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CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

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*Saturday 28 September 2024*  
*The King's School*  
*Macclesfield*

*Manchester Chamber Choir*  
*Director Sarah Brandwood-Spencer*  
*Conductor Ellie Slorach*

The **Manchester Chamber Choir** were founded in 2003. They had a shared passion for singing interesting and varied music, initially gathering in each other's front rooms to rehearse. Today, the choir hosts its own concert season in Manchester, collaborating regularly with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and performing with the Xi'an Symphony Orchestra, Hans Zimmer, Jarvis Cocker, Andrea Bocelli, and the Pet Shop Boys. Notable premieres include James Macmillan's Credo at the 2012 BBC Proms and Mark Simpson's The Immortal at the 2015 Manchester International Festival. Under Principal Conductor Vicente Chavarría since 2021, the choir has also worked with Nicholas Kraemer, Paul Spicer, Suzzie Vango, Ewa Strusinska, and Philip Rushforth. Highlights include a 2017 performance in China and concerts marking significant anniversaries and historical events. After a pandemic hiatus, the choir returned in 2021 with new performances and collaborations, celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2023 with a selection of favorite choral pieces.

Since her debut in Paris to an audience of 3,000, **Sarah Brandwood-Spencer** has enjoyed a busy career as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestral player. A graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music and the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, she has toured the world as principal and soloist with the European Union Chamber Orchestra, been guest associate concertmaster with the Canadian Opera Company, worked as a principal player with the prestigious Goldberg Ensemble, and was a founder member, principal and soloist with the Lancashire Sinfionetta. Brandwood-Spencer was a principal violinist of the Hallé Orchestra for seven years and is now enjoying a varied career as guest leader and principal player with many of the country's leading orchestras, and as a recording artist for various television, film and pop sessions. She is a passionate chamber musician, and performs regularly with her colleagues in the Chagall Ensemble.

**Ellie Slorach**, a Manchester-based conductor, is the Founder and Artistic Director of Kantos Chamber Choir and the Engagement Conductor for the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. In the 2023-24 season, she made her debut with the Royal Northern Sinfonia and New Adventures' production of Edward Scissorhands. She also returned to the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic, BBC Singers, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Orchestra of Opera North, and Manchester Camerata. Specialising in concerts for schools and youth, Slorach has worked with the Hallé Orchestra and Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège. She has directed youth orchestras and choirs, including the Hallé Youth Orchestra. Slorach regularly conducts opera productions, including Northern Opera Group's Handel's *Silla* in 2022 and *Sherlock* in 2024, and was Assistant Conductor for Opera Holland Park's *Rigoletto* in 2023. Ellie founded Kantos Chamber Choir in 2015, known for its innovative concerts and partnership with Manchester Camerata. She studied Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music and Music at the University of Manchester.

Established in 1967, the **Northern Chamber Orchestra** (NCO) has evolved into a prominent ensemble. The upcoming Macclesfield concert season features esteemed guest soloists including Raphael Wallfisch and Jeneba Kanneh-Mason. The orchestra's twenty-one members are not only accomplished chamber musicians but also perform regularly as soloists.

The NCO actively engages with schools, colleges, and music groups in its concert locations, providing tailor-made, inspiring programmes for both young and adult learners. This commitment to education extends to collaborations with institutions like Chetham's School of Music and Essential Music Hub.

The orchestra's extensive discography, including over thirty acclaimed recordings, has garnered global recognition. While excelling in diverse repertoire, the NCO remains dedicated to premiering new works by contemporary composers like Adam Gorb, Anthony Gilbert, David Ellis, and in-house composer James Manson.

# NORTHERN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

SATURDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 7.30PM | THE KING'S SCHOOL IN MACCLESFIELD

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791)

Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute), K.620  
*I Overture*

Symphony No. 31 'Paris', K.297  
*I. Allegro assai II. Andante III. Allegro*

Requiem in D minor, K.626  
*I. Introitus, Requiem aeternam (chorus with soprano solo) II. Kyrie eleison (chorus) III. Sequenz 1. Dies irae (chorus) 2. Tuba mirum (solo quartet) 3. Rex tremendae (chorus) 4. Recordare (solo quartet) 5. Confutatis (chorus) 6. Lacrymosa (chorus) IV. Offertorium 1. Domine Jesu (chorus with solo quartet) 2. Hostias (chorus) V. Sanctus (chorus) VI. Benedictus (chorus with solo quartet) VII. Agnus Dei (chorus) VIII. Communio, Lux aeterna (chorus with soprano solo)*

With this season's Mozart on Tour series, we celebrate the travels and journeys of **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**, which profoundly shaped his music. This concert includes his *Symphony No. 31*, known as the 'Paris', of 1778, alongside two masterpieces from his final year.

