

WHY SING?



The Evolution of Singing



The Priory Church of the Order of St John

St John's Gate, St John's Lane, Clerkenwell, London EC1M 4DA

Friday 28 April 2017, 10.00–19.30

In association with:



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HUMAN AND SOCIAL
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St John's Gate, London EC1M 4DA



MUSIC has inspired, entertained, comforted and moved us for thousands of years. But it is only recently that science has begun to shed light on the incredible impact that music and other art forms can have on the mind, brain and body. The Musical Brain is a registered charity committed to bridging a gap between the arts and sciences by encouraging discussion among scientists, artists, medical professionals and performers, sharing and debating this new knowledge and ground breaking research with a wide public audience. We aim to do this in ways that are memorable and accessible in conferences, study days and occasional shorter events, always including live performance.

WHY SING?

The Evolution of Singing

Artistic Director
IAN RITCHIE

Speakers
Dr EVANGELOS HIMONIDES
Prof STEVEN MITHEN
Dr KATIE OVERY
Prof MICHAEL TRIMBLE
Dr EDWARD WICKHAM

The Clerks:
RUTH KIANG *Alto*
CATHY BELL *Alto*
ALASTAIR BROOKSHAW *Tenor*
ROY RASHBROOK *Tenor*
JAMES BIRCHALL *Bass*
EDWARD WICKHAM *Bass*

Singing has played a significant part in the scientific presentations, intellectual deliberations and musical interventions of almost all the conferences that The Musical Brain has organised over the past seven years. Meanwhile we have faced a paradox: as the study and practice of music have been increasingly elbowed out to the margins of British mainstream education, singing was singled out by the Government for strategic support and community development across the country. We feel that the time is ripe to gather our thoughts, draw together some of our leading experts and explore the many reasons why humans sing.

We know that music is a basic human impulse and it is obvious that singing is its most natural and personal manifestation, the vocal instrument itself being grown as an essential and purposeful part of everybody. Many years ago a singing teacher told me that her method was based on the premise that the first cries of a new-born baby show the natural, open and perfectly supported vocal technique, subsequently lost through one's early years of linguistic and other usage, that singers somehow need to regain!

Our speakers, Dr Evangelos Himonides, Dr Katie Overy, Prof Steven Mithen, Prof Michael Trimble and Dr Edward Wickham, bring together a vast range of scholarship and practical knowledge, embracing anatomy, anthropology, neurology, psychology, technology and, of course, music. Individually and together they trace the evolution of music – especially singing, and how we have come to use, develop and enjoy it – from the times of our closest primate relatives millions of years ago, through our stone-age human ancestors and on to modern society: today's mother and child, irrespective of cultural circumstances, will still engage naturally in a musical protolanguage of song – the origins of verbal communication, according to Darwin. As in every Musical Brain conference, musical performance belongs at the heart of proceedings and is provided on this occasion by The Clerks, a vocal ensemble which specialises in ancient and modern music and has delved into much of our subject matter through their evolutionary programme, *The Ascent of Song: the first million years*.

Why Sing? is many questions rolled into one. We decided that we can only begin to do justice to such a vast and vital subject by addressing it in stages and from different angles over the next couple of years. Appropriately enough we start at the very beginning, with *The Evolution of Singing*. Information and discussions emerging from this event will inform the second conference, *The Power of Singing: Revolution, Religion and Tribalism*, to be held here at St John's on 24 November 2017. This, in its turn will influence the content and the way we approach the third and final two-day conference, *Singing Together: Wellbeing and Learning*, in Spring 2018. We hope you enjoy the first leg of this fascinating journey and join us again as we embark on our further explorations.

*The Musical Brain
is most grateful to
The Radcliffe Trust,
the Museum of the Order
of St John and our Friends
and donors for their
generous support.*

IAN RITCHIE
Artistic Director

Conference Programme

10:00 *Registration & coffee*

10:30 **Professor STEVEN MITHEN**

Why sing? Because our evolutionary ancestors sang

I will use archaeological and fossil evidence to argue that our capability and inclination towards singing has deep evolutionary roots within our brains and bodies, this having been a fundamental form of communication and expression long before the origin of spoken language. Indeed, when we sing – especially together – we still experience some of the ancient sensations that were of critical evolutionary importance in early prehistoric societies, even if today they simply provide a feeling of pleasure – such as building a sense of group identity and trust. With such evolutionary roots singing provides not only a pathway towards maintaining individual and social well-being but also an enquiry into the nature of being human.

