



Photo credit: Nick Rutter



**News Release, under embargo until 19.00, Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017**

## **Southwell Music Festival – 2017 Programme Announced**

Seventy of top flight professional singers and players will gather in the historic cathedral town Southwell in Nottinghamshire over the August Bank Holiday weekend to take part in the fourth annual Southwell Music Festival.

**Festival Founder and Artistic Director, Marcus Farnsworth** announced the 2017 programme at a free preview concert in the spectacular Southwell Minster on 31 March and said:

*“I am delighted that once again we have been able to attract some of the most exciting performers from across the UK and Europe. Members of this remarkable ensemble take part in all the main concerts and give the Festival its special character. The skill and enthusiasm of these talented colleagues, many of whom have been with us on previous occasions, are a key reason for the Festival’s growing reputation. We have a packed and varied festival programme, with several repeated concerts, so it is still possible for the most dedicated music lover to hear every note! We are keen that the Festival should be accessible to all so of the 28 events we have made half free of charge.”*

- The centrepiece of the five-day programme will be an all-**Mozart** concert featuring multi-award-winning pianist **James Baillieu** performing piano concerto **No. 21 C major K467**.
- This will be followed by a performance of the **Great Mass in C minor K427** with the critically-acclaimed soprano **Sophie Bevan**, a regular at the Royal Opera House and English National Opera, and mezzo-soprano **Rachel Kelly**, a recent graduate of ROH’s Jette Parker Young Artists Scheme, as the soloists.
- The professional choir and orchestra will be conducted by **Marcus Farnsworth** with the orchestra led by Associate Artistic Director **Jamie Campbell**.
- A key aspect of the Festival is to develop local musicians. BBC Young Musician of the Year 2016, **Sheku Kanneh-Mason**, will be making a very welcome return to the Festival and will be giving a recital of accompanied by **James Baillieu** in a programme which includes Beethoven’s Cello Sonata No. 2 in G Minor, Op.5
- The quality and variety of the Festival’s performing spaces is a vital part of its unique atmosphere. The Minster’s Quire has a wonderful acoustic for the string players of the Festival Ensemble who will give a concert including Vaughan Williams’ *Variations on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* and Britten’s *Les Illuminations* with soprano **Alison Rose** as soloist.

- This year's Festival has a strong French theme with a whole programme of chamber music, a late-night performance of Poulenc's choral tour de force *Figure Humaine*, and a **Family Concert** featuring his setting of *Babar the Elephant*, as well as an organ recital by **Matthew Martin** with a strong Gallic theme.
- The contemplative atmosphere of the Minster late at night provides the setting for our first concert of baroque music – a rare performance of **Buxtehude's** masterpiece *Membra Jesu Nostris*

**Public Booking opens on 15 May 2017 Tel: 0115 989 5555 [www.southwellmusicfestival.com](http://www.southwellmusicfestival.com)**

## Southwell Music Festival 2017 – programme highlights

### The Art of the Trio with Rachel Kelly, Lena Eckels and Amy Harman – 24, 25 August, 7pm

- A programme illustrating the many ways composers have written for trio including **Brahms' Two Songs for Alto, Viola and Piano and Horn Trio**, **Shostakovich's epic Piano Trio No.2 in E minor** and **Two Shakespearean Piano Trios** by the exciting young British composer **Charlotte Bray**
- Two of the 2017 Festival's leading performers, mezzo-soprano **Rachel Kelly** and international viola player and regular member of Amaryllis Quartet, **Lena Eckels** will perform the Brahms's Two Songs for Alto, Viola and Piano and **Amy Harman**, who headlined the Launch concert, will feature as part of **Poulenc's Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano**.
- The concerts take place in the State Chamber – part of the Archbishop's Palace once used by Cardinal Wolsey.

### Strings in the Quire with Jamie Campbell and Alison Rose – 24, 25 August, 8.15pm

- This programme will showcase the Festival's outstanding body of string players lead by Festival Associate Director, **Jamie Campbell** and will culminate in a performance of **Vaughan Williams' revolutionary Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis**. The programme will also include **Britten's Les Illuminations** for solo voice and strings and **Arvo Pärt's haunting Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten**, with soprano soloist **Alison Rose**, who recently completed the Young Artist Programme at the National Opera Studio.
- The concerts take place in the Minster's 13<sup>th</sup> century Quire.

