

# East London Chorus

Conductor Jessica Norton

Piano George Ireland

St Mary's Parish Church Woodford

Saturday 12 April 2025

## About Tonight's Programme

*Christus Factus Est*

Felice Anerio (c. 1560–1614)

Felice Anerio was an Italian composer of the late Renaissance, best known for his sacred choral works. He was a student of Palestrina and later succeeded him as composer to the Papal Choir, cementing his reputation as a master of Roman polyphony.

*Christus Factus Est* is a setting of the gradual for Maundy Thursday, taken from Philippians 2:8–9: "Christ became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." Anerio's setting reflects the rich vocal tradition of the Roman School, combining expressive homophonic declamation with flowing polyphony. The piece begins solemnly, with long, arching lines that mirror the text's gravity. As the music progresses, Anerio employs imitative textures that build in intensity, culminating in the final phrase "Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum" ("Therefore God also has highly exalted him"). This moment of exaltation is highlighted through soaring vocal lines and increased harmonic richness, providing a striking contrast to the earlier sections. Anerio's setting is both meditative and expressive, making it a poignant reflection on Christ's Passion.

*Crux Fidelis*

John IV, King of Portugal (1604–1656)

John IV of Portugal was not only a monarch but also a highly skilled musician and composer. His patronage helped shape Portuguese sacred music, and *Crux Fidelis* remains one of his most enduring compositions. The hymn is associated with the *Pange Lingua* text for Good Friday and is revered for its deeply solemn and meditative character.

The composition is a model of Renaissance-style vocal writing, marked by a smooth, flowing melody that unfolds in a chant-like manner. The text, which exalts the cross as the ultimate symbol of salvation, is set with great sensitivity to its meaning. The phrases move in a stepwise motion, creating a sense of continuous, prayerful devotion. The harmonic language is restrained yet expressive, employing subtle suspensions and gentle dissonances that heighten the work's emotional impact. The simplicity of *Crux Fidelis* is key to its power - it invites quiet contemplation and reverence, making it a deeply moving addition to any Passiontide programme.

### *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* Karl Jenkins (b. 1944)

Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* was composed in 1999 and premiered in 2000. Commissioned by the Royal Armouries to mark the transition into the new millennium, it is a powerful anti-war statement that interweaves the traditional Latin Mass with secular and sacred texts, including poetry by Rudyard Kipling.

The Mass opens with the medieval French tune *L'Homme Armé*, a melody that has been used in numerous Mass settings since the Renaissance. Jenkins' version transforms it into a rousing, militaristic call to arms, before later subverting it to underscore the horrors of war.

Throughout the work, Jenkins employs contrasting musical styles to heighten the emotional impact. *Kyrie* combines chant-like simplicity with poignant suspensions, while the *Sanctus* is marked by an insistent, rhythmic drive that evokes the relentless march of war. The *Agnus Dei*, in contrast, is an oasis of sorrowful lyricism, with arching melodies that capture the plea for peace.

In the *Benedictus*, one of the most beloved movements, Jenkins employs a soaring melody that gradually builds to an emotional climax. Here, the vocal writing is particularly striking, featuring rich harmonic textures and an almost cinematic sense of drama. When performed with piano, the reduction brings out the clarity of the vocal lines while maintaining the movement's ethereal quality.

The final *Dona Nobis Pacem* is a moment of profound resolution, where Jenkins weaves together earlier motifs into a plea for peace. The vocal parts are expansive, with the choir alternating between declamatory statements and lyrical, overlapping phrases that build towards a moving conclusion. Even without orchestration, the piano accompaniment ensures the underlying harmonic structure remains intact, supporting the expressive vocal writing.

Jenkins' Mass is both accessible and deeply moving, combining historical references with contemporary musical language to create a powerful meditation on the cost of war and the hope for peace.

1. *L'Homme Arme (anonymous, circa 1450)*

L'homme armé doit on douter.	The armed man should be feared.
On a fait partout crier,	Everywhere it has been proclaimed
que chacun se viegne armer	that each man shall arm himself
d'un haubregon de fer.	with a coat of iron mail.
L'homme armé doit on douter.	The armed man should be feared.

