

Background History



St Mary's has a long tradition of Choral Music since its foundation. As early as the Consecration of the

new Church in 1892, Weber's 'Mass in G' was sung and the current Choir recreated that event for the Mass celebrated by Cardinal Basil Hume in 1998, marking the Bicentenary of the founding of the Parish.

The Latin Choir has maintained its existence throughout the decades, singing in Latin at the Solemn / Latin Mass on a Sunday morning and also for all the major Liturgical Feasts. Members are all keen to maintain the Catholic Liturgical Choral Tradition which has always existed at a few Catholic Cathedrals and other major Churches through the centuries but now is increasingly difficult to find. Pope Benedict specifically asked that Latin and Gregorian Plainchant be reintroduced into use in Parishes.

The Choir is always looking for new members to maintain this tradition and full details are available in this leaflet and on the Choir's WebSite.

To raise funds, the Choir sings at other Churches and for special functions such as Pilgrimages to Aylesford Priory; we also plan termly visits to Cathedrals, starting with Arundel in July 2015. We also help arrange and sing at the Annual Extraordinary Form (Tridentine) Mass arranged at St Mary's each August.



Our Director of Music :

Jack Thompson

Jack combines this role with a full-time teaching post in the music department of Ardingly College and a busy freelance career as an organist, conductor and chamber musician.

Jack completed a postgraduate degree in choral studies at the University of Cambridge in 2016. Here, he was Organ Scholar of Corpus Christi College and Organist for St John's Voices, the mixed-voice choir of St John's College. Jack studied choral conducting with Stephen Layton, Graham Ross and Mark Williams, and received tuition in organ performance from James Lancelot and Dame Gillian Weir.

Before arriving in Cambridge, Jack was educated as an organ scholar and vice-chancellor's scholar at Durham University. He was the recipient of the University's Graham and Joanna Barker Award, and graduated with a degree in music in June 2015. Jack played regularly for services and events in both the University and Cathedral, and undertook three annual tours to Paris, Prague and New York, USA.

Jack became Director of Music at St Mary's in September 2016



Pope Benedict XVI:

"Latin, for centuries the vehicle and instrument of Christian culture, guarantees not only continuity with our roots, but remains as relevant as ever for strengthening the bonds of the unity of the faith in the communion of the church."

St Mary's Roman Catholic Church
Cadogan Street,
Chelsea, London
SW3 2QR



Pope Benedict XVI:

"An authentic updating of sacred music can take place only in the lineage of the great tradition of the past, of Gregorian chant and sacred polyphony" (June 2006)



St Mary's Latin Mass Choir



**We are the parish choir
who sing weekly at the
Sunday 1130hrs Solemn (Latin)
Mass and all major feasts**



WebSite

www.smlmc.org.uk

Come and Join Us !!



Who would I be singing with?

We are a voluntary group of singers, drawn from all over London, who have made St Mary's our place of worship. We are fortunate to be led by a professional Director of Music. Our aim is to retain the traditional Latin liturgy for which the Gregorian Plainchant and other polyphonic music we sing was intended.

How good a singer do I need to be?



We are looking for singers who can provide a positive contribution to the choir. We need people who can sing in tune and blend into the overall sound of the choir. Some sight reading is obviously required but you do not have to be an expert. Many of the current members have found that they have improved over time and if you are inexperienced this will be taken into account. Rehearsals are available for those who are less good at sight reading and need more practice.

Do I need to audition?

This can vary. Normally, we ask you to come along to a rehearsal and perhaps sing with the choir at a Mass (you would not be asked to sing alone on a line!) and the Director of Music will talk to you. It

is usual to have a period of a few weeks probation where you sing with the Choir and we mutually establish whether your voice suits the Choir -- and vice versa !

What would I be singing?

We have an extensive and ever-expanding Repertoire ranging in period from Gregorian Chant, through the Renaissance and Baroque and the 19th Century revival, and up to the modern day. We are fortunate to have had a number of pieces especially written for us and new members will enable us to be even more ambitious. We sing a different polyphonic setting of the Mass (Kyrie or Gloria, Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei) every week, together with two polyphonic motets; in addition, we sing the Latin Propers of the Mass appropriate to that Sunday; that is: the plainchant Introit is sung by all the choir, as are the Gradual and Alleluia verses (usually to a psalm melody due to time considerations); and the Offertory and Communion verses are sung by male voices only. We then sing the Recessional Marian Antiphon appropriate to the time in the Liturgical Year. Most of the music we sing is unaccompanied but, where required, the Organ is used. However, we always maintain the Catholic Liturgical Tradition of never using the organ during the Seasons of Lent and Advent.



ST MARY'S CHOIR - 2019/2020	
1. Kyrie	2. Gloria
3. Sanctus	4. Benedictus
5. Agnus Dei	6. Offertory
7. Communion	8. Recessional
9. Marian Antiphon	10. Plainchant
11. Motets	12. Polyphonic
13. Gregorian Chant	14. Renaissance
15. Baroque	16. 19th Century
17. Modern	18. Contemporary

I've never learnt Latin?

Neither have some of the Choir! Providing you can read, then you'll have no problem singing in Latin. In most cases, it is pronounced as it looks — just as if it was English. It really will not be a problem!



What is the time commitment I must make?

We sing every Sunday at 11:30hrs and the Mass usually takes between 50-70 minutes. We rehearse from c.10:30hrs in the Rectory attached to the Church and, if you are singing that day, we expect members to be present. Additionally, a rehearsal is held every Thursday in the Church from 19:00hrs, lasting about 1 1/2 hours.



This enables those of us who are less experienced sight readers to learn/practice the music for the following Sunday and also learn new pieces. It is not mandatory to attend this provided that you ensure you attend the pre-Mass rehearsal on the following Sunday.

Do I need to come every week?

While we would like you to, we recognise that this is not a reasonable stipulation. While most members do attend most Sundays, we would be happy to consider members who could only attend some weeks. A list is maintained for members to show their availability so that we know who will be singing each week.

Do I need to be Catholic?

No. Currently only half of the members are Catholic and others have varying backgrounds. While being Catholic is not necessary, the choir is an intrinsic part of the Mass and membership of the choir needs to be understood as a respectful participation in the liturgy. St Mary's parish is well-established and people without religious beliefs and members of other faiths or confessions are very welcome.

I am interested. Who can I contact or talk to before committing?



Come along to one of our Sunday Masses to listen and then come and introduce yourself to one of the Choir members or Jack after the Mass.

or: send us an e-mail at

admin@smlmc.org.uk

or:

directorofmusic@smlmc.org.uk

or: give Colin a call on:

020 8949 3234 or
07714 766724