The 'Paris' Symphony is an exuberant work which captures the essence of the bustling, pre-Revolutionary city, a few years after Louis XVI had ascended to the French throne. Mozart had triumphed there in childhood. Now in his early twenties, he hoped to find attractive career opportunities, and concomitant remuneration, so he took pains to write this commission in a style that would appeal to the Parisian audience. The public premiere took place at the Concert Spirituel at the Tuileries Palace, one of the first public concert venues. Set in the festive key of D major, it has an unusually large instrumentation for the time, including timpani, trumpets and – a first for Mozart – a pair of clarinets. Two vigorous, spectacular outer movements frame a wistful Andante.

The year of Mozart's death, 1791, was a significant one in Western history, a bridge into the modern era: in France, the revolution which challenged absolutism and spread democratic ideals was underway, with Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette making a failed attempt to escape their jailers; in America, Washington D.C. was founded; and Samuel Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, and Charles Babbage, the 'father of the computer', were born.

Mozart premiered two operas that September, *La clemenza di Tito* (in Prague) and then *The Magic Flute* (in Vienna). *The Magic Flute* is a fairy tale, as much for adults as for children, playing into a vogue for the exotic with the magical flute and bells which accompany the protagonists as they journey into a strange, fantastical land. There are Masonic themes and symbolism, with many references to the number '3', (the overture's three-chord opening and three-flat key signature), but there is comedy and romance too. The half-dozen repeated notes of the overture's main theme are the engine which drive the music forward resolutely. Its animated, fugal style shows the influence of J. S. Bach and Handel.

More masterpieces flowed from Mozart in his final year, including his E $\flat$  string quintet, concertos for clarinet and for piano, the motet *Ave Verum Corpus*, as well as the unfinished *Requiem*. Commissioned by Count Franz von Walsegg, the story of the *Requiem*'s genesis has accumulated layers of ambiguity and conjecture, driven perhaps by the mythologising of one of our greatest composers, and by the needs of a wife in poor health who, unexpectedly widowed and in debt, had to generate the greatest possible income to support herself and their children. Mozart's pupil and colleague Franz Xaver Süssmayr completed the *Requiem* in time to meet Count von Walsegg's commission. The extent of Süssmayr's role in that completion remains a disputed topic.

Set in the key of D minor, a key often associated with solemnity, intensity or even foreboding, the *Requiem* is scored for four solo singers, chorus and orchestra. The orchestra is made up of bassoon, clarinet, bassoons, trumpets, trombones, timpani and strings. There are no higher-sounding flutes or oboes. The darker, lower ranges of the instruments are exploited, and the trumpets and timpani punctuate rather than introduce a festive tone. This sombre, restrained instrumental palette allows the focus to be on the choir and the text, taking us through grief, hope and ultimately, redemption.

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# UPCOMING CONCERTS

**Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto**  
The King's School, Macclesfield  
Saturday 2 November 7.30pm

**Christmas Concert**  
Tatton Park, Knutsford  
Friday 13 December 3.30pm & 7pm

**Mozart on Tour (Linz)**  
The King's School, Macclesfield  
Saturday 14 December 7.30pm

**Strum**  
St Michael's Church, Macclesfield  
Saturday 18 January 7.30pm

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# THE ORCHESTRA

**Violin I**  
Sarah Brandwood-Spencer  
Midori Tramaseur  
Liz Rossi  
William Chadwick  
Catherine Studman

**Violin II**  
Simon Gilks  
Rebecca Thompson  
Louise Latham  
Laura Concar

**Viola**  
Sarah Greene  
Michael Dale  
Jacq Leighton-Jones

**Cello**  
Amy Jolly  
Elliott Bailey  
Amanda Turner

**Double Bass**  
Alice Durrant  
Nathan Knight

**Flute**  
Conrad Marshall  
Nichola Hunter

**Oboe**  
Kenny Sturgeon  
Jane Evans

**Clarinet/ Bassett Horn**  
Elizabeth Jordan  
Helen Blamey

**Bassoon**  
Helen Peller  
Rachel Whibley

**Horn**  
Jennifer Cox  
Alan Tokeley

**Trumpet**  
Anthony Thompson  
Graham South

**Trombone**  
Elizabeth Bannan  
Anthony Boorer  
Les Storey

**Timpani**  
Tim Williams

**Soprano**  
Elspeth Piggott

**Mezzo Soprano**  
Lorna Day

**Tenor**  
James Micklethwaite

**Bass**  
Henry Saywell

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