Q & A

11:30 **Professor MICHAEL TRIMBLE**

Moving together in heart and mind

In this presentation I want to concentrate on important differences between *Homo sapiens* and our nearest primate relatives, especially apes and monkeys, in terms of abilities to hear music as emotionally moving and pleasurable. One of the distinguishing features of humans is our ability to entrain to a musical beat and dance. Since virtually no other living species does this there must be differences between the structure of the human brain and that of other animals, which will be presented in this lecture. These differences will reflect not only on our cultural activities such as dancing, but also look at entrainment of neurophysiological measurements in humans while listening to music and taking part in communal activities such as singing in a choir.

12:15 *Panel discussion*

With Dr Katie Overy, Prof Steven Mithen,
Dr Edward Wickham, Prof Michael Trimble

12:35 *Lunch*

14:00 **Dr EDWARD WICKHAM**

Edward Wickham will introduce *The Ascent of Song*, sections of which will be presented in the first concert and at the end of the day. *The Ascent of Song* has been inspired by the work of a number of scholars – some of whom are also presenting at the conference – and is intended as a musical commentary on arguments about music and language development and singing as social interaction. Dr Wickham will also summarise his work on text intelligibility in polyphonic music and the function of text in choral music: work which, though located in particular historical repertoires, informs a wider debate about what we do when we sing words. Invoking medieval motets and monodgreens (the mis-hearing of lyrics in songs), he will propose an approach to text and music, which challenges common assumptions (held, in particular, by performers) about the role of sung words.

14:20 *Concert – The Clerks*

RUTH KIANG, CATHY BELL *altos*
ALASTAIR BROOKSHAW, ROY RASHBROOK *tenors*
JAMES BIRCHALL, EDWARD WICKHAM *basses*

The Ascent of Song is a playful and thought-provoking look at the history of singing as a universal characteristic of human behaviour, with the help of the repertoires both old and new which The Clerks have long pioneered. According to Charles Darwin, the origins of verbal communication lie in a musical 'protolanguage', in which speech and song were one. *The Ascent of Song* explores this ancestry, and the unexpected ways it is revealed in everyday experience. Here the polyphony of Ockeghem rubs shoulders with that of the Ba'aka tribes of the Congo, Medieval songs with those of Eastern Europe. The programme also features new works by Christopher Fox and Edward Wickham alongside music and sounds both exotic and commonplace; a sequence embracing madrigals and 'motherese', football chants and fa-la-las, in a unique celebration of that intrinsically human instinct – to sing. The programme was originally commissioned by The Wellcome Collection and premiered as part of Radio 3's *Why Music?* Season in September 2015.

15:00 **Dr KATIE OVERY**

Singing throughout the lifespan

Singing occurs throughout human experience, from lullabies and love songs to national anthems and football chants. There is growing scientific interest in this curious, joyous and emotional behavior that seems to touch upon what it means to be human. Focusing on recent research in this area, I will begin by considering how the infant, developing brain appears to respond to singing and later begins to learn through singing. We'll then examine the neural basis of adult singing, how social groups can form around singing, and the potential value of singing in neurological, therapeutic contexts such as stroke or dementia. Finally, we will re-address the famous statement by Steven Pinker that music can be considered 'biologically useless' and 'auditory cheesecake'.

Q & A

16:00 *Tea break*

16:20 **Dr EVANGELOS HIMONIDES**

The singing voice and its 'polyphonic' nature...

In this presentation, I will be offering a brief presentation of the vocal instrument, its function, properties, unique characteristics and needs, as we understand it today. We will be looking at basic acoustical aspects of the human voice, but also at how we try to make sense of it, with recording and analyses. We will be touching upon 'preferences' and how these are formed, but also how context specific these might be. Finally, we will use one particular 'trick' that researchers sometimes employ in order to form a greater understanding of 'normality', by looking at 'supra-' and 'infra-' normal examples of voice production and singing.

