

## MEDIA KIT

### ENGLISH MOTETS

**THE GESUALDO SIX**  
**WINTHROP HALL UWA, SAT 15 FEB**  
**TICKETS: \$39**

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#### ENGLISH MOTETS

The heavenly harmonies of one of the UK's finest choral ensembles will ring out when The Gesualdo Six perform their famed interpretations of English motets and part songs. This program traces music written by some of the English renaissance masters over a period of 200 years, encompassing florid medieval-sounding works by Sheppard and Plummer, intricately woven polyphonic works by Tallis and Byrd, and the beautiful simplicity of Tomkins and White.

#### COMPANY CREDITS:

**The Gesualdo Six**  
**Director** Owain Park  
**Countertenor** Guy James  
**Countertenor** Alex Chance  
**Tenor** Joseph Wicks  
**Tenor** Josh Cooter  
**Baritone** Michael Craddock  
**Bass** Samuel Mitchell

#### THE GESUALDO SIX

The Gesualdo Six is a vocal consort comprised of some of the UK's finest young consort singers, directed by Owain Park. Formed in March 2014 for a performance of Gesualdo's "Tenebrae Responsories for Maundy Thursday" in the chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, the group went on to give over sixty performances around the United Kingdom and abroad in its first three years. Over this time, The Gesualdo Six further developed a passion for ensemble singing that for many of them stemmed from formative years as choristers in churches and cathedrals around the country.

The Gesualdo Six has performed in many festivals in the UK, Canada, Germany, The Netherlands, France, Poland and Monaco. The ensemble recognises the importance of teaching, and regularly incorporates educational work into its activities, holding workshops for choirs and composers and giving concerts alongside local performers.

Whilst initially focusing on early music, concert programmes began to reflect a desire to include more modern repertoire and now renaissance polyphony is often juxtaposed with works by composers including György Ligeti and Joanna Marsh amongst others. In 2016, The Gesualdo Six successfully curated its first Composition Competition, supported by St John's Smith Square and the

Music Sales group of companies, attracting 174 entries from around the world. In 2019, over three hundred composers entered the second edition of the Composition Competition, with the winning works by Alison Willis and Jacob Beranek receiving their world premieres at Cadogan Hall in London.

### **OWAIN PARK | DIRECTOR**

Owain Park is a composer, conductor, singer and organist. As well as directing The Gesualdo Six, he regularly works with ensembles including the BBC Singers and Cappella Cracoviensis. Owain is also the Musical Director of Cambridge Chorale.

Owain's compositions are published by Novello and have been performed internationally by ensembles including the Tallis Scholars and the Aurora Orchestra. While at Cambridge University he studied orchestration with John Rutter, before undertaking a Masters degree in composition.

Recent works include 'Antiphon for the Angels' for VOCES8 and Rachel Podger, and 'Footsteps' for Tenebrae and Nigel Short, a piece conceived to be performed by young and amateur singers alongside the professional forces of Tenebrae. His chamber opera 'The Snow Child' was performed over five nights at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and his compositions have won awards from organisations including the National Centre for Early Music, with his music regularly broadcasted on the BBC, Classic FM, and internationally. The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge included 'The Wings of the Wind' in their tour programmes to the United States, Australia and Hong Kong, and recently released an album of his music on Hyperion Records which has been nominated in the 2019 BBC Music Magazine Awards.

Owain is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists (FRCO), and was awarded the Dixon Prize for improvisation, having been Senior Organ Scholar at Wells Cathedral and Trinity College Cambridge. He is a Tenebrae Associate Artist, and has worked with ensembles including Polyphony, Gabrieli Consort and Alamire

### **GUY JAMES | COUNTERTENOR**

Guy James is a London-based countertenor and a founding member of The Gesualdo Six. He performs, records and tours with a wide selection of choirs and ensembles including the Amici Voices, the London Choral Sinfonia and the Italian *Ensemble Odhecaton* and has now appeared on over 20 commercial CDs of choral music. Guy deputises regularly with many London choirs including Westminster Cathedral, the Temple Church, the Chapel Royal of St. James' Park and Westminster Abbey.

