



Graham Ross | director
Nicholas Mogg | choir administrator

The Choir of Clare College
Trinity Lane
Cambridge
CB2 1TL

www.clarecollegechoir.com

Building on a number of initiatives set up by the Director of Music in his first year, the Choir has had another exciting year of projects, including most significantly the start of its partnership with recording label Harmonia Mundi USA, its representation by Ikon Arts Management, the continuation of the College's new Masterclass Series and benefitting from the generosity of the ongoing Friends of Clare Music scheme.

The Choir's principal function of providing music for the liturgy in Chapel has offered an extremely broad range of repertoire for Choir and congregations alike. In addition to the three weekly services, the Choir sang Duruflé's *Requiem* for All Souls's Day, Allegri's *Miserere* for Ash Wednesday, with music for each term stretching from medieval plainchant to contemporary works, with much inbetween. Services have included numerous solo opportunities for individual members of the Choir, and have utilised all four of the Chapel's keyboard instruments. Additional instrumentalists have been brought in for such works as Monteverdi's *Beatus Vir*, Schubert's *Mass in G*, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* and Patrick Gowers' *Viri Galilei*. The Choir performed its first Cantata Evensong with Bach's *Herr, Jesu Christ, wahr' Mensch und Gott* BWV 127 led by alumna and Baroque violinist Margaret Faultless. The Dean and Director of Music continue to work closely together to plan the liturgy, and to oversee the pastoral side of the members of the Choir.

The Choir's first recording of the renewed partnership with Harmonia Mundi USA took place in July 2011, in collaboration with Director of Music's performing group, The Dmitri Ensemble, recording a disc of world premières by Imogen Holst, including her orchestral arrangement of Benjamin Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*, to be released worldwide on 24 September 2012. In Easter 2012 the Choir recorded an Advent programme for Harmonia Mundi, to be released in 2013 as the start of a major ongoing series of music for the church year. The recording sessions for both recordings were produced, engineered and edited by Honorary Fellow and former Director of Music John Rutter, to whom the Choir is much indebted.

The Michaelmas Term ended with a busy December schedule, including with the well-attended Advent services and Christmas Concert in the College Chapel, followed by a concert in Dingley Hall, and the Choir's annual concert at St John's, Smith Square in London, after which Timothy and Christina Benn, the patrons of the Choir's new Lay Clerkship, kindly hosted a reception. The calendar year was rounded off by a tour to the Netherlands with concerts in Vlissingen, Kampen, Amersfoort, and Nijmegen leading to an immediate re-invitation for 2013.

This year has been a particularly successful year of exposure with several BBC radio performances. The new academic year saw the farewell to the Choir of 2010/11 with a BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong broadcast live from St Matthew's Church in Northampton, performing Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* in its usual organ arrangement with Nicolas Haigh, the Sir William McKie Senior Organ Scholar, sixty eight years to the day after it was given its world première in that venue. The Choir this year were again invited to sing on Radio 3's 'In Tune' to promote the concerts in December, and also appeared on New Year's Eve in a programme of toasting songs recorded in the SCR for BBC Radio 4, hosted by John Sargent. The Lent Term began with a live broadcast from the College Chapel for BBC Radio 4's 'Sunday Worship' programme celebrating the Blessed Virgin Mary, heard by 1.5 million listeners.

This year the Choir has worked with a number of distinguished musical figures. During the Michaelmas Term the Choir celebrated the 500th anniversary of St John's College, performing Walton's

Belshazzar's Feast with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Andrew Nethsingha, alongside four other College choirs, first in Ely Cathedral and then in the Royal Festival Hall, London. In the Lent Term the Choir sang under the direction of Sir Mark Elder in Debussy's *La Damoiselle Elue* and Act III of Wagner's *Parsifal* in King's College Chapel, and later in the term had masterclasses with alumnus and former choral scholar, Simon Bailey, with New Zealand-based choral clinician, Karen Grylls, and with the distinguished mezzo-soprano Ann Murray DBE who visited Cambridge to teach students from five different colleges as part of the College's Masterclass Series.

Collaborations with other Cambridge choirs have this year seen the Choir sing joint services with the Chapel Choirs of Selwyn, Jesus, Gonville and Caius and St John's Colleges. In addition, at the end of the Lent Term the Choir sang a Eucharist at St Paul's Cathedral, London. The Director of Music continues to pursue an active programme of visiting schools and welcoming visiting students and choirs to observe or join the Chapel Choir for services. This year has seen visitors from Netherlands, the USA, Cologne and numerous UK schools, and outreach projects with Tower Hamlets and Hackney. In the Michaelmas Term some musicians from the College participated in the Clare's collaboration with 'Turtle Song', a song-writing project working with Alzheimer's and Dementia sufferers, to be repeated in Lent Term 2013.

New music continues to play a large part in the Choir's performing schedule, most notably through the works of Giles Swayne, the College's Composer-in-Residence, formally established during this academic year. His works this year have included a new set of canticles (the *Clare Service*), a setting of the Lord's Prayer, a piece to mark the death of student Rebecca Chamberlin, and a major new work for Choir and four instrumentalists, to be premiered during the Choir's tour to Australia in August 2012. This year the Choir has also premiered works specially written for it by John Rutter, Nicolas Haigh and by the Director of Music.

In late June 2012 the Choir will sing Evensong at Westminster Abbey and in the summer vacation the will give a concert at Childerley Hall, before embarking on a major three-week tour of Australia, performing Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Australian Chamber Orchestra. This, the Choir's first tour to Australia, will include eleven concerts in Melbourne, Canberra, Alelaide, Perth, Brisbane and Sydney, including two performances in Sydney Opera House. It is thanks to the generous donation of alumnus Daryl Dixon, along with the income from these concerts, that this tour has been made possible. The Choir Committee is grateful to the former Development Director, Dr Toby Wilkinson, in helping to secure this significant donation.

Friends of Clare Music continues to build its resources and maintain crucial continuing links with the present Choir. Most significantly it has enabled the establishment of a new standalone website for the Choir, www.clarecollegechoir.com. We are confident that this is the best Chapel Choir website in Oxbridge, with visitors now able to sample and purchase recordings in just a few clicks, as well as keeping up-to-date with all the Choir's activities and reading testimonials from the College's distinguished musical alumni.

2012/13 is set to be a full year for the Choir and for music in the College, with external performances in St John's, Smith Square, King's Place, Royal Festival Hall, St Peter's, Eaton Square, Long Melford, Suffolk, Spitalfields Festival, Dingley Hall, Northamptonshire, St Paul's Cathedral, and Fenstanton's festival for Macmillan Cancer Support, Fringe in the Fen. The Choir will sing Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* with Sir Mark Elder and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Bach's *St John Passion* first with the Director of Music and a one-to-a-part orchestra in Great Hall, and later with Nicholas Collon and the Aurora Orchestra in London. They will make two further recordings for Harmonia Mundi USA, and will broadcast a special Britten-anniversary BBC Choral Evensong live from Aldeburgh Parish Church, Suffolk. They are likely to tour Lagos, Nigeria in December 2012, and give concerts with the European Union Baroque Orchestra in Europe in summer 2013.

Whether the standard of the Choir at Clare College and the high profile of its engagements can be maintained for subsequent years due to the imposed changes made to the application procedures for Choral Trials remains to be seen.

Graham Ross
June 2012