

THAMES VALLEY EARLY MUSIC FORUM



Saturday 21st February 2026, 10.30 for 11-5.30pm
in Keble College Chapel, Oxford
in association with the Keble Early Music Festival

JS Bach

Choruses from the Christmas Oratorio

A workshop for voices and baroque orchestra (A=415)
directed by Philip Thorby

Singers and baroque instrumentalists are invited to a day working on the choruses from Bach's Christmas Oratorio, which was composed for the Christmas season 1734-5 in Leipzig. There will probably not be time to do all the choruses so we will definitely leave out Part 4 which needs horns.

Applications are invited from singers and from instrumentalists who play strings (viol and violin families), baroque flute, oboe (including oboe d'amore and oboe da caccia), bassoon and continuo. There is a chamber organ in the chapel. To be sure we have them, we have already invited the natural trumpets and timpani. (If you play these instruments and would like to be invited for a future workshop, please let me know.) Wind players – please indicate on the form if you would be happy to sing if places for your instrument are full. All wind players will need to sing (or listen) some of the time as the scoring varies between the six Parts. Although we will be limiting the number of wind instruments, we expect to be able to allow extra baroque wind, including recorders, to play in the short session after lunch when we do the Sinfonia from Part 2. These extra wind players will need to sing in the other sessions. Pitch will be A=415.

All choir scores and instrumental parts will be provided on the day, but scores and instrumental parts can be found on IMSLP if you want to look at them in advance. We will be using the Bärenreiter edition and singing in German. It is important that you don't leave any marks on the hired music or take it home by mistake.

Philip Thorby is TVEMF's President and is well known to forum members for his many enjoyable and instructive workshops and his amazing fund of knowledge about period performance practice. We are delighted to welcome him for his first workshop at Keble.

The day will begin with coffee and registration at 10.30 for an 11am start and run till 5.30pm, with lunch around 1pm. Bringing your own lunch is recommended. The college is in Keble Road, OX1 3PG. There is no parking in the college, but people with heavy instruments will be able to drive in from 9.30 to drop them off, giving them time to park elsewhere afterwards. A Park and Ride bus stops nearby, and we will send out more travel information before the day.

The fee is £16 for Early Music Forum and Keble members, £20 for non-members and £5 for full-time students. (TVEMF annual membership for 2026 is £9, or £6 if you pay by standing order.) **Please apply online by Friday February 6th**, using the following link [BOOK HERE](#). After that date, please email chair@tvemf.org.uk to check if there are still places and music available before applying. If you are unable to do Stripe or online booking (using 'Keble' as your reference), you can also book by post to 43 Inchwood, Birch Hill, Bracknell RG12 7ZX, enclosing a cheque payable to Thames Valley Early Music Forum (not TVEMF), giving your name, address, voice or instrument, email address and phone number, and mentioning if you would like a lift. Enquiries about payments to membershipsecretary@tvemf.org.uk please. Other enquiries should go to chair@tvemf.org.uk.

You can assume you have been accepted unless you hear to the contrary quite soon after you book or your part is marked 'waiting list'. It's worth booking a waiting list place because there are always a few cancellations, but in that case please don't pay until you know you have a place. Late bookings may be possible if there have been cancellations (email chair@tvemf.org.uk). **If you have booked and cannot come, please let us know at once because otherwise you will not only lose your booking fee but you will very likely deprive someone on the waiting list of a place.** I'd prefer you to email me at chair@tvemf.org.uk but you can text (not phone) me on 07758 211206 or phone 01494 721582 if necessary. Please leave a message if I don't answer the phone.

There will still be some covid precautions, including taking a lateral flow test before you come. These will be outlined in the online booking form and in the final email. If you're not well with a cold, cough, flu, covid or anything else infectious, please cancel and we will refund your fee.

Registered charity no. 900284

The first page of Bach's autograph score
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BWV_248_Autograph.jpg