### Classical with a Twist – 24, 25, 27 August, 7.15pm

- Southwell's former Georgian theatre where once George Bernard Shaw trod the boards is an intimate venue for more informal classical concert giving
- This year's eclectic repertoire includes **Mozart's Sonata K292** arranged for Bassoon and String Trio, **Villa-Lobos' Bachianas Brasileiras No 6** for Flute and Bassoon and **Steve Reich's Clapping Music** featuring the Artistic Director as guest percussionist, with flautist **Katherine Bryan** and bassoonist **Amy Harman**, both among the most exciting young players in their profession.
- The second half comprises specially arranged close harmony vocal arrangements of popular folk and pop songs and numbers from stage musicals.

### Late Night Baroque with Chelys Consort of Viols, The Little Baroque Company and Southwell Festival Voices - 24 August, 10pm

- The Festival's first Baroque recital played on period instruments by the **Chelys Consort of Viols** and **The Little Baroque Company**.
- Late Night Baroque will present a performance by Southwell Festival Voices of **Buxtehude's** remarkable *Membra Jesu Nostris patientis sanctissima* – a unique meditation on the body of the crucified Christ.
- The performance will be given at twilight in the atmospheric surroundings of the Minster's Quire.

### **Voices of Freedom: Late Night Choral Music with Southwell Festival Voices - 25 August, 10pm**

- An annual highlight and chance to spotlight the **Southwell Festival Voices**, this year's programme focuses on **Poulenc's** cantata for double choir ***Figure Humaine***, a choral tour de force and hymn to *Liberté* written in France during the Second World War. The rest of the programme will draw on choral works from around Europe which echo this theme; with actor **Victoria Newlyn** and conducted by **Marcus Farnsworth**.

### **Southwell Masterclass - 26 August 10am**

- Led by artists appearing in the Festival, the class is both a unique opportunity for aspiring Nottinghamshire musicians to benefit from mentoring by professionals of international standing and an intriguing insight into developing a performance.

### **The Family Concert, *The Story of Babar the Little Elephant* – 26 August, 10.15am**

- The outstanding success of last year's inaugural Family Concert – part of the Festival's strategy to broaden the audience for classical music – has confirmed its position at the heart of the Festival.
- This year Poulenc's ***The Story of Babar the Little Elephant*** will be performed to children and families in the Southwell Minster School.

### **Young Musician's Recital in the Nave with Sheku Kanneh Mason and James Baillieu - 26 August, 1pm**

- **Sheku Kanneh-Mason** returns to Southwell for the Saturday afternoon Young Musician's Recital in the Nave. The Nottinghamshire cellist delighted the Festival in 2015, when aged only 16, he attended a Public Masterclass and was coached on Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No.1 that he later performed to win the BBC Young Musician of the Year. Sheku lives in Nottingham and holds the ABRSM Junior Scholarship to The Royal Academy of Music, where he will be studying from September. He has recently brought out his first EP and earlier this year wowed audiences at the BAFTAs.
- **James Baillieu** will accompany Sheku in a programme which includes **Beethoven's Cello Sonata No. 2 in G Minor, Op.5, Gaspar Cassado's Suite for Solo Cello, Alexander Scriabin's Etude Op.8 No. 11** and **David Popper's Hungarian Rhapsody Op. 68**.

### **Saturday Night Concert with James Baillieu, Sophie Bevan, Rachel Kelly and Southwell Festival Voices – 26 August, 7.30pm**

- Building on the success of the performances of *The Creation* (2014), *Elijah* (2015) and *The Dream of Gerontius* (2016), the 2017 Festival flagship Saturday night concert will be another large-scale work for chorus and orchestra in the Minster **Mozart's Mass in C minor K427**.
- Critically acclaimed soprano **Sophie Bevan**, who regularly sings at the Royal Opera House and English National Opera, and mezzo-soprano **Rachel Kelly**, a recent graduate of ROH's Jette Parker Young Artists Scheme, will be the soloists with **Southwell Festival Voices, Southwell Festival Sinfonia** conducted by Festival Director **Marcus Farnsworth**.
- One of **Mozart's** greatest **Piano Concertos No. 21 C major K467** will complete the evening's programme performed by multiple award-winning soloist **James Baillieu**, who is a professor at the Royal College of Music and who last year presented his own concert series at Wigmore Hall.

### **French Chamber Classics with Marcus Farnsworth, Libby Burgess, James Baillieu, James Cheung, Katherine Byran, Joseph Shiner, Celine Saout, Jamie Campbell – 27 August, 7.30pm**

- Debussy's evocative *Syrinx* and a rare performance of Poulenc's dramatic and entertaining ***Le bal masqué*** (soloist Marcus Farnsworth) frame a programme from the high-water mark of French music including **Fauré's Piano Quintet No. 1** and **Ravel's unique Introduction and Allegro for Harp, Flute, Clarinet and String Quartet**.
- The event features **Ravel's Mother Goose Suite for Piano Duet** played by **Libby Burgess** and **James Baillieu**.

