



# PEGASUS CHOIR

Matthew Altham *director*



## From Agincourt to Waterloo

Sunday 20 September 2015 5:15pm | The Charterhouse, London

## ***Charterhouse: A Brief History***

The site upon which Sutton's Hospital in Charterhouse stands was acquired in the middle of the fourteenth century as a burial ground for victims of the Black Death. As not all the space was used, a Carthusian monastery was established here in 1371 by Sir Walter de Mauny, one of Edward III's senior advisers. A prior and 24 monks were accommodated in two-storey houses arranged round a large cloister, and the church, built alongside the burial ground, became the priory church. Thomas More, the "man for all seasons" and later Henry VIII's Chancellor, frequently visited Charterhouse as a student, as it was an important centre of ecclesiastical learning.

In 1535 the monks refused to conform to Henry VIII's Act of Supremacy, and some were executed at Tyburn. The monastery was suppressed and passed to the Crown. Subsequently it was granted to Lord North, who constructed a fine Tudor mansion which was later sold to the fourth Duke of Norfolk, who further embellished it. In November 1558 Elizabeth I arrived at Charterhouse from Hatfield and stayed for five days before her coronation in Westminster Abbey. She returned to Charterhouse on at least two other occasions. Upon succeeding to the throne in 1603, James I came to Charterhouse from Edinburgh and held his first council in what is now the Great Chamber.

In 1611 Norfolk's son, Thomas Howard, first Earl of Suffolk, sold the mansion to Thomas Sutton, building Audley End in Essex with the proceeds. Sutton's involvement in the coal trade, property dealings and money lending had enabled him to amass a considerable fortune, and he was said to be the wealthiest commoner in England. Sutton used much of his fortune to endow a charitable foundation at Charterhouse to educate boys and care for elderly men, known as "Brothers". John Wesley was a pupil at the school in Charterhouse as was William Makepeace Thackeray, in the early nineteenth century. The school moved to Surrey in 1872, and the area was divided, though the almshouse continues to this day to occupy the land to the west.

Until 1933 Merchant Taylors' School occupied the site to the east. This area later became The Medical College of St Bartholomew's Hospital and is now occupied by Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry.

Sutton's Hospital sustained much damage during the Second World War but was faithfully restored by the architects Seely and Paget, reopening in 1951. In 2000 the Admiral Ashmore Building was completed by Hopkins Architects to house 14 Brothers. The two new buildings restored the southwest corner of Preacher's Court, replacing those lost to bombing in the war.

## PROGRAMME

<b>The Agincourt Carol</b>	Anon.
<b>L'homme armé</b>	Anon.
<b>Agnus Dei <i>from</i> Missa L'homme armé sexti toni</b>	Josquin des Prez (c.1450–1521)
<b>Lamentatio sanctae matris ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae</b>	Guillaume Dufay (c.1397–1474)
<b>Lamentations</b>	Antoine Brumel (c.1460–1512)
<b>Trois chansons de Charles d'Orléans</b> I. Dieu! Qu'il la fait bon regarder II. Quant j'ai ouy le tabourin III. Yver, vous n'estes qu'un vilain	Claude Debussy (1862–1918)
<i>There will be a brief pause before the following works; please remain seated.</i>	
<b>Pastyme with good companye</b>	Attr. Henry VIII (1491–1547)
<b>Nesciens mater</b>	Jean Mouton (c.1459–1522)
<b>Surrexit pastor bonus</b>	Jean Lhéritier (c.1480–1551)
<b>Ah Robyn</b>	William Cornysh (1465–1523)
<b>La Guerre</b>	Clément Janequin (c.1485–1558)

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*The battle of Agincourt took place on St Crispin's Day (October 25) in 1415, when the English army defeated the French forces. Its fame rings down through the ages, not least in the words Shakespeare gave to the protagonist of Henry V. Four hundred years later, an even more decisive battle between the French and the English (with a little help from their friends) took place only 200km from Agincourt, in Waterloo, just south of Brussels.*

*Our concert this afternoon takes these two great events as reference points. A number of the composers featured were born in the century following Agincourt and in the vicinity of both battle sites, in the strategically important and much contested area near northern France's modern border with Belgium. We have included a mix of folksongs (or chansons) and sacred music, as well as music from across the channel in England.*

**The Agincourt Carol**, “Deo gracias Anglia”, is an English folksong from the early 15<sup>th</sup> century recounting the Battle of Agincourt. The carol is one of thirteen on the Trinity Carol Roll at Cambridge. The roll is the earliest surviving example of polyphonic settings of the English language.

**L'homme armé** was an extremely popular French folk song in the fifteenth century. Its origin is unknown, but it may have been named after a popular tavern known to the composer Dufay in Cambrai in what is now northern France. Cambrai is not far from Agincourt and was also the Duke of Wellington's headquarters for the British Army of occupation after Waterloo.

Josquin des Prez is generally considered the pre-eminent figure of the Franco-Flemish school of composition. His **Missa L'homme armé sexti toni** is a so-called parody mass based on the *L'homme armé* and is unusual in that the melody appears across the different vocal parts rather than in just one.

Guillaume Dufay is the earliest named composer in today's concert. He was probably born near Brussels and was brought up in Cambrai, where he was a choirboy in the cathedral. The motet **Lamentatio sanctae matris ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae** belongs to a series of four laments for the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

Antoine Brumel probably hailed from the area of Chartres, where he sang at the cathedral in the 1480s. A pupil of Josquin des Prez, he was choirmaster to the boys at Notre Dame de Paris in 1498–1500. His setting of the **Lamentations**, part of the liturgy for Holy Week, is sombre and meditative and, unusually for the period, has little counterpoint.

