

Haydn

THE CREATION

Hampton Singers and Godiva Ensemble
Conductor Benjamin Hamilton



Concert Programme

Saturday 28th February 2026 7pm

Parish Church, Hampton in Arden

Welcome!

On behalf of Hampton Singers, we are delighted to welcome you to our concert this evening in Hampton parish church.

It is always a huge privilege for the choir to perform with the accompaniment of an orchestra, and guest soloists, and we are especially excited to present Haydn`s stirring oratorio, Creation. For some months now, members of the choir have been leaving rehearsals on a Monday evening still humming the wonderful tunes in this piece.

Hampton Singers continues to grow in number, attracting new members from our local community. We enjoy the breadth of music with which Ben develops and entertains the choir, and we are also extremely grateful to our regular accompanist, Lucy Griffiths, who supports us on our Monday evening rehearsals. In Creation, there are an awful lot of notes to play when accompanying the choir!

We would like to thank Alistair Kennedy and the Godiva Ensemble for playing with us this evening.

Our next concert will be an afternoon of Greatest Hits, at 4pm on Saturday 16th May, at Fentham Hall, featuring music we are confident that both the choir and our audience will know and love. If you are tempted to join the choir, do contact a member of the choir or visit our website www.hamptonsingers.co.uk.

We hope that you enjoy listening to our performance this evening as much as we have enjoyed rehearsing it.

Sue Kiely & Mark Blake – Co Chairs, Hampton Singers.



Benjamin Hamilton, our conductor



Benjamin Hamilton is a sought-after choral and opera conductor and award-winning translator, passionate about using singing to give voice to everyone. He works with singers of all ages and stages, from B:Music's Workplace Voices and Ex Urbe Chamber Choir (and of course the Hampton Singers) to emerging opera artists through DEBUT's Opera-in-a-Day series (recent productions include Carmen, Le nozze di Figaro, La traviata, and La bohème). He has also been

commissioned for the Royal Opera House's Ballet and Opera Family Sundays and is editing the works of Welsh composer Margaret More as part of his mission to spotlight overlooked composers.

The Choir, The Hampton Singers

Established in 1980, the Hampton Singers have become a valued part of music making in the Solihull area, with many supporters regularly attending our concerts. The choir is also involved in local community initiatives, singing at Solihull Civic Centre, entertaining our older residents at Christmas and helping to facilitate Singing for Wellbeing in the borough.

Our talented and enthusiastic conductor, Ben Hamilton, rehearses the choir every Monday evening (from 7.45 to 9.45pm) in Hampton in Arden's Scout and Guide Headquarters, Shadowbrook Lane. Ben has guided our development for the last 10 years and rehearsals are always lively and fun (and include a break for a cup of tea and often cake!). Ben is ably assisted by our accompanist Lucy Griffiths (who usually makes the cake).

We always welcome new singers, so do get in touch with us - either by approaching one of the choir or our conductor at the end of the concert, or by getting in touch with us via our website www.hamptonsingers.co.uk

Alistair Kennedy, Orchestra leader



After completing a degree in Classics from Liverpool University, Alistair went on to study violin at the Birmingham Conservatoire. He graduated in 1996 and went on to pursue a very busy freelance career, playing with a number of orchestras including Orchestra of the Swan, Orchestra da Camera, Chameleon Arts Orchestra, Moscow City Ballet Orchestra, English Symphony Orchestra, English Pro Musica and the International Film Orchestra to

name but a few, always in principal positions. Alistair has performed with many top soloists including Nigel Kennedy, Peter Donohoe, John Lill and Katherine Jenkins. Alistair has also toured with “Phantom of the Opera”, and has performed with a large number of “pop” artists including Leo Sayer, Victoria Beckham, Wizard, Procul Harlem, and Emerson Lake and Palmer.

Alistair has made numerous recordings for film and television, including the soundtrack to The Krypton Factor for ITV. Solo engagements have included both Beethoven Romances with the English Philharmonic Orchestra, The Lark Ascending and The Seasons with Spires Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra, and the Beethoven Triple Concerto. Alistair is founder and artistic director of the Godiva Ensemble and Chairman of Orchestra da Camera.