### ***Come and Sing, Mozart Vespers - 28 August, 10am, with an informal performance at 2pm***

- *Come and Sing* is a wonderful opportunity for amateur singers from the Southwell community to be part of the Festival and perform under the direction of **Marcus Farnsworth**. The music will be rehearsed in the morning and given an informal afternoon concert in the Minster.

### ***Southwell Music Festival – Sponsorship and Support***

Southwell Music Festival is very grateful for the generous support from sponsors, Festival Friends and many other donors. As well as the extensive involvement of members of the community in offering a variety of gifts in kind from hosting visiting musicians to volunteer stewarding all of which allow the Festival to happen. The Festival takes place by kind permission of Southwell Cathedral.

### ***Southwell Music Festival***

#### ***In numbers:***

- Southwell Music Festival Ensemble is made up of over 70 young professional singers and players.
- The Festival consists of 28 events over 5 days of the August bank holiday weekend.
- 2017 is the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Festival.
- 2016 Festival was at 93% capacity.
- Visitors to Southwell in August have increased by approximately 50% since the Festival started.
- Total income has risen by 39% since the Festival's inception and Box office income has more than doubled.

#### ***Venues:***

Southwell Music Festival is fortunate to have access to a wonderful collection of venues; from the majesty of Southwell Minster with the versatility of the Quire, Nave and Crossing, to the intimacy of the Old Theatre Deli, the grandeur of the State Chamber, the Minster School Recital Hall and the historic surroundings of the Walled Garden of the mediaeval Archbishop's Palace.

#### ***Box Office:***

24<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> August

Public Booking opens: 15 May 2017

Tel: 0115 989 5555

[www.southwellmusicfestival.co.uk](http://www.southwellmusicfestival.co.uk)

**Full price tickets from £8-25 concessions available (half of the Festival events are free of charge)**

*-Ends -*

#### ***Notes to Editors:***

For press information, photographs, review tickets or to arrange interviews, please contact Emma Menniss  
**Emma Menniss PR for *Southwell Music Festival* T: 07766 655998 or E: [emma.menniss@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:emma.menniss@hotmail.co.uk)**

## About Southwell Music Festival



The Southwell Music Festival is an inspirational classical music event attracting first-class professional musicians to the historic town of Southwell in rural Nottinghamshire. The Festival began in 2014, the brainchild of award-winning international baritone Marcus Farnsworth a former Head Chorister of Southwell Minster and includes recitals, chamber music and large choral works. The Festival runs for five days over the August bank holiday weekend, in and around spectacular Southwell Minster and the Archbishop's Palace, perfect venues for classical music along with the Minster School and Southwell's intimate Georgian theatre. Southwell Music Festival encourages the community to share in the enjoyment of classical music of the highest order; inspiring local musicians, and especially young people, as well as raising the profile of the town of Southwell, and that of its magnificent medieval Minster, seat of the Bishops of Southwell and Nottingham, with a long-established tradition of high quality music-making.

Predominately the Festival provides a performance platform for extremely gifted young professional artists early in their careers. The format of recitals and masterclasses create a generous atmosphere for fostering talent and community involvement. Each year there is a full-scale family event involving the local community. The Festival culminates in a concert in the Minster, combining the talents of leading soloists, the Southwell Festival Voices and the Southwell Festival Sinfonia (a professional choir and orchestra of the best young performers drawn from leading ensembles and orchestras from across the UK and further afield), all coming together in a show-stopping choral and orchestral performance. Now in its fourth year, the Festival is attracting national recognition and raising the profile of the town.

**Marcus Farnsworth** is the Artistic Director and violinist **Jamie Campbell**, is the Associate Artistic Director. **Patrons: Dame Felicity Lott DBE, FRAM, FRCM; Harry Christophers CBE.** The Festival takes place by kind permission of Southwell Cathedral.

[www.southwellmusicfestival.co.uk](http://www.southwellmusicfestival.co.uk)

Email: [info@southwellmusicfestival.com](mailto:info@southwellmusicfestival.com)

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, You Tube and Instagram

Registered Charity: 1153135

Southwell Music Festival Limited, Minster Centre, Church Street, Southwell, Nottinghamshire NG25 0HD