3. *Kyrie*

Kyrie eleison	Lord have Mercy
Christe eleison	Christ have Mercy
Kyrie eleison	Lord have Mercy

4. *Save Me From Bloody Men (Psalms 56:1 and 59:2)*

Be merciful unto me, O God:  
For man would swallow me up.  
He fighting daily oppresseth me.  
Mine enemies would daily swallow me up.  
For they be many that fight against men.  
O thou Most High.  
Defend me from them that rise up against me.  
Deliver me from the workers of iniquity,  
And save me from bloody men.

5. *Sanctus*

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,	Holy, Holy, Holy,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth	Lord God of Hosts
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua	Heaven and earth are full of your glory
Hosanna in excelsis	Hosanna in the highest

6. *Hymn Before Action (Rudyard Kipling)*

The earth is full of anger,	High lust and froward bearing
The seas are dark with wrath,	Proud heart, rebellious brow
The Nations in their harness	Deaf ear and soul uncaring,
Go up against our path:	We seek Thy mercy now!
Ere yet we loose the legions	The sinner that forswore Thee,
Ere yet we draw the blade,	The fool that passed Thee by,
Jehovah of the Thunders,	Our times are known before Thee
Lord God of Battles, aid!	Lord, grant us strength to die!

*7. Charge! (John Dryden and Jonathan Swift)*

The trumpet's loud clangor excites us to arms,  
With shrill notes of anger, and mortal alarms.  
How blest is he who for his country dies  
The double, double beat of the thund'ring drum  
Cries, Hark! the foes come;  
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat.  
How blest is he who for his country dies  
The double, double beat of the thund'ring drum  
Cries, Hark! the foes come;  
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat.  
Charge!

*8. Angry Flames (Tōge Sankichi, witness to the bombing of Hiroshima)*

Pushing up through smoke	Quivering like seaweed
From a world half darkened	The mass of flames spurts forward.
by overhanging cloud.	Popping up in the dense smoke,
The shroud that mushroomed out	Crawling out wreathed in fire,
And struck the dome of the sky,	Countless human beings on all fours
Black, red, blue, Dance in the air,	In a heap of embers that erupt and subside,
Merge, scatter glittering sparks,	Hair rent, rigid in death,
already tower over the whole city.	There smoulders a curse.

*9. Torches (excerpt from The Mahābhārata, Sanskrit epic poem)*

The animals scattered in all directions, screaming terrible screams.  
Many were burning, others were burnt.  
All were shattered and scattered mindlessly, their eyes bulging.  
Some hugged their sons, others their fathers  
and mothers, unable to let them go,  
and so they died.  
Others leapt up in their thousands, faces  
disfigured and were consumed by the fire,  
everywhere bodies squirming on the ground, wings, eyes and paws all burning.  
They breathed their last as living torches.

*10. Agnus Dei*

Agnus Dei,  
qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei,  
qui tollis peccata mundi,  
dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God,  
who takes away the sins of the world,  
have mercy upon us.

Lamb of God,  
who takes away the sins of the world,  
give us peace.

*11. Now the Guns Have Stopped (Guy Wilson)*

Silent, so silent now, Now the guns have stopped.  
I have survived all, I who knew I would not.  
But now you are not here.  
I shall go home, alone;  
And must try to live life as before And hide my grief.  
For you, my dearest friend, who should be with me now,  
Not cold, too soon, And in your grave,  
Alone.

*12. Benedictus*

Benedictus qui venit  
in nomine Domini.  
Hosanna in excelsis

Blessed is the one who comes  
in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.

*13. Better is Peace (Thomas Mallory, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Revelations 21:4 )*

Better is peace than always war,  
And better is peace than evermore war.

Ring out the thousand wars of old,	Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.	Ring in the thousand years of peace.
Ring out the old, ring in the new,	Ring in the valiant man and free,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:	The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
The year is going, let him go;	Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring out the false, ring in the true.	Ring in the Christ that is to be.
Ring out old shapes of foul disease;	The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;	Ring out the false, ring in the true

God shall wipe away all tears  
And there shall be no more death,  
Neither sorrow, nor crying,  
Neither shall there be any more pain.  
Praise the Lord.

