

Matthew Watts - Conductor

Matthew Watts joined the Surrey Heath Choral Society as its Musical Director in September 2008. He read Music at Glasgow University and was awarded a MA Honours degree in Music. He then studied conducting and singing at the London College of Music and Trinity College of Music, winning the Ricordi Conducting Prize. He was a student on the Advanced Conducting Course at Dartington International Summer School and for the past two years has studied orchestral conducting with Denise Ham from the Royal Academy of Music.

Matthew is also Musical Director of the New Essex Choral Society. Previous positions include Assistant Conductor of the hundred-voice Reading Festival Chorus, Assistant Musical Director of the prestigious professional choir at Ealing Abbey and Choral Director for Westminster Adult Education Service.

Whilst at Trinity College he was Chorus Master for the British Staged Première of *Beatrice Cenci* at the Spitalfields Festival - "*The chorus delivered their contribution with intensity and conviction*" (The Independent), "*Excellently focused chorus*" (Opera Now). He has also conducted the European Première of *Quest* by the American composer George Crumb.

Having studied singing with the distinguished teacher Lyndon Van Der Pump, Matthew is now also a busy singing teacher. He teaches at Halstead Preparatory School in Woking, where he also conducts the chamber choir, as well as at Notre Dame School in London and Slough Grammar School.

He was a Choral Scholar in Glasgow University Chapel Choir and at St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church, Trafalgar Square and continues to sing with some of London's top professional church choirs.

Geoffrey Tuson - Organ

Geoffrey Tuson joined Surrey Heath Choral Society as its accompanist in January 2009.

Geoffrey began studying the organ in Godalming, Surrey, with John Belcher at the age of 14. Since 2004, he has been a student at the Royal College of Music in London studying with Margaret Phillips, and has recently begun his postgraduate MMus course there, now studying with David Graham and Sophie-Véronique Cauchefer-Choplin. He has been awarded the Harold Darke prize for excellence in organ performance. Studying at the RCM has afforded him opportunities to play famous instruments in France, Holland, North and East Germany as well as participating in masterclasses with internationally-renowned organists such as Dame Gillian Weir. In 2006 he won the Kent County Organists' Association's inaugural festival in Maidstone, earning a recital in Canterbury Cathedral, which took place in April 2007. In April last year he played alongside the RCM Symphony Orchestra in a performance of Strauss' *Also Sprach Zarathustra* conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy. In addition to his RCM studies, he has recently attained his Associateship diploma from the Royal College of Organists and gave a recital in the 2008 Three Choirs Festival in Worcester. Earlier in 2009 Geoffrey took up the post of Organist and Choirmaster at The Royal Garrison Church of All Saints, Aldershot. He is also a peripatetic piano and organ teacher at the Salesian College in Farnborough, Hampshire.

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Coronation Anthems

One of the last acts of King George I before his death in 1727 was to sign "An Act for the naturalizing of George Frideric Handel and others." One of Handel's first tasks as a naturalized British Citizen was to write the music for the coronation of the new monarch, King George II, and Queen Caroline, to be held in Westminster Abbey on 11th October 1727. ***The Four Anthems*** he composed, which highlighted the most important events throughout the celebration, were completed in just four weeks. They were first performed by a choir of nearly 50 singers, mainly from the Chapel Royal, and an orchestra believed to have consisted of around 160 players. Although not published until 1743, the Anthems have never lacked popularity, being repeatedly performed at concerts and festivals during Handel's lifetime and since. This year marks the 250th anniversary of Handel's death.

Handel's setting of arguably the most famous anthem, ***Zadok the priest***, which refers to the coronation of King Solomon, was performed during the Anointing - the most solemn part of the ceremony. It has been sung at every coronation since its first performance in 1727. The words are adapted from 1 Kings 1.

*Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon King,
And all the people rejoiced and said:
"God save the King, long live the King!
May the King live for ever. Amen, alleluia."*

The other Anthems are based on words from the Psalms and the Prophet Isaiah.

Let thy hand be strengthened - Psalm 89: 13-14 - appeared early in the service, at the Recognition.

*Let thy hand be strengthened and thy right hand be exalted.
Let justice and judgment be the preparation of thy seat!
Let mercy and truth go before thy face. Alleluia.*

The King shall rejoice - Psalm 21: 1,2,3 & 5, which was probably performed at the actual crowning of George II, matches the occasion perfectly.

*The King shall rejoice in thy strength, O Lord.
Exceeding glad shall he be of thy salvation.
Glory and worship hast thou laid upon him.*

Thou hast prevented him with the blessings of goodness and hast set a crown of pure gold upon his head. Alleluia.

My heart is inditing - after Psalms 45: 1,10 & 12 and Isaiah 49: 23, was likely to have been sung late in the service, during the crowning of Queen Caroline.

*My heart is inditing of a good matter; I speak of the things which I have made unto the King,
Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women.
Upon thy right hand did stand the Queen in vesture of gold;
and the King shall have pleasure in thy beauty.
Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers.*