Alistair plays on a Fagnola Violin from 1919. In addition to performing, Alistair is ABRSM’s Regional Development Executive for England and Wales and is on the board of the Incorporated Society of Musicians

Soloists

Jon Grave—Tenor



Jon was destined for a vocal career following Choirboy of the Year success and his first operatic lead in Menotti's *Amahl* aged 11. More than 60 subsequent roles include Verdi, Puccini, Mozart, Donizetti, and Gilbert & Sullivan, alongside new and modern interpretations including Bouffe (Brighton Festival, WSO), Melvyn Bragg in *The Francis Bacon Opera* (Dublin), and Raimondo in *Nina Rota's I due timidi* (Italy).

Jon graduated from the Guildhall School of Music, before continuing his vocal studies in Italy and Zurich. He has worked with conductors including Paul McCreesh, Sir Colin Davis, John Wilson, Thomas Zehetmair, Paulo Olmi, Nicholas Cleobury and Stephen Cleobury.

As a concert specialist Jon has performed over 700 songs and 80 different oratorios in over twenty countries. His *Dichterliebe* in Germany and the UK was followed by a 'thrilling Schubert's *Winterreise*', praised by critics as 'an emotional rollercoaster'. Recent engagements include passing 75 Messiahs and 50 Bach St John Passion Evangelists.

Described by Classic FM as 'one impressive tenor' with 'something special in his beautiful voice', Jon has performed for the Royal Family and in many world famous concert halls. Major film soundtracks and roles have included working with Ewan McGregor, Dominic West, Timothy Spall and Richard E Grant.

Jon has lectured since 2009 at the University of Chichester Conservatoire, where his roles include lecturing in Voice; Italian; Opera & Operetta; Acting for film, Music Theatre, and choral director of 8 choirs. He formally lectured at the London College of Music.

Danni O'Neill—Soprano



Danni is a Masters graduate with distinction from the Royal Academy of Music on the preparatory opera course. She was awarded the Michael Head Prize for English song in her first year, was a soloist with Academy Voices and received a DipRAM for an outstanding final recital.

Danni has performed with Solomons Knott in Wigmore Hall, with the Academy of Ancient Music, The Sixteen,

London Early Opera, Polyphony in the UK and USA and at the BBC Proms with La Nuova Musica and Irish Baroque Orchestra. She has also worked with the BBC Singers, Gabrieli Consort, Co-Founded Recordare Chamber Choir who are recording their debut album next February and made her professional Opera Chorus debut in Lille and Luxembourg Opera Houses with Concert D'Astree, with whom she has also been on tour to America.

As a soloist, Danni has performed in some prestigious venues such as The Royal Albert Hall, Manchester Cathedral, Southwell Minster with the Southwell Festival Voices, Canterbury Cathedral, Sinfonia Smith Square, Teatro Argentina in Rome and The Barbican Theatre performing House by Amos Gitai.

She is looking forward to a variety of performances including Haydn's Nelson Mass at St. Andrew's Holborn, Welwyn Garden Concert Club with Recordare, Tubular Bells in her solo debut at The Royal Festival Hall and making her Barbican Hall Debut as Damigella and La Fortuna in Monteverdi's Poppea with The Academy of Ancient Music.

Sam Young—Baritone



Sam has been praised for his warm, resonant voice and powerful stage presence. He was previously a Young Artist with Opera Prelude for 2024/2025, and an Emerging Artist with Longborough Festival Opera. In 2023, he was recipient of the Young Artist Award in conjunction with the Strand International Festival of Song.

In 2026, Sam will be making his debut at Garsington Opera as an Alvarez Young Artist, performing the role of Marchese d'Obigny in Verdi's *La traviata*, and covering the role of Notary in Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*.

Sam's previous roles include Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas* (Longborough Festival Opera), Bartolo cover in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*

(Longborough Festival Opera), the title role in *Don Giovanni* (Hurn Court Opera), Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Hewlett Opera Company; Heritage Opera), Sergeant in *La bohème* (Longborough Festival Opera), Escamillo in *Carmen Reimagined* (Rogue Opera), Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* (St Bartholomew's Orchestra), Moralès in *Carmen* (Oxford Opera), Leporello in *Don Giovanni* (Rogue Opera). He has also been a member of the chorus with companies including English National Opera and Glyndebourne Festival Opera/Tour, where he covered the Customs Officer in *La bohème*.

