

Westminster Cathedral Choir

Westminster Cathedral Choir is acclaimed as one of the world's great choirs. Since its foundation in 1903 it has occupied a unique and enviable position at the forefront of English church music, not least because of the ground-breaking work of its first Master of Music, Richard Terry, who revived the great works of the English and continental Renaissance composers. The choir's fame grew under Terry as it presented this forgotten music, revolutionizing attitudes to the repertoire. Innovation continued under George Malcolm who pioneered the development of the choir's sound along continental lines, resulting in a choir that was truly revolutionary in both what and how it sang. The choir continues these traditions under its present Master of Music, Martin Baker, and it remains the only Catholic Cathedral choir in the world to sing daily Mass and Vespers. More recent holders of the post have included Colin Mawby, Stephen Cleobury, David Hill and James O'Donnell.

The choir's reputation is ever-expanding and it continues to reach new audiences through its series of acclaimed recordings on the Hyperion label, the two most recent being the Palestrina Lamentations and a sequence of music from Advent to Epiphany featuring music written specially for the choir. In 1998 the choir was awarded the Gramophone Awards for "Best Choral Recording of the Year" and "Record of the Year" for the performance of Frank Martin's *Messe* and Pizzetti's *Requiem*.

The choir has a history of commissioning and performing new music, famous examples being Britten's *Missa brevis* for boys' voices, the *Mass in G minor* by Vaughan Williams and compositions by Wood, Holst and Howells. Within the last decade the choir has commissioned new Masses from James MacMillan, Peter Maxwell Davies, Judith Bingham, John Tavener, Matthew Martin and Stephen Hough, all of which were first performed in the context of the regular liturgies at Westminster Cathedral.

Westminster Cathedral Choir features frequently on radio and television. When its busy liturgical schedule permits it takes its music further afield. In addition to regular concerts around the UK, recent tours have included Hungary, Norway, Germany, Belgium, Italy and the USA.

Updated March 2011