Raised in Dursley in Gloucestershire, Guy received academic and music scholarships to study in the VIth form at Cheltenham College and went on to read Natural Sciences (Physical) at St. John's College in Cambridge, graduating with an MSci and a speciality in Organic Chemistry for Drug Discovery in 2013. During his undergraduacy he was a choral scholar in the Choir of Trinity College Cambridge, directed by Stephen Layton. In his time at Trinity the choir was voted '5th Best Choir in the World' by Gramophone magazine, won a Gramophone award, and was nominated for an American Grammy award. Guy has been lucky to tour twice to Australia, America and Europe with the choir, and has also toured and recorded with a number of other Cambridge College choirs, including that of St. John's College.

Recent solo appearances have included Bach's B Minor Mass with Solomon's Knot, a recital of songs from Gloucestershire, the St. John and St. Matthew Passions, and the Weihnacht's-Oratorium with the Amici Voices.

Continuing his interest in Science and Science Policy, Guy has written for The Observer and the Cambridge Globalist as a Science Policy writer. In his spare time he enjoys travelling and playing Cricket.

### **ALEX CHANCE | COUNTERTENOR**

Alex graduated in 2015 having read Classics at New College, Oxford, where he was a choral scholar under the direction of Edward Higginbottom for three years, and then of Robert Quinney for one. Many opportunities for solo performances came his way all over the world, most notably in Grace Cathedral, San Francisco where he sang the alto arias in Bach's St John Passion. He also made a number of recordings with the New College Choir, including a recent CD of John Blow symphony anthems, on which he features heavily as a soloist.

More recent appearances have included a joint recital with his father, Michael Chance, in the Stour Festival, Handel's 'Saul' with the the Choir of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at the Enescu Festival in Bucharest, solo appearances in Handel's Messiah with Richard Cooke at Canterbury Cathedral, Bach's St John Passion with Mark Deller at St Mary's Ashford, Christmas Oratorio with Robert Quinney at the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford, Magnificat with Edward Higginbottom at King's Place in London, and regularly with Tom Hammond-Davies and the Oxford Bach Soloists. Upcoming solo highlights include the role of Micah in Handel's Samson at the Stour Festival, and Bach's B Minor Mass with Vox Luminis in Utrecht. He also works frequently with ensembles such as The Tallis Scholars, Tenebrae, Vox Luminis, and the Marian Consort.

He is also a keen sportsman, and represented New College in both football and cricket, despite, in the case of the latter, often having to leave after the first innings to go and sing.

### **JOSEPH WICKS | TENOR**

Joseph Wicks is Assistant Director of Music at Truro Cathedral, a post that he took up in September 2017. He is also Musical Director of St Mary's Singers, the cathedral's voluntary choir, sings tenor in The Gesualdo Six and has founded his own chamber choir, The Beaufort Singers.

Joseph's duties at Truro include assisting the Director of Music Christopher Gray in the training of the boy and girl choristers, conducting services and mentoring of the choral and organ scholars, as well as playing the world-famous Father Willis organ for the majority of daily sung services. Prior to this Joseph was Assistant Organist of St John's College, Cambridge, having been its Herbert Howells Organ Scholar. While at St John's, Joseph played the organ for a large proportion of the daily services sung by the world-famous Choir of St John's College, Cambridge and also accompanied them on their busy broadcast, recording and international tour schedules to countries across the world. Joseph appears as accompanist to the choir on three CDs all on the Signum Classics label, including a disc of Vaughan Williams's choral music to be released in May 2018. Joseph also recorded a CD of Christmas music with The Gentlemen of St John's entitled 'White Christmas'.