In concert, Sam has appeared throughout the UK and in Europe. In 2025, he made his debut at Bechstein Hall, London. His solo concert and oratorio repertoire include the title role in Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Jesus in Bach's *St John's Passion*; Haman in Handel's *Esther*, soloist in Handel's *Messiah*, and other major works including Mozart's *Requiem*; Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, and Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Opera in the City Festival).

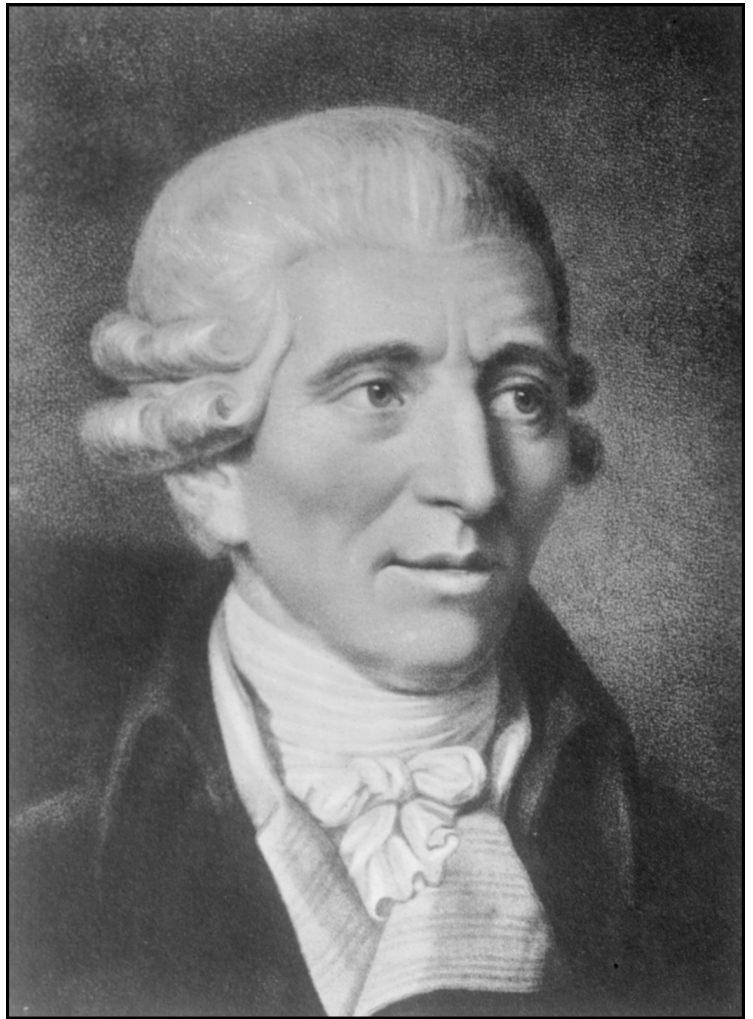
in 2019, Sam performed as part of *Downton Abbey Live* in 2019 with the Chamber Orchestra of London at Highclere Castle, and again with the City Lights Symphony Orchestra at KKL Luzern, Switzerland.

Sam studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he was awarded the Chartered Surveyors Vocal Prize, and is a graduate of Bath Spa University.

Haydn, London, and The Creation

On 1st January 1791, Haydn crossed the English Channel for the first time and this journey not only propelled him into a new year but also into a new and lucrative chapter late in his life. His long-term sponsor, Count Esterhazy, had recently died, succeeded by a son with little interest in music.

Haydn needed a fresh source of income. His music was very popular in London, so his friend Johann Peter Salomon, suggested a trip on the understanding that Haydn would write some new symphonies, which would be certain to attract large audiences. However, neither he nor Haydn could know how deeply affected the Joseph Haydn composer would be by the oratorios he heard



at a Handel festival in Westminster Abbey. *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt* in particular made such a deep impression on him that he resolved to attempt to write an oratorio worthy of comparison.

The 1791 visit was so successful that Haydn decided on a follow-up in 1794. In the meantime, Salomon had discovered a poem suitable as a libretto for Haydn to work upon. The poem, whose authorship is not definitively known, was entitled "The Creation of the World", and drew its content from Genesis, the Book of Psalms, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Back home in Vienna he started work on the score using a German translation of the poem made by his Austrian colleague, Baron Gottfried van Swieten. The oratorio's first performance in Vienna in April 1798 was followed by more than 80 repeat performances around Europe.