Q & A

17:20 *Panel discussion*

With Prof Steven Mithen, Dr Evangelos Himonides,
Dr Katie Overy, Prof Michael Trimble, The Clerks

18:00 *Closing concert – The Clerks*

SEQUENCE THREE: FA-LA-LA – Songs About Singing

The Speakers



Dr EVANGELOS HIMONIDES holds the University of London's first ever academic appointment in music technology education and is now Reader in Technology, Education, and Music at UCL. He lectures in Music Education, Music Technology, Music Psychology, Psychoacoustics and Information Technology, at a post-graduate level, and also leads the post-graduate courses in Music Technology in Education and Choral Conducting, Leadership and Communication. Evangelos has just developed UCL's first ever course in Music, titled "Interactions of Music and Science" which is going to become available under UCL's Bachelors of Arts and Sciences. He is Chartered Fellow (FBCS CITP) with the British Computer Society. As a musician, technologist and educator, Evangelos has had an ongoing career in experimental research in the fields of Psychoacoustics, Music-Perception, Music-Cognition, IT, Human-Computer Interaction, Special Needs, the Singing Voice and development. As a sound engineer and researcher, Evangelos has recorded with various artists such as Derek Lee Ragin (Farinelli), Vanessa Mae (SONY BMG) and Jarvis Cocker (Pulp) and for numerous media productions (for the BBC, Ch5, Discovery Channel, RTL, CBS). Evangelos has developed Sounds of Intent (www.soundsofintent.org), an online resource that supports the development of children and young people with complex needs through and with music. When time permits, Evangelos likes to record music, play guitar, and handcraft musical instruments in order to raise funds for his charitable work.



Professor STEVEN MITHEN holds a BA (hons) in Prehistory & Archaeology from Sheffield University, an MSc in Biological Computation from York University and a PhD in Archaeology from Cambridge University. Between 1987 and 1992 he was a Research Fellow at Trinity Hall and then Lecturer in Archaeology at Cambridge. After moving to the University of Reading, he was promoted to Senior Lecturer (1996), Reader (1998) and then Professor of Early Prehistory (2000). In August 2002 he was appointed as the first Head of the School of Human & Environmental Sciences, formed by the Departments of Archaeology, Geography, Soil Science and the Postgraduate Institute of Sedimentology, a post he held until August 2008 when he became Dean of the Faculty of Science. He was elected as a Fellow of the British Academy in 2004. He is Pro-Vice-Chancellor at Reading University and author of several books including *The Singing Neanderthals* and *The Prehistory of the Mind: The Cognitive Origins of Art, Religion and Science*.



Dr KATIE OVERY is a Senior Lecturer in Music and Director of the Institute for Music in Human and Social Development (IMHSD) at the University of Edinburgh. Her core research interest is musical learning, with a particular focus on rhythm, which she explores from the interdisciplinary perspectives of music psychology, music pedagogy and music neuroscience. Katie has supervised or examined over twenty interdisciplinary PhD theses, was the UK partner in the International Training Network EBRAMUS (Europe, Brain and Music) and has co-edited several interdisciplinary special issues on the topic of the rhythmic, musical brain, including for *Transactions of the Royal Society B* (2015), *Proceedings of the New York Academy of Sciences* (2012), *Cortex* (2009) and *Contemporary Music Review* (2009). Musically, Katie plays piano and tenor saxophone, is a keen (albeit highly sporadic) Taiko drummer and sings soprano in a choir Edinburgh.



MICHAEL TRIMBLE is Emeritus Professor in Behavioural Neurology at the Institute of Neurology and Honorary Consultant Physician to the department of Psychological Medicine at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, London. His research for many years has been on the behavioural consequences of neurological disorders, especially epilepsy and movement disorders. He has a lifelong research interest in neuroanatomy, hence his ability to explore the neuroanatomical basis of crying. He is also a psychiatrist with much clinical experience of mood disorders, and has investigated the latter in patients using neurological techniques, such as brain imaging. His book *The Soul in the Brain* (Johns Hopkins, 2007) explores the cerebral basis of art and belief and *Why Humans like to cry: Tragedy Evolution and the Brain* (OUP 2012) discusses emotional responses to tragedy and the arts from an evolutionary and neurobiological perspective.



Dr EDWARD WICKHAM is a choral conductor and teacher whose pioneering work in Contemporary and Renaissance repertoires has earned him an international reputation. In 1992 he established the vocal ensemble The Clerks, with which he has made over two dozen recordings, and received many plaudits including the Gramophone Early Music Award. Since 2003, Edward Wickham has been Director of Music and a Fellow at St Catharine's College, Cambridge. He is also an Affiliate Lecturer at the Faculty of Music in Cambridge and is Course Principal of the Master's course in Choral Studies. As well as directing the College Choir, in 2008 Dr Wickham formed the St Catharine's Girls' Choir, the first and, until recently, only college-based choir for girls in the country. Under his direction, the choirs of St Catharine's have made several recordings – latterly on the Resonus label – and toured as far afield as China and the United States. Dr Wickham is a committed advocate of choral outreach, and is the founder and Artistic Director of The Oxford and Cambridge Singing School, which runs vacation singing courses for children in London, Cambridge and Oxford.