## Jessica Norton - Conductor



Jessica Norton is a dynamic choral practitioner, vocal coach, and Vocal Health First Aider, dedicated to inspiring and developing singers of all levels. She is the Musical Director of East London Chorus and Polymnia Chamber Choir, as well as Music Leader of the Blackheath Halls Youth Choir. She also serves as Vocal Coach for the CBSO Youth and Children's Choruses and Section Coach for the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain. Her extensive choral experience includes work with Henley Youth Choir, London Concord Singers, London Orpheus Choir, Pegasus Choir, London Symphony Chorus, and Milton Keynes Chorale.

A classically trained soprano with a Diploma in Singing Performance from ABRSM, Jessica has performed as a soloist with ensembles such as the London Symphony Chorus, Ealing Common Choir, and Harwich and Dovercourt Choral Society. She has been a featured soprano in Wanstead's annual opera gala, *Glamour on the Green*, and has appeared in multiple BBC Proms, including *The Dream of Gerontius* under Sir Simon Rattle. Her vocal versatility has also led to performances at PHAB's Christmas Fundraising Events, ITV's *The Halcyon*, and a viral YouTube collaboration with Brendan Kavanagh, which has amassed over 8.3 million views.

As a sought-after vocal coach, Jessica teaches privately and for institutions such as Music in Offices. She leads vocal workshops for schools, choirs, and corporate events, working with organisations like Haygarth Marketing Agency and the Nous Group. Passionate about vocal health and choral excellence, she regularly runs Come and Sing Days and Vocal Training Days for choirs throughout the year, helping singers refine their technique and build confidence.

## George Ireland – Piano



Noted for "spectacular, sensitive and vivid accompaniment" (*The Latest*) and a "superbly voiced instrumental partnership of his singer" (*Sussex Express*), George Ireland enjoys a thriving career, equally in demand in recital, opera and choral music. He has recently worked with the youth companies of the Royal Opera House and Glyndebourne, as well as Grange Park Opera, Waterperry Opera Festival and West Green House Opera.

He is the winner of the 2024 New Voices Competition at the Northern Aldeburgh Festival with Mezzo-Soprano Judith Lebreuilly, adjudicated by Sir John Tomlinson, Edward Gardner and Sholto Kynoch, and with Mezzo-Soprano Rebecca Leggett won the 2022 London Song Festival Masterclass and British Art Song Competition with Sir Thomas Allen. He accompanied Soprano Oksana Lepska's winning recitals at the 2022 National Mozart Competition in London, and the Kathleen Ferrier Award-winning recitals of Countertenor Hugh Cutting and Soprano Jessica Cale in 2021 and 2020.

## East London Chorus

### *Soprano*

Sandra Andrews, Eleanor Blackman, Alison Chubb, Jennifer Griffiths\*, Viv Lennadd, Ri McDaid Wren, Aleksandra Povazhnaia, Jen Walker

### *Alto*

Olivia Buckley, Sue Davis, Lesley Jones, Maia Kershaw, Rosemary Leeke, Rosemary Lucas, Catherine Marris\*, Sarah Norton, Stephanie Shaw

### *Tenor*

John Garlick, Kwaku Owusu-Akyem, Andy Swordy\*, Jezz Tennant

### *Bass*

Edward Cieslik, Jim Cohen, James Dodd\*

\*Soloist

*List of singers correct at time of going to press*

## Hear Us

### Sacred Songs and Celtic Airs

Saturday 28 June 2025, 6.30pm

Christ Church Wanstead E11 2SW

## Join Us

We rehearse at Chobham Academy, Stratford E20 1BD on Tuesday evenings. We hold open rehearsals at the start of each term so that you can try us out before joining us. If you would like to attend an open rehearsal, please contact our membership secretary, Rosemary Lucas, at [membership@eastlondonchorus.org.uk](mailto:membership@eastlondonchorus.org.uk) to make arrangements.

After that, if you'd like to join us, recruitment is by a simple audition with our Musical Director, Jessica Norton.