The version of *The Creation* we perform today is the original Novello Octavo edition. The English text used in these editions stems from the original bilingual publication overseen by Haydn, based on a translation of Gottfried van Swieten's German libretto.

The work starts with a 'big bang' on the timpani. In this introductory "Representation of Chaos", shifting harmonies portray the formlessness that marked the beginning of the universe. It is followed by the famous depiction of the creation of light: 'Let there be light: and there was light'. This was so enthusiastically received at the first performance that any further progress was delayed until the tumultuous applause died down.

The succeeding days of creation are then introduced by the archangels: Raphael (bass), Uriel (tenor), and Gabriel (soprano). On Day Two, illustration of the 'outrageous storms' and 'awful rolls of thunder' would have been standard fare for a composer of Haydn's quality, but listen to the delicate string tracery describing the falling rain, and the hushed treatment of 'the light and flaky snow'. 'The foaming billows' of the seas appear on Day Three along with the rivers, which poetically meander 'in serpent error'. Later that day, Gabriel's delightful aria, 'with verdure clad', contains music beguiling enough to distract us from the bizarre 'here vent their fumes the fragrant herbs'. The day ends with a glorious choral fugue on the words: 'For he the heavens and earth has clothed in stately dress'. On Day Four, we encounter a magical description of the sunrise, but the subtle treatment of moonlight spreading over the night sky which follows it is even more enchanting. The chorus, 'The heavens are telling', provides a splendidly uplifting end to Part One.

An eagle, a lark, and cooing doves are introduced on the fifth day, while the nightingale has its own lovely flute solo. There are whales, 'finny tribes' multiplying in the waters, and an 'immense leviathan sports on the foaming wave'. Finally the soloists and chorus declare the greatness of the Lord. The sixth day regales us with the 'cheerful' roaring of the lion, a 'flexible' tiger, a nimble stag, and a neighing, sprightly steed, while 'in long dimensions creeps with sinuous trace the worm'. We are then introduced to Man, 'the lord and king of nature all', and his partner, 'a woman, fair and graceful spouse'. Thus and therefore, 'achievèd is the glorious work'.

Part Three is devoted to the story of Adam and Eve, with Adam represented by the bass soloist who sang the role of Raphael earlier, and Eve by the soprano who sang the role of Gabriel. The libretto focuses on the happy union between Adam and Eve and their delight in the beauties of the Garden of Eden.

Expulsion from the Garden is only indirectly hinted at, before a final hymn of praise. So ends a happy masterpiece by a master craftsman.

THE CREATION

Part the First.

THE FIRST DAY

1. INTRODUCTION. – REPRESENTATION OF CHAOS.

2. RECIT. – Raphael.

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth; and the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

CHORUS.

And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; and God said, let there be light; and there was light.

RECIT. – Uriel.

And God saw the light that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.

3. AIR.

Now vanish, before the holy beams, The gloomy shades of ancient night; The first of days appears. Now chaos ends, and order fair prevails; Affrighted fled, hell spirits black in throngs; Down they sink in the deep abyss to endless night.

CHORUS.

Despairing cursing rage attends their rapid fall: a new-created world springs up at God's command.

THE SECOND DAY

4. RECIT. – Raphael.

And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, and it was so. Now furious storms tempestuous rage; as chaff, by the winds are impelled the clouds, by heaven's fire, the sky is inflamed; and awful thunders are rolling on high; now from the floods in streams ascend reviving showers of rain, the dreary wasteful hail, the light and flaky snow.

5. AIR. – Gabriel.

The marvellous work behold amaz'd the glorious hierarchy of heaven; and to th' ethereal vaults resound the praise of God and of the second day.

CHORUS.

And to th' ethereal vaults resound the praise of God and of the second day.

THE THIRD DAY

6. RECIT. – Raphael.

And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear, and it was so. And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of waters called He seas; and God saw that it was good.

7. AIR.

Rolling in foaming billow uplifted, roars the boisterous sea. Mountains and rocks now emerge, their tops into the clouds ascend. Through the open plains out-stretching wide, in serpent error rivers flow. Softly purling glides on through silent vales the limpid brook.

8. RECIT. – Gabriel.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth; and it was so.

9. AIR.

With verdure clad the fields appear, delightful to the ravish'd sense; by flowers sweet and gay enhanced is the charming sight. Here fragrant herbs their odours shed; here shoots the healing plant; with copious fruit the expanded boughs are hung; in leafy arches twine the shady groves; o'er lofty hills majestic forests wave.

