

ABCD 30th Convention

28-30 August 2015 • Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester

A whole year's motivation from
one unforgettable weekend!

Forty
reasons
to attend –
sing
Spem in Alium!



Visit www.abcd.org.uk for the latest information



Manchester – North West and best



Welcome back to the musically-vibrant North West; we've a wonderful array of presenters and a huge variety of topics to stimulate everyone interested in choral music - directing it, performing it or just enjoying it! The RNCM, with its newly-extended concert hall and lovely seminar rooms, is the ideal venue for **abcd's** 30th Convention. Its accommodation right next door and closeness to Oxford Road and Piccadilly stations add to its appeal.

Our focuses this year are on: conducting skills, basic to advanced; working with community choirs; and singing in secondary schools.

Presenters include Patrick Russill, Michael Reif, Sarah Tenant-Flowers and Martin Cook on conducting skills; Gitika Partington, Ian Chesworth and Andy Guthrie on leading community choirs; Philip Stopford on church choir repertoire; and Maggie McDonald and Jonathan Griffith on vocal health.

You'll enjoy jazz warm ups and improvisation with Will Todd; Andy Beck and friends concentrate on voice care, repertoire for every choir, and arranging technique; and Irina Walters brings you wonderful music from Russia and Eastern Europe.

In the final plenary you've a rare chance to sing Tallis' *Spem in Alium* under Robert Hollingworth's direction -- a real treat! We also celebrate John Rutter's 70th birthday as he leads a Come and Sing afternoon on the Saturday. This is open to the public, so do tell your friends and make it a magnificently memorable weekend for everyone.

Mavis Fletcher, Convention 2015 Artistic Director & abcd Trustee



abcd gala concert

Saturday 29th August 2015, 7.45pm • RNCM Concert Hall

The fabulous, newly-refurbished RNCM Concert Hall makes a fittingly superb setting for the 2015 Gala concert. There are three fantastic choirs on show:-

Gala Concert choirs

The Academic Student Choir of the Ural Federal University (Russia)

Conductor Svetlana Dolnikovskaya

Convention's first-ever Russian choir! Re-founded by their conductor in 2003, the choir is a frequent participant in regional, all-Russian and international contests, festivals and master-classes. Based in Ekaterinburg, they have won 6 Grands Prix, 17 Gold, 4 Silver and 2 Bronze prizes at international competitions in Russia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, Macedonia and Japan. You can also meet choir members in a special session on Sunday.



The 24

Conductor Robert Hollingworth

Based at the University of York, this highly-accomplished and versatile chamber choir performs music from the sixteenth century to the present day and tours widely, most recently in China. Robert is also Anniversary Reader in the University of York Music Department and well known as founder and conductor of I Fagiolini.



Cambiata North West

Conductor *abcd* member Ian Crawford

One of *abcd*'s greatest successes, now in its fourth year, this innovative and hugely impressive choir brings boys from across the North West together to sing music specially for changing voices. Cambiata lets boys sing with confidence, supporting them throughout this critical period in their vocal lives. Last year the choir took part in the BBC's highly acclaimed War Horse Prom, where the boys sang — and acted — magnificently.



Friday night delight...

Music for community choirs led by Ian Chesworth and Gitika Partington — followed, we suggest, by drinks in the bar.

... and come and sing on Saturday

Enjoy an afternoon Come and Sing session in the RNCM Concert Hall with *abcd* Vice-President John Rutter. Explore John's own music and other favourite pieces. Singers of all ages and experience are very welcome, so do encourage your choir members to come along! For more details see the *abcd* website.

Themes, Presenters and Events



New repertoire

Always one of Convention's most popular themes, this year's repertoire sessions take in music for upper voices, church and SATB choirs. But this year there are extra repertoire sessions too: music from Russia and Eastern Europe and music inspired by Shakespeare.

Conducting technique

Back by popular demand, we are again offering hands-on advice for Intermediate and Advanced level conductors, with Patrick Russill (RAM) and Michael Reif (Germany); while Martin Cook offers a 'back to basics' session for those starting out and for anyone wanting a refresher. You can also benefit from individual tuition at our popular Pre-Convention Conducting Course.

Vocal technique

We all know the massive difference good vocal technique makes to a choir's performance. Less well-known is how best to teach it. At Convention this year world-class vocal-technique practitioners show you how it's done.

Community choirs

Easy to join, if hard to define, community choirs range from gospel, rock, and church to barbershop and beatbox. They're increasingly popular and give pleasure to thousands, so this year's Convention takes a good look at them.

Conducting masterclasses - Intermediate & Advanced

Patrick Russill and Michael Reif

Two Intermediate and two Advanced sessions, each giving 15-20 minutes' individual tuition to three conductors, along with observer delegates. Patrick and Michael each choose three short, contrasting, pieces, sent out in advance. To receive more details, contact Penny Homer – or see our website. A panel will choose those lucky enough to take part.

Repertoire reading sessions

Explore new repertoire in the best way: sing it yourself! These highly useful sessions will look at six genres of choral music: Church music with composer Philip Stopford; Shakespeare-themed pieces with Keith Orrell; Russian and Eastern European music with Irina Walters (two sessions - SATB and upper voices); music for large SATB choirs, including newly-edited archive works and Peter Broadbent on works composers have published themselves.

