford and Carlow. The old Victorian church, rectangular in shape, has a very large apex roof space which gives the inside of the building a wonderful acoustic. The organ, built in 1912 by George Benson of Manchester for Tourmakeady Parish Church, Co Mayo, is a single manual instrument. It

was moved to Carnew in the late 1950s on the closure of its original home.

On arrival, the choir settled down to rehearsal. Despite our depleted numbers, the musical brilliance of the Choristers, and the relentless encouragement of our Director of Music, combined

Carnew (continued)

to make a wonderful balanced sound. We were then treated to a cup of tea and some light refreshments in the nearby school.

The Rector, the Reverend Arthur Minion, greeted us with the information that he had spent time as a chorister many years earlier in St Canice's Cathedral in Kilkenny. The service followed the format of Lessons and Carols, and the congregation



joined in enthusiastically in the congregational carols.

The choir dedicated its performance of the *Wexford Carol* to the memory of Ivan Carlyle, a native of nearby Ballymurn, Enniscorthy, who died in tragic circumstances last summer. This piece was sung to a splendid arrangement by Peter Parshall. The choir gave its first performance of Philip Stopford's unusual and exciting setting of *We Three Kings*.

After the service, we

were treated to a sumptuous spread of goodies by the ladies of Carnew parish. The evening closed with a speech by Fraser Wilson thanking all who made the day possible, gratefully acknowledging the welcome and hospitality given to us by the local people. In reply,

Reverend Minion thanked us all for coming and looked forward to our next visit.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the Organist of Carnew, Leslie Dowse, for inviting us back to Carnew, for his attention to detail, and for publicising the event locally. It was a joy to see people from Enniscorthy, Gorey, and Aughrim who also braved the elements to make it to the service.

Robin Heather

Come-and-sing

One of our central beliefs about singing is that there should be opportunities for as many people as possible to be involved, and that was certainly the case on Saturday 8 November as we welcomed over seventy people, including some of our own boys and men, to sing the ever-popular *Requiem* of Gabriel Fauré. Directed by Peter Parshall and accompanied by myself, all of the material was covered in a relaxed and enjoyable ninety minute rehearsal. In the performance that followed later that afternoon, the work was interspersed with poetry chosen by the Vicar and read superbly by Alan Fletcher and Jerusha McCormack. We were delighted to have participants from all over the country, including a small contingent from Belfast. The *Requiem* was the first of what I hope will be many events staged in conjunction with the Royal School of Church Music in Ireland. The next in the series will be the come-and-sing *Crucifixion*, which you will find advertised later in this magazine.

Fraser Wilson





Shine: A Musical Collaboration

For a number of years, pupils at Ranelagh Multi-Denominational School have been members of both the boys' and girls choirs' at St Bartholomew's.

Nine years ago, RMDS pupils produced *Little Stars* – a CD of Christmas songs. All the pupils involved in *Little Stars* have now left the school, so late last year the decision was made to do it again. Each class from Junior Infants to sixth class performed a number of songs for the new CD, *Shine*. Selections ranged from traditional carols to popular and seasonal songs – and some

not so seasonal! We all went to Windmill Lane Studios for the recording. This was very exciting. We didn't meet U2, but we did see the world-famous graffiti! It surprised me how many attempts it took to record a single song to the satisfaction of our producer – it was much harder work than I thought it would be.

At present there are fourteen RMDS pupils in St Bartholomew's Choir. In a departure from the previous CD, these singers were invited to contribute several tracks to *Shine*. These were recorded both in St Bartholomew's,

and in a small studio beside the canal. When the recording was completed, we celebrated with a party at the school, at which Mr Wilson was guest of honour. He was presented with a football for use by the Choristers on Wednesday and Friday evenings before rehearsals.

Shine was sold at Christmas in order to raise money for the school building fund. The final total raised was over €6,000 and this was deemed to be a great success.

Liam Newman

John Scottus Recording

The prospect of spending several hours of their Saturday singing was not immediately welcomed by some members of John Scottus Senior School Choir. Nonetheless there was a full turnout last November when they recorded their latest CD in St Bartholomew's. The recording consisted of four pieces: *In the bleak midwinter* by Harold Darke, Fauré's *Cantique de Jean Racine* and two works

by Bach. More than 40 JSS students took part. The choir was ably accompanied by Fraser Wilson on the organ,



as well as Úna Ní Chanainn, a cellist with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra.

The finished product was a fantastic achievement for both the choir and its conductor, Fran Dempsey, who has been working hard with the students for several months. In the new year, the JSS Senior Choir will be singing at several choral events around Ireland, including a performance in Arklow, and competing in both the Feis Ceoil and the Wesley Interschools Music Festival.

Emmet Kiberd

Anniversary

Early in October, the grandparents of one of our boy choristers celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary, and to mark the occasion, and by way of congratulation, I played the *Toccata* from Charles-Marie Widor's fifth organ Symphony (the famous one) as the voluntary at the Solemn Eucharist. It was the piece they'd had on their wedding day itself, so (I hope) it was a nice trip down memory lane for them!

Fraser Wilson

Silver Medal

During the build-up to Christmas, some of the choir boys (Rupert, William, and Isaac) entered themselves for the Voice for Life Silver Award. The result was a distinction (for William) and two very high passes! When the time came for me to do the exam I felt a bit nervous; however Miss Martin the examiner, Mr Wilson and Mr Parshall were all very friendly and encouraging. I soon felt much better. I sang *O thou the central orb* by Charles Wood, *Magnificat in D* by Dyson, the hymn *Sweet sacrament divine* and

Psalm 78, accompanied by Mr Parshall. It seemed strange to be singing only to Miss Martin without a congregation or any other boys, although I soon got into it and started to enjoy it.

