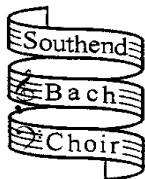


**Southend Bach Choir**

**Magnificat  
and  
Feel the Spirit**  
**Sir John Rutter**

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2025 at 7.00pm

St Alban the Martyr Church, Westcliff-on-Sea



**Programme**



**SUPPORTING &  
CHAMPIONING  
VOLUNTARY MUSIC**



# The Southend Bach Choir

Musical Director – Roger Humphrey

The Southend Bach Choir began life in 1943 as an evening class of the Municipal College in Southend under the direction of its founder Dr. Harold May, FRCO. Known as the *Municipal College Choir*, it gave its first performance in December of that year. The programme consisted of selections from Handel's "Messiah".

In its early years, the Municipal College Choral and Orchestral Society sponsored the birth of the *College Opera Group*, which became independent in 1950. In this year the choir's name reverted to *The Municipal College Choral Society* and many challenging concerts followed. In 1968, the choir became the *Southend Bach Choir*, and in 1993, under the baton of Gerald Bates (Musical Director 1987-2001), the choir celebrated its Golden Jubilee with a memorable performance of Bach's "Mass in B minor". Upon Gerry's retirement in 2001, the choir welcomed its past Music Director Colin Edwards until 2023.

In 2023, Roger, who had served as our accompanist for 40 years, stepped into the role of Music Director. Under his direction, the *Southend Bach Choir* continues to thrive, building on its rich history and looking forward to many more memorable performances.

## Why not join us?

- Our rehearsals:
  - *When?* Every Tuesday during school terms at 7:30-9:30pm
  - *Where?* St Andrew's Church, Southview Drive, Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 9PW
- No auditions and reading music is an advantage but not a requirement.
- ***If you are interested in singing with the choir, please speak to any one of us during the interval or after the concert!***

## Our Guest Soloist

**Helena Paish** - Helena Paish has been singing in choirs since she was six and at the age of twelve won *BBC Young Chorister of the Year 2014*. She was a founding girl chorister at *Truro Cathedral* (2015-2020) where she took part in three CDs and was frequently featured as a soloist live on *BBC Radio 3*. During her time in Truro, she appeared as a soloist with many local choirs. Helena graduated from *Cambridge* with a Music degree in 2023 and stayed on for a 4th year with *Trinity College Choir* as an alto Lay Clerk. She has featured as a soloist on three recordings with Trinity and has toured with them to Germany, France, Italy, and Switzerland. During her studies, Helena was awarded second prize in the *Clare College Song Competition*, with head judge James Gilchrist and enjoyed taking part in concerts and performing solo recitals across Cambridge. Helena is currently studying for a masters in singing at the *Royal Academy of Music*. Alongside her studies, she has continued with choral singing as a member of the *Choir of the Chapels Royal, HM Tower of London* and *Continuum Choir*. Helena is also an established composer. In 2019 she won the *BBC Proms Inspire Competition*, which led to her compositional debut at the *BBC Proms by the BBC Singers*, and a commission by the group. She has gone on to receive commissions from groups including *The Choir of St John's College, Cambridge, Multitude of Voyces, The Vasari Singers* and *Continuum*. Her music features on three CDs.

## Our Accompanist

**Rosemary Pennington** - Rosemary was born in Southend, but lived in other parts of the United Kingdom before returning in 1985. She is a graduate of the *Guildhall School of Music and Drama*, where she studied piano, accompaniment and percussion. After gaining a postgraduate teaching diploma, she developed a career in increasing positions in arts management. She has worked for concert agencies in London, as personal assistant to the Director of the *Edinburgh International Festival*, and has worked freelance as concert manager for festivals and concert halls. She currently holds a position at *Southend City Council*, with responsibility for arts and culture. As a pianist, Rosemary has played both as soloist and accompanist in many major concert halls in London and beyond. She has accompanied choirs in Australia, Canada, US, Seychelles and across Europe, including playing for televised broadcasts and recordings. In April 2025, Rosemary was awarded "Freedom of the City of Southend-

on-Sea” as recognition of her work in music across the city. She is Assistant Musical Director to the *Southend Girls' Choir*, and accompanist to the *Southend Boys' Choir*, *Southend Festival Chorus* and *Southend Choral Society*.