10. RECIT. – Uriel.

And the heavenly host proclaimed the third day, praising God, and saying –

11. CHORUS.

Awake the harp, the lyre awake, and let your joyful song resound, rejoice in the Lord, the mighty God: for He both the heaven and the earth hath cloth'd in stately dress.

THE FOURTH DAY

12. RECIT. – Uriel.

And God said, let there be lights in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day from the night, and to give light upon the earth; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years. He made the stars also.

13. RECIT. – Accompanied.

In splendour bright is rising now the sun, and darts his rays; a joyful, happy spouse, a giant proud and glad to run his measured course. With softer beams and milder light steps on the silver moon through silent night; the space immense of azure sky, in numerous hosts of radiant orbs adorns. The sons of God announce the fourth day, in song divine, proclaiming thus his power –

14. CHORUS.

The heavens are telling the glory of God, the wonder of His work displays the firmament.

TRIO.

To-day that is coming speaks it the day, the night that is gone to following night.

CHORUS.

The heavens are telling the glory of God, the wonder of His work displays the firmament.

TRIO.

In all the lands resounds the word, never unperceived, ever understood. The heavens are telling the glory of God, the wonder of His work displays the firmament.

INTERVAL

Part the Second.

THE FIFTH DAY

15. RECIT. – Gabriel.

And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

16. AIR.

On mighty pens uplifted soars the eagle aloft, and cleaves the air in swiftest flight to the blazing sun. His welcome bids to morn the merry lark, and cooing calls the tender dove his mate. From every bush and grove resound the nightingale's delightful notes; no grief affected yet her breast, nor to a mournful tale were tun'd her soft enchanting lays.

17. RECIT. – Raphael.

And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, and God blessed them, saying, be fruitful and multiply. Ye winged tribes, be multiplied; and sing in every tree; multiply, ye finny tribes, and fill each watery deep; be fruitful, grow, and multiply, and in your God and Lord rejoice.

18. Raphael.

And the angels struck their immortal harps, and the wonders of the fifth day sung.

TRIO.

19. Gabriel.

Most beautiful appear, with verdure young adorn'd the gently sloping hills; their narrow sinuous veins distil, in crystal drops, the fountain fresh and bright.

Uriel.

In lofty circles play, and hover in the air, the cheerful host of birds; and in the flying whirl,
the glittering plumes are dyed as rainbows by the sun.

Raphael.

See flashing through the wet in thronged swarms the fish on thousand ways
around,
upheaved from the deep, the immense leviathan sports on the foaming wave.

Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael.

How many are Thy works, O God! Who may their numbers tell!

20. TRIO & CHORUS.

The Lord is great, and great His might, his glory lasts for ever and evermore.

THE SIXTH DAY**21. RECIT. – Raphael.**

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind; cattle,
and creeping thing, and beast of the earth, after his kind.

22. Raphael.

Straight opening her fertile womb, the earth obey'd the word. And teem'd crea-
tures numberless, in perfect forms, and fully grown. Cheerful roaring stands the
tawny lion. With sudden leap the flexible tiger appears. The nimble stag bears
up his branching head. With flying mane, and fiery look, impatient neighs the
noble steed. The cattle, in herds, already seek their food on fields and mead-
ows green. And o'er the ground as plants are spread the fleecy, meek, and
bleating flocks. Unnumbered as the sands in swarms arose the hosts of insects.
In long dimension creeps with sinuous trace the worm.

23. AIR.

Now heaven in fullest glory shone; Earth smil'd in all her rich attire; th'room of
air by fowl is fill'd; the water swell'd by shoals of fish; by heavy beasts the
ground is trod: but all the work was not complete; there wanted yet that won-
derous being, that, grateful, should God's power admire, with heart and voice
His goodness praise.

24. RECIT. – Uriel.

And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him.
Male and female created He them. He breathed into his nostrils the breath of
life, and man became a living soul.

25. AIR.

In native worth and honour clad, with beauty, courage, strength adorn'd, erect, with front serene, he stands, a man, the lord and king of nature all. His large and arched brow sublime, of wisdom deep declares the seat! And in his eyes with brightness shines the soul, the breath and image of his God. With fondness leans upon his breast the partner for him form'd, a woman, fair and graceful spouse. Her softly smiling, virgin looks, of flow'ry spring the mirror, bespeak him love, and joy, and bliss.