I am very proud to have received the Silver Award and I am looking forward to gold. I greatly thank both Mr Wilson and Mr Parshall for preparing me for, and organising the award. And last but not least I wish the other boys and girls good luck with their future exams!

Isaac Dempsey

In Memoriam

As we begin another year, members of the choir remember our fellow chorister, Mervyn Percival, who died on Saturday 22 December 2007.

Apart from his wonderful 'basso profundo' voice, we warmly recall his wit, charm, humour and great generosity. Our thoughts are with his wife Margaret, his brother Charlie, and the rest of the family. May he Rest in Peace.

Bobby Barden

Alexandra Jobling

We were all delighted to learn that Alex Jobling, formerly our acting Assistant Director



to the world-famous Hallé orchestra based in Manchester. Alex has acted as our accompanist and indeed conducted the choir on quite a number of occasions over the past year. While wishing Alex a great career with the Hallé, we appeal to her to come back to see us as often as possible.

Bobby Barden

of Music, has been appointed Corporate Membership and Sponsorship Manager

Peter Macintosh

A fine new Evening Service was specially written for the men of St Bartholomew's Choir by Peter Macintosh, a friend of our new Director of Music. It was sung for the first time at Choral Evensong on Sunday 16 November. We were very pleased with the music and felt it presented a most worthy act of worship.

More Macintosh was heard in the church on Christmas Eve, when the specially commissioned *Song of the Midnight Hour* was sung as the communion motet. Contrasting with Haydn's beautiful *Little Organ Mass*, this contemporary work flows along through a number of challenging and discordant sections before, dramatically reaching a majestic major chording, declaring 'Christ is born'.

It will be hard to wait for twelve months to sing this lovely work again.

Bobby Barden

Choir Support Committee

Last term we took steps to establish a Choir Support Committee, the principal aim being to provide assistance of all kinds to the Choirs in order to help them achieve the very best in their work.

Niamh Harty agreed to be the Committee's first chair and worked hard to prepare for the first meeting last November, which she very kindly hosted at her house. A small but dedicated group of parents was in attendance, and I am exceptionally grateful for

all that they have already done to smooth the way for our boys and girls. I am sure that, in time, this group will become an invaluable part of what we are aiming to achieve, and that all parents will become involved in its activities in some way. After all, their support is essential if the boys and girls are to make the most of the opportunities that being in the Choir here offers, and we are lucky to have a dedicated and generous group of parents.

Fraser Wilson

Funderland

On Friday 9 January six boys went to Funderland at the RDS in Ballsbridge (*the Girls' Choir were brought separately; see back cover - RB*). First we went on the rides outside, which included two roller coasters and a big wheel. No one wanted to go on the big wheel because it was very cold. Rupert, Hugh and I bravely volunteered to look after Mr Bannister on the big roller coaster! You could hear our screams of joy as we hurtled down the tracks at fifty miles per hour! Then we went inside to encounter yet more terrifying rides. Determined to test the strength of their

stomachs, Rupert and Hugh went on almost everything. Meanwhile on the dodgems Aaron, Jeff and Matthew were showing off their driving skills, or should that be lack of driving skills?! Next we went to the hall of mirrors where we were all banging into glass trying to escape. Lastly Aaron suggested we should go in the fun house, which was made up of obstacles like moving floors and a big hamster wheel. Everyone enjoyed themselves, and we would all like to say a big thank you to Mr Bannister who organises it every year.

Jake Foley

St Bartholomew's Choir Register

A couple of years ago we were fortunate to come across an old register, which a former Chorister had saved from being discarded. It lists all those who sang in the choir from the turn of the century up to 1945. After this date there are only a few spasmodic entries, but if anyone has a grandfather or great-grandfather they suspect

was in the choir, the register can be consulted. It was in a poor state, but has been left into an antiquarian bookbinder to be restored. There are some other other less formal note books which record a number of the years after this time if anyone wishes to enquire.

Bobby Barden

Stainer's *Crucifixion* – A very good idea?

Following the success of our come-and-sing performance of Fauré *Requiem* last November, which was attended by over seventy singers, we will be singing Stainer's splendid Victorian oratorio *The Crucifixion* in March, again in collaboration with the RSCM (registration 1.45; rehearsal 2.15; performance 5.00). The girls and men will be leading the performance, which will be directed by Fraser Wilson and

accompanied by Peter Parshall. Those who are unfamiliar with this unique and dramatic work should certainly come to discover its joys; those already acquainted with it will need no such encouragement! Scores will be available to hire or buy, both in advance and on the day. Singers should book in advance by contacting Fraser Wilson: 01 668 8522 or music@stbartholomews.ie.

Fraser Wilson

Christmas Concert with Alan Stanford

Our annual Christmas concert with Alan Stanford took place on Sunday 13 December to a full house. The concert sold out several weeks in advance, raising well over €3000 for the Choir Fund and the Dublin

Simon Community. The choirs were in particularly good voice, as was Alan Stanford whose dulcet tones have become an essential part of Christmas in our church.

Richard Bannister

Music @ St Bartholomew's
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Photography

All photographs by Richard Bannister, except Carnew (Robin Heather), John Scottus (Fran Dempsey), and Alexandra Jobling.

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Submissions for future issues of this magazine and all enquiries about advertising should be sent to richard@indigo.ie. This magazine is available by post for a nominal charge; for further details, contact the Administrator, Fergus McCullough on 01-6688522 or fergus@stbartholomews.ie.

Future events

A full schedule of services and events is available on the diary page of the parish web site, located at <http://www.stbartholomews.ie/>.

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