Concert Programmes

The Ascent of Song

the first million years

devised by

EDWARD WICKHAM and **CHRISTOPHER FOX**

performed by

The Clerks

RUTH KIANG, CATHY BELL *altos*

ALASTAIR BROOKSHAW, ROY RASHBROOK *tenors*

JAMES BIRCHALL, EDWARD WICKHAM *basses*

EDWARD WICKHAM *Director*

Source Material (1): Origins CHRISTOPHER FOX

Sequence: Lullabies and Laments

Source Material (2): The Descent of Language CHRISTOPHER FOX

Sequence: Alleluia – an Anthology of Communal Song

Source Material (3): The Ascent of Song CHRISTOPHER FOX

Sequence: FA-LA-LA – Songs about Singing

14.20

SOURCE MATERIAL (1): Origins CHRISTOPHER FOX

SEQUENCE ONE: Lullabies and Laments

Motherese Source: RACHEL NEAUM (private recording)

Lullay, lullow: I saw a swete semly sight Anon, 15th century: Ritson MS

Motherese

Source: 'Stefania' speaking/singing to 'Elisa' (aged 6 months); recorded 2013 as part of research project *Music, song & speech in adult-infant interaction* led by Dr Fabia Franco (Middlesex University, London), with Dr Mirco Fasolo, Mrs Iryna Kozar, Prof Nicoletta Salerni (all from Milan-Bicocca University, Italy).

Ho-Ho Watanay: Iroquois Lullaby Artist: ALAN MILLS

Source: Smithsonian Pathways; collected by Alan Mills from Caughnawaga settlement in Quebec, 10 miles from Montreal.

Translation: Oh-oh, little one; go to sleep, now go to sleep.

Lullaby for Freya: Gaelic Lullaby STEVIE WISHART

Artist: St Catharine's Girls' Choir, dir. EDWARD WICKHAM

Arrangement of Christ Child's Lullaby (TÁLADH CHRÍOSDA)

Women's wu-ungka song: Aboriginal Lament

Source: Smithsonian Folkways

The reference in the two items on this track is to a "story" or myth about two girls drowned in the mouth of a nearby river. The short vocal sections, punctuated by vocal sounds – in this case, pub'wa, simulating the final gasps of the victims – are characteristic of ceremonial songs still remembered by older people in western settlements on Cape York Peninsula, Queensland.

The Coventry Carol: Lully, lulla, thow little tyne child Anon, 16th century

Chorus of Ululation Sources: various

Plange quasi virgo Gregorian chant

Translation: Weep like a virgin, my people, howl, keepers of the flock, covered with ashes and wearing hair-shirts, for the great and very bitter day of the Lord will come. Prepare yourselves, priests, and lament, acolytes before the altar, cover yourselves with ashes. For the great and very bitter day of the Lord will come.

Vox in Rama GIACHES DE WERT (1535–1596)

Translation: A voice is heard in Rama of weeping and [great] lamentation. Rachel is weeping for her children, and will not be comforted because they are no more.

Lament/Lullaby: SOLOMON ISLANDS

Source: Solomon Islands – The Sounds of Bamboo

Dr FABIA FRANCO identifies this, from its style, as a lullaby as much as a lament. (The two share some functional and aesthetic characteristics.)

Pie Jesu EUSTACHE DU CAURROY (1549–1609)

SOURCE MATERIAL (2): The Descent of Language CHRISTOPHER FOX

SEQUENCE TWO: Alleluia – an Anthology of Communal Song

Alleluia: Jubilate Deo omnis terra Gregorian chant

Translation: Praise the Lord all the earth, serve the Lord with gladness and come before his presence in exultation.

I am a Poor Pilgrim of Sorrow

Source: Smithsonian Folkways

Sung by members of the Indian Bottom Association, Old Regular Baptists, at Defeated Creek Church in Linefork, Kentucky, in 1993: an example of lined-out hymnody, America's oldest English language religious music in the oral tradition.

How'd ya earn your livin'

Source: US Navy Seals (1999)

Oh when the Saints go marching in

Source: Southampton FC Fans

Alleluia: A neue werke Anon English (15th century)

BaAka vocalisation

Source: Pitts Rivers Museum

Recorded by Louis Sarno in the Central African Republic, 7th April 1993.

