



King's Singers present music from Tudor times to the 20th century

One of the most celebrated British choral ensembles, The King's Singers will next month open the new season of the Marlborough College Concert Series.



The King's Singers (© Ben Ealovega)

The King's Singers are countertenors David Hurley and Timothy Wayne-Wright, tenor Paul Phoenix, baritones Christopher Bruerton and Christopher Gabbitas, and bass Jonathan Howard.

Recently returned from a World Tour encompassing Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA, Mexico, Korea, Singapore and China, as well as the United Arab Emirates and most of Europe, they will perform choral works in the College Chapel from 7:30pm on Sunday, 16th September.

Highlights from their programme include – *Good Companie* (music from King Henry VIII's manuscript), *Oriana* (Golden Age of English madrigals), and *Gloriana* (Benjamin Britten).

Last year, we sold out on opening night and this year we are likely to again. We hope you can join us for what promises to be a richly satisfying evening. Please take your seats from 6:45pm. ■

Piano in the afternoon with Joanna MacGregor

Next January, internationally acclaimed pianist Joanna MacGregor will come to Marlborough for the fourth of five concerts in our new season. She will perform works by Beethoven, Bartók and Brahms in what is sure to be a musical journey of moods and emotions.

Daughter of the piano teacher Angela (Hughes) MacGregor, Joanna grew up in London during the 1960s and 70s in a family with eclectic musical tastes. She learned to play the piano mostly by ear and dabbled also with violin and guitar.

MacGregor recorded 15 discs for Collins Classics before launching her own label Sound Circus in 1998. The Collins discs feature mostly 20th century composers such as Bartók, Debussy and Ravel, along with Satie, Birtwistle, Britten and Hugh Wood.

She is credited with dozens of recordings and broadcasts for BBC Radio 3, as well as numerous television appearances on British terrestrial channels.

She has premiered works by composers as diverse as Sir Harrison Birtwistle, John Adams and James



Photo © Pal Hansen

She studied music with Hugh Wood at New Hall, Cambridge between 1978 and 1981, and after graduating pursued a Masters degree in performance at the Royal Academy of Music.

She has performed as soloist with many of the world's leading orchestras, including the London Symphony, Berlin Symphony, New York Philharmonic and Chicago Symphony orchestras. And she has worked with many of today's most revered conductors, including Pierre Boulez, Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Colin Davis and Michael Tilson Thomas.

During the early 1990s, Joanna

MacMillan. And she is renowned for collaborations with musicians, who like herself defy categorisation. The multi-instrumentalist Django Bates composed the piano concerto "*What it's like to be alive*," both for her and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

In 2001, she published *Piano World*, a series of piano teaching books for children with companion CDs featuring storytelling, cartoon narration and musical accompaniment. Other writing credits include *Memoirs of an Amnesiac*,

Previews

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The Henry Hony Centre,
Marlborough College, SN8 1PA

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MacGregor [from Page 1, Column 3]

a radio play about the life of Eric Satie. For the past six years, she has held the position of Artistic Director of the Bath International Music Festival.

Two years ago, she curated *Deloitte Ignite*, a three day festival opening the 2010 season at the Royal Opera House. Comprising a series of installations with an arboreal theme, open to the public during the day, Joanna also gave three evening performances of a *Lying Down Concert* with Kiki Dale and Ilona Jantti.

MacGregor has received honorary Professorships and Fellowships from the Royal Academy of Music and Trinity College of Music, as well as honorary Doctorates from the University of Bath and the Open University. She has served as Artist-in-Residence at Liverpool Hope College, where she is now Professor of Musical Performance. And last year, she assumed the role of Head of Keyboard at the Royal Academy of Music.

This summer, Joanna returns to the BBC Promenade series appearing as soloist with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, and on a separate occasion will perform Hugh Wood's Piano Concerto with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

For her recital in Marlborough, she will present four pieces – an early Beethoven sonata followed by Bartók's "Out of doors" suite; then after the interval, *Three Intermezzi* by Brahms and the *Waldstein* Sonata, also by Beethoven.

The Beethoven Opus 2 was composed in 1796 and published a year later in Vienna. It comprises a triptych of piano sonatas, and the no. 3 which we will hear, is regarded as the most weighty of the set having been likened to a solo concerto in scope and style.

Its three movements have been interpreted by some as moments in a day – the first, a pleasant yet noisy bustling day; the second, the calmness of night; and the third, the dawn of a new day.

And it is for these reasons that French and Italian audiences have come to know the sonata as *L'Aurore /L'Aurora (The Dawn)*.

The "Out of doors" suite is a set of solo piano pieces written around the time Bartók was composing the First Piano Concerto. It consists of five contrasting and descriptive movements:

- the first "With Drums and Pipes" emulating the sound of drums and wind instruments,
- the second "Barcarolla" a traditional folk melody,
- the third "Musettes" representing the sound of a poorly tuned pair of bagpipes,
- the fourth "The Night's Music" depicting the sounds of night in a Hungarian summer, and
- the fifth "The Chase" which breathlessly conveys the spirit of pursuit.

The *Three Intermezzi*, Opus 117 by Brahms are thought to have been inspired by a Scottish poem from Herder's *Volkslieder*. They bear the inscription:

"Schlaf sanft mein Kind, schlaf sanft und Schön ! Mich dauert's sehr, dich weinen sehn,"

translated as

"Sleep softly my child, sleep softly and well ! It hurts my heart to see you weeping."

Tender and introspective, Brahms described them as "lullabies to my sorrows." Written in 1892, they are some of his most popular late piano works.

Bringing the recital to a grand finale is the Sonata in C major, Opus 53 "Waldstein" by Beethoven – which takes its name from a dedication to his patron and close personal friend Count Ferdinand Ernst Gabriel von Waldstein of Vienna.

Considered one of his finest piano sonatas, it bears comparison with two others from his so called middle period (1803-1812) – the *Appassionata* (Sonata No. 23) and *Les Adieux* (Sonata No. 26).

What better way to conclude a diverse and varied programme of virtuoso piano? I for one can't wait! ■

Season 71 at a glance

King's Singers 16-Sept-12 Music from Tudor times to the 20th century

Red Priest 07-Oct-12 "Pirates of the baroque"

London Mozart Players 04-Nov-12 Songs from a Threepenny Opera (Kurt Weill) plus music by Barber and Dvorak

Joanna MacGregor 13-Jan-13 Piano works by Beethoven, Bartók and Brahms

Southbank Sinfonia 03-Feb-13 Mozart Clarinet Concerto (soloist: Julian Bliss) plus Tchaikovsky – Capriccio Italien and Symphony no. 5