Joseph is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists (FRCO) winning the Limpus, Shinn and Durrant prize for the highest mark in the practical examination. Joseph has given recitals in Westminster Abbey, King's College Cambridge, as well as several other Cambridge colleges, municipal halls, and several cathedrals and churches across the UK. In addition, Joseph maintains a freelance career as a singer. He is a graduate of Genesis Sixteen, a training scheme for young singers run by The Sixteen and its director Harry Christophers. Joseph has sung with groups such as Alamire and Polyphony and is a founding member of The Gesualdo Six.

### **JOSH COOTER | TENOR**

Josh began his musical studies as a chorister at Chichester Cathedral before accepting a music scholarship to Eton College. Having finished his degree at King's College London, where he sang in the chapel choir under the late David Trendell, he began work as a freelance singer and now pursues a busy ensemble career, enjoying singing for some of the UK's most prestigious consorts such as The Sixteen, Tenebrae and Britten Sinfonia Voices as well as other upcoming groups such as Siglo de Oro and The Fieri Consort.

Recent soloist highlights include singing the role of Evangelist in Bach's 'St. John Passion', Jupiter in Handel's 'Semele' and solos in Schutz's 'Christmas Story' and Handel's 'Israel in Egypt'. Josh has also featured as a soloist in operas curated by Brighton Early Music Festival. Not just content with singing, Josh also teaches the trombone and aims to teach himself the harmonica in order to ultimately become the one man band he's always dreamed of.

### **MICHAEL CRADDOCK | BARITONE**

Michael is a London-based freelance singer, who started his musical education with the choir of Trinity College Cambridge, whom he sung with for four years. Whilst studying Mathematics, he found himself in many university productions, including Pergolesi's La Serva Padrona (Uberto), Milhaud Le Pauvre Matelot L'Ami and Bernstein Trouble in Tahiti (Sam), and was invited back in 2014 to the university to sing the title role in Don Giovanni.

His student days now behind him, Michael appears regularly as a soloist, and with choirs such as Polyphony and the Choir of the Enlightenment and is currently learning with Gary Coward. In 2013 he undertook a tour of cathedrals with the City of London Sinfonia singing the baritone solos in the Fauré Requiem, broadcast live on Radio 3. In addition to performing with the Gesualdo Six, he is a founder member of the consort group Amici Voices, with whom he regularly performs the works of JS Bach one-to-a-part.

Recent operatic performances include Walton "The Bear" (Smirnov) for Opera Minima and Opera Anywhere, Britten's A Midsummer Night's Dream (Bottom) in Aldeburgh, sharing the role with Matthew Rose, Donizetti Don Pasquale (Dr. Malatesta) for Opera Minima, Puccini's Madama Butterfly (Yamidori) for Opera A La Carte and Verdi's La Traviata (Marchese) for Regent's Opera at the Bermuda Festival.

Michael is a regular with the choir of the London Oratory, and in between his vocal engagements he works for a very accommodating barristers chambers as an accountant. In his spare time he enjoys moving pictures, hopped beverages and cricket, a venn-diagram of interests which intersects perfectly with his colleagues in The Gesualdo Six.

### **SAMUEL MITCHELL | BASS**

Sam is currently living in Oxford, where he balances his life singing at Christ Church Cathedral and teaching music academic music at a sixth form college. After finishing his A levels at Oundle School where he was a music scholar, Sam spent a gap year in Truro, singing with the very well respected Cathedral Choir. Sam went on to read music at the University of Manchester. During his three years in Manchester Sam performed regularly as a pianist as well as a singer, becoming heavily involved in many ensembles across the city.

Upon leaving university, Sam decided to embark upon a singing career and has since performed as a soloist and with many leading ensembles across the country. Sam sings regularly with groups such as *The Sixteen*, *Siglo de Oro* and *Britten Sinfonia Voices*. Like Joe, Sam is also a graduate of the same vintage of the *Genesis Sixteen* programme, a series of courses for talented young singers run by *The Sixteen* and Harry Christophers.

As a soloist Sam has performed works from Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs* to arias Handel's *Messiah* and Saul and scenes from Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* to Ades' *The Tempest*. Sam is a keen recitalist and is currently developing a strong passion for lieder, particularly of Schubert and Schumann.

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