

GLORIANA

≡ WOMEN IN HARMONY ≡



Led by top choral director and singer **Deborah Miles-Johnson**, this talented all-female group brings new colours, repertoire and timbre to its performances. Deborah sings with the BBC Singers and Royal Opera House and has trained both the BBC Symphony Chorus and Chelsea Opera Group. This experience across different musical genres gives her an impressive conducting range and gains her credibility with singers and audience alike. The members are drawn from top choruses and chamber choirs across London and the South East.

What marks Gloriana out from the crowd is its enthusiasm for new repertoire as well as the classics, the different sonority to be found in an all-female, all-adult, group and the evident loyalty and commitment of the singers that shines from their performances.

The important part played by women in music is hugely under represented in the historical narrative. There are, of course, some female composers coming to the fore and huge numbers of well-known female solo singers and instrumentalists through the ages but less well known are the choirs of women's voices.

Pietà, 'pity' in Italian, often brings to mind the characteristic Easter image of the dead Christ held by his mother, so movingly rendered by Michelangelo. Also, the eponymous institution in Venice where Vivaldi taught his orphans, famous throughout Europe for their musical abilities. The vocal works written for the girls – probably including the popular *Gloria* - are nowadays customarily performed by mixed choirs but when heard in their original form reveal a fascinating and beautiful sonority. With hundreds of similar convents around Europe, many possessing fine choirs for liturgical use, there is large body of sacred works to be restored to their intended voices. The King's College choral tradition using boys' voices has perhaps dulled our ears to the sound of women choirs in sacred music.

In our concert we play instrumental music and pieces for women's voices with instruments written from the 18th century for the period in the church calendar leading up to Easter.

Our Lenten programme includes sumptuous music from:
JS Bach cantatas *Tilge, Höchstes, meine Sünden* BWV1083 and *Christ Lag in Todesbanden* BWV4, **Zelenka** *Gesu al Calvario*, **Hasse** *Miserere mei Deus*, **Chaprentier** *Stabat Mater* and *Regina Coeli*, **Telemann** *Brockses Passion*, **Handel** *Il Nume Vincitor*, **Vivaldi** *Sonata al Santo Sepulchro*