Back to basics

Martin Cook

abcd conducting tutor Dr Martin Cook will help you brush up some basic skills and learn new ones. Having studied and worked in the US, Martin can demonstrate some fascinating trans-Atlantic techniques.

Jazzy warm-ups

Will Todd

As we all know, good singing needs a happy, focused choir! Will shows how to achieve this with jazz warm-ups and short pieces which he uses himself,

focusing on rhythm, pitch – and a sense of adventure!

Community choirs

Andy Guthrie

Andy is Director of The Workplace Choir Company, running choir programmes with organisations such as Thomson/TUI Travel and UNISON. His session looks at three types of community choir – and why they're all successful:-

SingItLoud: a medium-sized choir singing popular and classical music from sheet music;

Songlines: a large choir singing folk, pop and world music, taught and sung by ear;

The Workplace Choir Company. Workplace and office choirs.

Topics include: getting started, finance, recruitment, allocating voice types, planning a performance and avoiding pitfalls.

Community repertoire

Ian Chesworth and Andy Guthrie

What to choose; how to teach it; how to engage non-readers; how to adapt music to suit your own choir. As well as looking at these questions Ian and Andy share newly-published music and show you how to arrange music specifically for community choirs.

Three sessions with Andy Beck. What works for school choirs?

Well-known US composer and publisher Andy Beck shares simple choral arranging techniques that work especially well for school-aged singers, leading you in several published compositions (at various levels of difficulty) that clearly illustrate the discussion.



Meet me in the middle. Choral music for developing voices.

Join Andy to sing through the best repertoire for singers in years 7, 8, and 9. Music in this session will address your big concerns, like finding music for changing voices, balancing fun selections with educational repertoire and motivating teen singers.

Train young singers in six simple steps.

This practical "how-to" session highlights materials and techniques for training primary school singers. Andy cover unison songs, echo songs, rounds and canons, rhythm and music reading activities, ending with full 2-part choral pieces.

Warm-ups - why bother?

Maggie McDonald

Maggie McDonald, prize-winning mezzo-soprano, adjudicator, choral coach and specialist voice teacher, explains why warm-ups are so vital. She also advises on the right singing techniques to employ to prepare choirs for rehearsals and concerts.

'Vocal-ease'

This intriguing session covers Maggie's own specially-developed 'Vocal-ease' procedures, techniques and exercises to promote healthy, productive phonation; "guiding the sound", vocal regimes and vocal health.

Good vocal technique in five basic steps

Jonathan Griffith

Acclaimed New York conductor, educator and lecturer, Jonathan has led performances across North America, Europe and Asia. He'll teach you the basic steps to producing a natural, free and vibrant tone, through simple exercises that result in consistent, resonant tone production which last a lifetime.

You'll also find out why uniform vowel production is key to good choral singing.

Sight-read in one hour!

Surprising, but true: even singers who claim they can't sight read actually can, given the right tools and their instincts to build on. Jonathan reveals what these are; no longer will your singers need to rely on their neighbour or learn by "ear"; they'll be able to sight-read diatonic and chromatic scales & manage transposition and simple harmony.

Technology - the choir director's new ally

New technology now helps choral directors in so many ways that no-one can ignore it. In this technology basics session a panel shows how to use IT to source printed music, help singers who are not strong readers learn music quickly through websites, record individual vocal lines and share audio and text files.

Keep boys singing as their voices change

Martin Ashley

An authority on teenage boys' changing voices and how to look after them, Martin is a co-founder of Cambiata North West. With the help of boys from the choir, in this session he gives practical guidance on how to encourage boys to sing and shows how vital the right repertoire is to achieve that most tricky thing: keep them singing!

Forum – the secondary school music challenge

Despite pressures – lack of funds, lack of interest or support, too many demands on musical students' time – there are secondary schools where music is vibrant and thriving. Led by **abcd** Chair Leslie East, the panel will reveal how it's done, with time for

delegates to share challenges and successes of their own.

Accompanied recitative – how to manage it

Sarah Tenant-Flowers

Recitative is never easy but can be magical. In two sessions Sarah uses well-known extracts from Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, Haydn's *Creation* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* to show how to do it. A limited number of active places are available; the second session features a string quartet.

And finally – sing Spem!

Robert Hollingworth

Who better than the vastly-experienced Robert Hollingworth to lead you in the final plenary session to sing Tallis' colossal forty-part motet, *Spem in Alium*? If you've never sung *Spem* before, now's your chance to get to know this extraordinary work – and if you have, you'll know what a treat you have to look forward to, ending 2015's Convention on a sublime musical high!

Music exhibition – so much that's new

Don't miss Convention's Exhibition – as much an ideas bank as a trade show. Repertoire – new compositions – tour agencies – software, recordings, gadgets and gizmos – it's all there, together with the people who can really help you maximise your and your choir's musical enjoyment. Do schedule some browsing and buying time in your Convention timetable.