## Our Musical Director

**Roger Humphrey** - Roger studied organ, piano and conducting at the Royal College of Music, London and University of London. Post graduate work included studies at the City of London University and Guildhall School of Music. He has held positions of Director of Music at *Southend High School for Boys* and lecturer in Performing Arts at *South Essex College*. Currently Roger teaches part time at the Westcliff High Schools. In addition to conducting the *Southend Bach Choir*, Roger is musical director of *Southend Choral Society* and Director of Music at Holy Trinity Church, Southchurch, with whom he has taken the choir to many cathedrals across the UK. Roger is the founder and Musical Director of *Southend Girls' Choir* and Director of *Southend Boys' Choir*, positions he has held for over 30 years. Roger has taken these choirs on many overseas concert tours to Poland, Belgium, France, Holland, Italy, Spain, Canada, US, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia and Seychelles. These tours have included performances in The Sydney Opera House, Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Cathedrals in Paris, New York, Chicago, Washington, Milan, The Seychelles, Florence, St Peter's Basilica, Rome, St Mark's, Venice and many other major venues and concert halls across Europe, Canada, US, Singapore, and Australia. Roger has conducted the choirs in major London concert halls, including Royal Festival Hall and Barbican, and prepared the choirs for many performances at the BBC Proms. Roger directed performances of Britten's "Noye's Fludde" during the centenary year of Britten's birth, involving over 450 musicians of all ages performing in Southend, Tilbury Cruise Terminal and Southwark Cathedral. For several years Roger was Musical Director of the *Seychelles Festival of Music*. In April 2025, Roger was awarded "Freedom of the City" of Southend-on-Sea as recognition of his work in music across the city. In addition, Roger was presented with The High Sheriff of Essex Award in recognition of great and valuable services to the community.



# Sir John Rutter

Sir John Rutter (b. 1945) is one of the most beloved and influential figures in contemporary choral music. An English composer, conductor, and producer, he is internationally renowned for his rich and accessible style, often blending lyrical melodies with vivid orchestration. Rutter's music has become a staple in both sacred and secular choral settings around the world.

From an early age, Rutter was drawn to music - his fascination began at the family piano and blossomed through his involvement in school choirs and later at *Clare College*, Cambridge. There, he studied and eventually served as Director of Music. A pivotal figure in his development was Sir David Willcocks, who not only encouraged his early compositions but also connected him with *Oxford University Press*, Rutter's long-standing publisher.

In 1983, Rutter founded the *Collegium* record label, primarily to record with the *Cambridge Singers*, a professional chamber choir he established. Over the decades, he has composed an extraordinary range of choral works—both large-scale settings such as “Gloria”, “Requiem” and “Magnificat”, and smaller anthems like “The Lord bless you and keep you” and “For the beauty of the earth”, many of which have become modern classics. His contribution to the world of Christmas carols is especially beloved.

Though he often refers to himself as "still that kid doodling at the piano," Sir John Rutter's music continues to inspire and unite singers and listeners alike.

## ***Magnificat* (1990)**

John Rutter's *Magnificat* is a joyful and radiant setting of the biblical canticle of the Virgin Mary, traditionally sung during Evening Prayer. Inspired by Latin American musical traditions, this work pulses with rhythmic energy and colorful orchestration. Rutter envisioned it as a “bright Latin fiesta” in honor of Mary, and the result is a festive, lyrical, and sometimes tender choral work. Alongside the traditional Latin text, Rutter includes an English poem (“Of a Rose, a lovely Rose”) and a Sancta Maria, adding emotional depth and stylistic contrast. It's one of his most widely performed large-scale works, and a vibrant celebration of faith, womanhood, and joy.

### ***Feel the Spirit (2001)***

*Feel the Spirit* is a suite of seven well-known African-American spirituals arranged by Rutter for mezzo-soprano soloist, choir, and orchestra or piano. From the exuberant rhythms of “Joshua fit the battle of Jericho” to the moving simplicity of “Steal Away”, Rutter’s settings honor the deep spiritual and emotional power of the original songs while bringing his own sensitivity to choral color and dynamics. With this work, Rutter pays tribute to a rich musical tradition that speaks of hope, resilience, and longing—and invites both choir and audience to truly “feel the spirit.”