Claude Debussy's **Trois chansons** are the composer's only works for unaccompanied choir. Debussy set three texts by medieval poet and prince Charles d'Orléans, who was imprisoned in England, albeit fairly comfortably, after the Battle of Agincourt. *Dieu! Qu'il la fait bon regarder* is a love song admiring the grace, virtues and beauty embodied by the beloved. The solo voice in the next chanson, *Quant j'ai ouy le tabourin*, pronounces the narrator's desire to stay in bed rather than join in the May Day festival, heralded by the tambourine portrayed by the choir's rhythmic accompaniment. In *Yver, vous n'estes qu'un villain* Debussy personifies winter with stark vocal lines and cold harmonies. A contrasting middle section reflects on the warm colours and sleepy sounds and smells of summer, before returning to the wintry reality of cold, wind and sleet.

**Pastyme with good company** is believed to have been composed by King Henry VIII shortly after his coronation and was very popular in England and continental Europe in the sixteenth century. In 1520 Henry held a lengthy treaty meeting with King Francis I of France at the Field of the Cloth of Gold. It took place just inland from Calais—then in English hands—but the elaborate musical festivities are thought to have been provided by Jean Mouton, whose beautiful motet **Nesciens mater** is a tour de force of musical canon in praise of the Virgin Mary.

Mouton's pupil Jean Lhéritier was one of the most notable composers of his time. Based in Rome, his works became very popular and were published all over Europe. Lhéritier's Easter motet **Surrexit pastor bonus** is known as one of his masterpieces.

William Cornysh's haunting ballad **Ah Robyn** is written for three solo voices. The English composer, a contemporary of both Josquin and Mouton, was responsible for musical and dramatic entertainments at the court of Henry VIII and during important diplomatic events such as the Field of the Cloth of Gold. *Ah Robyn* was used to great effect in the recent television adaptation of Hilary Mantel's Tudor novel *Wolf Hall*.

Clément Janequin was a composer from the Poitou region in central France. Unlike the other composers in this programme, he never held a regular musical position with a cathedral or an aristocratic court. **La Guerre** relates to the Battle of Marignano, which took place near Milan in 1515—coincidentally one hundred years after Agincourt. The music vividly portrays brass fanfares, tambourines and drums amidst the call to arms.

**Pegasus** is one of London's most versatile chamber choirs, with a repertoire embracing sacred and secular music from the Renaissance to contemporary commissions. The choir performs with leading instrumental ensembles, vocal soloists and conductors, and has had regular collaborations with the London Handel Players, as well as with ballet dancer Carlos Acosta at the London Coliseum. In 2013, under its director Matthew Altham, Pegasus won the chamber choir prize at the Florilège Vocal de Tours International Choral Competition in France, along with a special award for its performance of the music of Poulenc. The choir has featured on BBC television and radio, Channel 4 and Classic FM.

You can find out more about Pegasus and join our mailing list at [www.pegasuschoir.org.uk](http://www.pegasuschoir.org.uk). Visit us on [facebook.com/pegasuschoir](https://www.facebook.com/pegasuschoir) or follow us on Twitter @pegasuschoir. Pegasus' CD, Twelve Days—A Celebration of Christmas, is available on the internet.

**Matthew Altham** has been the director of Pegasus since 2001. He began conducting choirs while studying at Oxford University and led performances of music by Poulenc and the major English Renaissance composers. Alongside his work as director of strategy for a business management company, Matthew directs Pegasus, Vox Cordis and the London Bach Players, with whom he has performed on several occasions in Pau, France. He has toured as a conductor to Prague, Tolosa, Arezzo and Antwerp and has broadcast on BBC Radio and Classic FM.

**Special thanks to:**

The Governors and Staff of the Charterhouse, especially:  
The Master, Brig. Charlie Hobson OBE RM  
The Preacher and Deputy Master, Rev Robin Isherwood  
The Organist, Graham Matthews

## **COMING UP FROM PEGASUS...**

### ***In Memoriam—Fauré's Requiem***

**Saturday 24 October 7:30pm | St Clement Danes Church, London**

We return to the Brandenburg Choral Festival with Gabriel Fauré's renowned setting of the Requiem mass, alongside music from our forthcoming CD, "For the Fallen", with works written in the shadow of the First World War.

### ***A St Cecilia's Eve Concert***

**Saturday 21 November 7:00pm | St George's Church, Bloomsbury**

Pegasus joins forces with the London Handel Orchestra under director Laurence Cummings for a performance of works by Philips, Britten and Handel honouring the patron saint of music on the eve of her feast day.

### ***A Winter Wassail at Shakespeare's Globe***

**Saturday 28 November 11:00am | Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, Shakespeare's Globe**

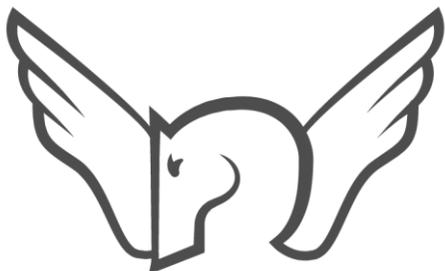
We are delighted to make our debut at the atmospheric Sam Wanamaker Playhouse at Shakespeare's Globe. Get into the pre-Christmas spirit with this morning performance of seasonal music, with readings by actors from Shakespeare's Globe.

### ***A Candlelight Christmas***

**Saturday 12 December 7:00pm | Holy Trinity Church, Claygate, Kent**

Our annual concert of Christmas music old and new and audience favourites to join in with, all in support of the Princess Alice Hospice.

**For more information and tickets, please go to  
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