26. RECIT. – Raphael.

And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good: and the heavenly choir, in song divine, thus closed the sixth day:

CHORUS.

Achieved is the glorious work; the Lord beholds it, and is pleas'd. In lofty strains let us rejoice, our song let be the praise of God.

27A. TRIO.**Gabriel and Uriel.**

On Thee each living soul awaits, from thee, O Lord, all seek their food. Thou openest thy hand, and all are filled with good but when Thy face, O Lord, is hid, with sudden terror they are struck; thou tak'st their breath away, they vanish into dust.

Raphael.

Thou sendest forth Thy breath again, and life with vigour fresh returns; revived earth unfolds new strength and new delights.

27B. CHORUS.

Achieved is the glorious work; our song let be the praise of God. Glory to His Name for ever. He, sole, on high exalted reigns.
Hallelujah.

Part the Third.

INTRODUCTION. – Morning.

28. RECIT. – Uriel.

In rosy mantle appears, by music sweet awak'd, the morning, young and fair;
from heaven's angelic choir pure harmony descends on ravish'd earth. Behold
the blissful pair, where hand in hand they go: their glowing looks express the
thanks that swell their grateful hearts. A louder praise of God their lips shall
utter soon; then let our voices ring united with their song.

29. DUET. – Adam and Eve.

By Thee with bliss, O bounteous Lord, the heaven and earth are stor'd. This
world so great, so wonderful, thy mighty hand has fram'd.

CHORUS.

For ever blessed be His power, His Name be ever magnified.

(Numbers 31 and 32 have been cut for this performance.)

33. RECIT. – Uriel.

O happy pair, and happy still might be, if not misled by false conceit ye strive at
more than granted is, and more desire to know than know ye should.

34. CHORUS.

Sing the Lord ye voices all, magnify his name thro' all creation, celebrate His
power and glory, let His name resound on high. Jehovah's praise for ever shall
endure. Amen.

Hampton Singers Choir

Sopranos

Sue Blake
Margaret Buckle
Georgina Cappendell
Judy Docker
June Dove
Jane Durkin
Helen Grave
Lucy Griffiths
Sue Kiely
Sally Kinnear
Janet Lee
Mandy Lewis
Pauline Morris
Beth Pitt
Christine Roberts
Helen Roper
Janet Upward
Jo Warburton
Di de Woolfson
Lucy Youdell

Altos

Lesley Cable
Christine Cook
Viv Dobson
Joyce Jones
Liz Kaminsky
Glenys Lamb
Hilary Moore
Jayne Parkin
Helen Perry
Carolyn Roskill
Kay Sumner
Sandy Wasse
Halyna Wheatley
Sarah White
Liz Wilkin
Oksana Zurak

Roy Copsey
Caroline Durk
John Greetham
Martin Lee
Andrew Taylor
Donald Whitlock

Basses

Tom Bridge
Chris Docker
Bruce Hart
Tim Jones
Richard Pether
David Pickering
Will Rumball
John Rutledge
Mark Schampier

Tenors

David Bixby
Mark Blake

Rehearsal

Accompanist

Lucy Griffiths



Hampton Singers performing at the 2025 Solihull Festival

Godiva Ensemble

Leader Alistair Kennedy

Violin 1

Alistair Kennedy

Violin 2

Helen Hollinrake

Viola

Angela Dickson

Cello

Sophie Cheng

Double Bass

Anish Velankanni

Flute

Lindsay Martin

Oboe

Chloe Peterson

Clarinet

Denise Pandya

Bassoon

Dave Gillott

Bassoon/Contra Bassoon

Alison Brierley

French Horn

Dominic Allison

Trumpet

Julie Spraggett

Timpani

Evan Barnes

Come and join us!

Hampton Singers are a friendly choir who are always looking to meet new singers. We would love you to join us at one of our rehearsals.

Mondays 7:45pm - 9:45pm

The Scout and Guide HQ

Hampton in Arden

Please get in touch if you'd like to come along

www.hamptonsingers.co.uk



Hampton
Singers

GREATEST HITS

Hampton Singers
Conductor Benjamin Hamilton



Saturday 16th May 2026 | 4pm
Fentham Hall, Hampton in Arden
Tickets £15 (under 18s free)

Tickets available online at www.hamptonsingers.co.uk or on the door