

THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL

Adrian Lucas – Artistic Director, Worcester Three Choirs Festival
Adrian Partington – Artistic Director, Gloucester Three Choirs Festival
Susanna Mälkki – Conductor
Sir Andrew Davis – Conductor
Geraint Bowen – Artistic Director, Hereford Three Choirs Festival
Alistair Mackie – Joint Principal Trumpet, Philharmonia Orchestra

START OF VIDEO

[Music: Choir singing]

Adrian Lucas

At the heart of the Three Choirs is the three Cathedral Choirs, which is really where the Festival started and in the very early days it really was just the three Cathedrals' Choirs so a very small group of singers, perhaps 40, 50 singers at most. And over the years of course that changed and we had the big chorus as well, but this must be really the only festival of its kind whose centre is absolutely in the daily round of worship that goes on.

[music continues]

Adrian Partington

English cathedrals are rather one of the wonders of the world, collectively. You know, they are marvellous buildings in every possible way and they make great concert halls. It's just good to hear great music in great architecture rather than just in your average concert hall, so I think the buildings have a big part to play in why people come back year after year.

[Music: Mahler: Symphony No.3]

Susanna Mälkki

We artists always feel ourselves very small in the sort of big continuation of time, you know, we are working with material, with repertoire which comes from centuries away – like this piece, a hundred years away – and this building, which is several centuries away. So tradition is part of our daily life already. But then, of course, it is even more special when you have the walls around you which are really, really old.

[music continues]

Adrian Partington

We have a huge tradition of great musicians whose participation in the festivals went on year after year. I still feel Elgar, Vaughan-Williams and Finzi walking around in these festivals, Kodály came year after year, Saint-Saens... so it has got a kind of collective musical tradition which is really unmatched by any other music festival, dare I say, in the world.

Sir Andrew Davis

I love this part of the world, this whole area, Hereford, Gloucester, Worcester, again the Welsh borders, the Malvern Hills and of course, especially for the association with Elgar, this country, this countryside, the grandeur of the hills, and the intimacy of some of the landscapes is so much part of his music.

[Music: Elgar: Caractacus]

Geraint Bowen

The Philharmonia first came to play at the Festival in 1995 and the relationship between the Orchestra and the Festival has flourished over the intervening years and in fact it's been Resident Orchestra eight out of the last ten festivals and so this is being formalised one stage further with a three-year residency which begins in Hereford next year, 2012. And we're all looking forward to that hugely.

[music continues]

Alistair Mackie

The Philharmonia has had a long association with the Three Choirs Festival, it's one of our summer highlights for the Orchestra. The players, we love coming to this part of the country and living here, we love playing in these beautiful buildings and doing some absolutely wonderful music. It really is repertoire that we don't usually play and we are delighted now that we have this on going, more formalised, relationship with Three Choirs.

[music continues]

Alistair Mackie

Yesterday we had a master class for four brass quintets. Colleges from Birmingham, Guildhall, Royal College of Music, Royal Academy of Music, all sent a brass quintet: we had this master class format, we worked with the students and we tried to give them some ideas and then in the evening we had a showcase performance which is also a competition, and the winning quintet will be offered a recital in Hereford, next year.

Adrian Partington

Since the Cathedrals are the focal points in each of the cities, everything happens around them. The whole surroundings of the Cathedral are bound up with the Festival so there is a great atmosphere.

Geraint Bowen

It's a very friendly and welcoming festival and people come every year from all over the world to it.

Adrian Partington

I've had three lives here actually: chorister, assistant organist at Worcester and then Director of Music at Gloucester so once it's in your blood – and it must be the same for the audience as well – once it's in your blood it's there to stay.

[music continues]

END OF VIDEO