# Programme

## Magnificat

### 1. Magnificat anima mea

Magnificat anima mea Dominum: et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo. Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae: ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.

*(My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his hand-maiden: for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.)*

### 2. Of a Rose, a lovely Rose

Of a rose, a lovely rose,  
Of a rose is all my song.

### 3. Quia fecit mihi magna

**Solo:** Ros Hayman & Iain Reid

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est: et sanctum nomen eius.

*(For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name.)*

### 4. Et misericordia

**Solo:** Eve Read

Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies timentibus eum.

*(And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.)*

### 5. Fecit potentiam

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo:  
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.  
Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles

*(He hath shewed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heats. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek.)*



## 6. Esurientes

Esurientes implevit bonis: et divites dimisit inanes. Suscepit Israel puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae. Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini eius in saecula.

**Solo:** Eve Read

*(He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away. He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel. As he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.)*

## 7. Gloria Patri

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

**Solo:** Elyza Mells & Liz Swanson

*(As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.)*

## SHORT INTERVAL

## Feel the Spirit

*Ev'ry time I feel the spirit moving in my heart, Lord, I pray; O Lord, I kneel and pray.*

1. Joshua fit the battle of Jericho
2. Steal away
3. I got a robe
4. Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
5. Ev'ry time I feel the spirit
6. Deep river
7. When the saints go marching in

*Oh, when the saints go marching in, Lord, oh, when the saints go marching right in.  
Oh, Lord, I want to be in that number, when the new world is revealed.*

***Thank all of you for joining us at our concert tonight 🎵***

***We look forward to seeing you at our concerts throughout the year.***

***Please join the choir for light refreshments after the concert.***

# Have you thought about becoming a Patron?

*Are you a regular attendee at our concerts?  
Ever felt you'd like to support the choir but don't want to take up a singing position?  
Do you like attending our social events?*

If so, the Southend Bach Choir Patron scheme may be for you. There is no fixed fee to join this scheme, though Patrons may make a donation if they wish. Patrons receive regular updates about choir events and activities and an invitation to continue their patronage. They will also receive a complimentary ticket to every concert and be invited to other choir events including the AGM.

If you are interested in becoming a patron or would simply like further information, then please speak to any choir member or contact us via email on:

[membership@southendbachchoir.org.uk](mailto:membership@southendbachchoir.org.uk)

---

## For further information about the Southend Bach Choir please contact:

[secretary@southendbachchoir.org.uk](mailto:secretary@southendbachchoir.org.uk)

visit our website:

[www.southendbachchoir.org.uk](http://www.southendbachchoir.org.uk)

or social media pages:



Southend Bach Choir



southendbachchoir

*Singing in a Choir not only very enjoyable, but a chance to make new friends,  
learn to sing wonderful music and experience the health and mental benefits  
of choral singing. Whether you are an experienced singer or a musical  
beginner, you will be warmly welcomed!*

## OUR PATRONS

Mrs J. Restorick   Mr K. Treverton  
Mr S. Burford   Mr T. Harding   Mr J. Wall  
Miss C. Kirkham   Mrs J. Bliss   Mr M. Bliss   Mr R. Hair  
Mr P. Hepworth   Mr M. Luxford

*Southend Bach Choir is very grateful to the Patrons  
for their continued encouragement and support*

**For details of the Patron Scheme:**

**Email: [membership@southendbachchoir.org.uk](mailto:membership@southendbachchoir.org.uk)**

## OUR NEXT CONCERT

**Brahms: Ein deutsches Requiem**

*Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2025, 7pm*

St Alban the Martyr Church, Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 7JZ

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Our next concerts will take place on:

*20<sup>th</sup> December 2025 – Christmas Concert*

*2<sup>nd</sup> May, 18<sup>th</sup> July, 21<sup>st</sup> November, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2026*



**Southend Bach Choir**

Registered Charity  
No. 274370

