

Martin Baker
Master of Music, Westminster Cathedral

Born in Manchester in 1967, Martin Baker studied at the Royal Northern College of Music Junior School, Chetham's School of Music and Downing College, Cambridge, then held positions at London's Westminster and St Paul's Cathedrals before being appointed to Westminster Abbey at the age of 24. During his eight years at the Abbey, initially as Sub-Organist and subsequently as Acting Organist and Master of the Choristers, his performances on broadcasts and recordings with the Abbey Choir received wide critical acclaim.

Martin Baker is recognized as a dynamic choral conductor. Since his appointment to Westminster Cathedral as Master of Music in 2000, the choir has maintained its high profile both in the Roman Catholic Church and in the musical world in general. He has commissioned and directed the choir in the premieres of a number of new choral masses, including works by composers such as James MacMillan, Peter Maxwell Davies, Judith Bingham and John Tavener. The choir has continued its series of acclaimed recordings on the Hyperion label, the most recent releases being recordings of the service of Vespers of the Nativity, the Palestrina Lamentations and a sequence of music from Advent to Epiphany featuring music written specially for the choir. Forthcoming releases include two Palestrina Masses, *Missa Te Deum laudamus* and *Missa Tu es Petrus*. Under his direction the choir has given concerts regularly in the UK, participating in many prestigious festivals such as South Bank's Messiaen and Maxwell Davies celebrations, and toured in the USA, Hungary, Germany, Belgium, Norway and Italy. In 2005 Martin Baker

was invited to address the Congregation for Divine Worship at the Vatican on the Liturgical Role of the Choir. In 2006 he founded the Conference of Catholic Directors of Music, an association which brings together the leading catholic cathedral and church musicians in the UK and Ireland, and which aims to promote and foster quality of music in Roman Catholic worship. In November 2009 he attended a meeting of Pope Benedict and a select group of artists from all over the world in the Sistine Chapel, to mark the tenth anniversary of Pope John Paul II's Letter to Artists.

As an organist, Martin Baker is much in demand all over the world. Performing regularly in the UK, he has recently given concerts in France, Holland, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Austria, the USA, and Russia. The winner of the St Alban's Improvisation competition in 1997, improvisation features regularly in his recital programs.

Updated March 2011