Pre-Convention Conducting Course 27– 28 August

Led by Jo McNally and Keith Orrell



This practical course looks at rehearsal and conducting techniques for leaders of all kinds of choir – no minimum experience is required. Delegates can either participate as conductors or attend as observers; a repertoire list is sent in advance. Individual tuition will be available for conductors with more experience or who have already attended an abcd course.



Both Jo and Keith are experts in their field, each with a wealth of conducting experience. Jo, originally from the USA, works as an amateur, conductor, clinician, author and singer; Keith is a versatile choral and orchestral

conductor and also a dedicated church musician, organist and pianist.

Individual lessons

For the first time in a number of years, we are offering one-to-one tuition for delegates from some of our presenters. Available in singing, conducting and composition, they will run through the weekend alongside sessions. Booking will be available separately and full information will be sent in due course.

Young Conductors' Course 28-30 August

Led by Amy Bebbington



Open to all aged 18-25 not currently earning a living from conducting, this course runs parallel with Convention so that students can attend some Convention events as well as taking part in conducting-technique sessions. Amy gives group tuition in the basics of choir training and conducting, and works on rehearsal and leadership skills. This is a practical, hands-on

course; the emphasis is on informality and tutoring in a small group.

Conductor, teacher, singer, pianist and composer, Amy has been described as 'one of the brightest talents of her generation.' She has directed numerous choral ensembles in the UK and US.

Bursaries available!

Thanks to funding from the Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation, a limited number of young conductors can benefit from subsidised places at just £100 each this year. For eligibility details, contact **abcd** Training

Manager Penny Homer on 07805 454563, email penny.homer@abcd.org.uk, or see our website.

Our base – the Royal Northern College of Music

One of the UK's top five music conservatoires, with world-class facilities, the college is conveniently situated in the middle of Manchester and very easily accessible by train: from Piccadilly station there are frequent buses and Oxford Road station is only 5-10 minutes' walk away.

Accommodation is available to book with your delegate place in the Sir Charles Groves Hall, next door to the College. All rooms are en suite. We have further en suite accommodation available about 15 minutes' walk away near Piccadilly station. Accommodation numbers are limited, so early booking is advised. All breakfasts are served at the college.

There are of course numerous hotels in Manchester city centre and a wide range of ways to book online.

Very easy travelling

Manchester is exceptionally well-served for transport. Cars and coaches have access by motorway and there are frequent services by plane to Manchester Airport and by train. There are even boat trips up the Manchester Ship Canal from Liverpool to Salford Quays!

The easiest way to book is online: for information on all modes of public transport see Traveline (www.traveline.info). For fares, see the websites of the travel companies themselves.

Parking in Manchester

There is no parking available at the college except for those with mobility problems – please let us know if you need a space. However, there are public car parks within a few minutes' walk of the college.

For more information on Convention, see our website at www.abcd.org.uk, contact Len Fletcher on 01772 704834 or email convention@abcd.org.uk

About time Convention starts at 3.15 pm on Friday afternoon with the opening of the Exhibition. Sessions proper commence at 4.15 pm, and the weekend finishes at 4 pm on Sunday. The full timetable for the weekend is kept up to date on our website. Join us for the full weekend, or just for a day!

Convention Fees all held at last year's prices!

Convention fees exclude B&B but include meals and refreshments. Please indicate your Convention requirements by ticking the appropriate box(es), then choose any accommodation requirements.

abcd Members

Main Convention, 28–30 August

£275 if booked by 30th June, £295 if later

Saturday only

£130 (includes lunch & dinner but not gala concert ticket)

Sunday only

£110 (includes lunch)

Pre-Convention Conducting Course, 27-28 August

£150 if booked by 30th June, £160 if later

Young Conductors' Course, 28-30 August

£275 if booked by 30th June, £295 if later

Total Convention fee £ _____

Accommodation

Please indicate your accommodation requirements by ticking the relevant boxes below.

All prices include bed and breakfast.

Thursday 27 August

Friday 28 August

Saturday 29 August

Sir Charles Groves Hall:

En suite single room (£45 per night)

En suite double room (£60 per night) (limited numbers)

Liberty Point, 15 minutes walk from RNCM:

En suite single room (£40 per night) N.B. only available on 28 & 29 August

If you wish to share a double room, please let us know the name of the person staying with you

Total Accommodation fee £ _____

There will be a limited number of subsidised places for the Young Conductors' course at £100 each.

Please tick here for further details

I am not currently a member of *abcd* but wish to join and pay the member's rate for Convention.

I enclose my *abcd* subscription with my payment - the current individual annual subscription is £56, reduced to £11.20 (i.e. 20%) for members aged 26–27 and FREE for up to two years for under 25s. Memberships paid for now will last until 30 April 2016.

Total fee £ _____

Your contact details

Name _____

Address _____

County _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

I am an *abcd* member, _____ region

Do you have any dietary or other special requirements? Yes/No

Do you require ground floor accommodation? Yes/No

Do you have a disability for which you might need assistance? Yes/No

If so please state assistance required _____

Have you previously attended an *abcd* extended conducting course? We would like to provide a networking opportunity for alumni. Please tick the box if you have.