Sumer is icumen in Anon English (13th century)

18.00

SOURCE MATERIAL (3): The Ascent of Song CHRISTOPHER FOX

SEQUENCE THREE: FA-LA-LA – Songs about Singing

Too much I once lamented THOMAS TOMKINS

Hey Jude THE BEATLES

'Give me a few words...' LUCIANO BERIO

Source: Sequenza 3. Artist: TONY ARNOLD

Evening Hymn HENRY PURCELL

Artists: EMMA KIRKBY, CHRISTOPHER HOGWOOD and ANTHONY ROOLEY

Extract from **Salve regina** JEAN OCKEGHEM

Translation: To you we cry, exiled sons of Eve; O merciful, O devout, O sweet virgin Mary.

She'll be coming round/down the mountain

Source: The Oxford and Cambridge Singing School (private recording)

Mor'fElenku: Bulgarian vocalisation

Source: The London Bulgarian Choir

From the Pirin region. The whoops and "hiccups" are typical of the vocal style, and reflect sounds in nature.

Ideki e csenderbe: Hungarian dancing song

Source: Ensemble Népzenei Kamaraműhely (Szeged, Hungary)

The song is a Csángó Hungarian folk song of Eastern Romania (Moldavia), county Bacau.

Translation: 'Out here in the grove, roses bloom in the grass.

Come, sweetheart, let's pick them and make a posy. Send it to the lad you love best, the one you embrace in the dance, the one who keeps snapping his fingers and winking with his eyes.'

Sing we and chaunt it THOMAS MORLEY

The Music and Musicians

Source material CHRISTOPHER FOX

Source material consists of three movements: 'Origins (d'après Rousseau)', 'The Descent of Language' and 'The Ascent of Song'. The first piece, 'Origins' sets Jean-Jacques Rousseau, speculating on the relationship between singing and speaking, a text which recurs in the final piece, 'The Ascent of Song'. The second, 'The Descent of Language', sets a text assembled by Edward Wickham out of the everyday banalities – 'whatever', 'sink or swim', 'every little helps' – that we use as sentence-fillers in conversation. The third grows out of short audio extracts from the great and not-so-great – Einstein, Edward VIII, Jackie Kennedy and Margaret Thatcher – before returning to Rousseau's words and the sound of running water, the stream beside which Rousseau imagined our earliest ancestors sitting as language, whether sung or spoken, first evolved. As with my previous collaborations with the Clerks, *20 Ways To Improve Your Life*, *Tales from Babel* and *Phantom Voices*, the initial ideas for *Source material* came from Edward Wickham; 'Origins (d'après Rousseau)' is dedicated to him. The second and third movements are dedicated respectively to Egidija Medeksaitė and Georgia Rodgers; Georgia was also responsible for the technical realisation of the tape part for 'The Ascent of Song'. *Source material* was commissioned by The Clerks with funds from the Wellcome Trust.



CHRISTOPHER FOX is a composer who sometimes writes about music too. Often working at a tangent to the musical mainstream he has based his compositional career around close collaborations with particular performers, including Roger Heaton, Ian Pace, Anton Lukoszevics, the instrumental groups the Ives Ensemble, KNM Berlin and Apartment House, and the vocal ensembles The Clerks and EXAUDI. His work is the subject of the book *Perspectives on the music of Christopher Fox: Straight lines in broken times* (Ashgate-Routledge, 2016). CDs of his music are available on the Ergodos, HatHut, Metier and NMC labels. He is editor of *TEMPO* and professor of music at Brunel University London.

THE CLERKS, one of the outstanding vocal groups in its field, whose recordings and performances of Renaissance vocal music have earned them a place among the foremost interpreters of the repertoire. The group's discography of over 20 CDs represents a uniquely valuable and pioneering contribution to early music and has won them many accolades, including the coveted *Gramophone* Award for Early Music. The Clerks have performed in the UK's major venues and festivals, including the BBC Proms, the Barbican, the Queen Elizabeth Hall, and St David's Hall, Cardiff; and regularly appear at festivals throughout Europe and the United States. The Clerks have broadcast in many European countries, and have made programmes for Belgian and French television. In recent years the ensemble has expanded its repertoire to include contemporary works and collaborations. These have included *Qudduson*, a programme featuring soloists from the Middle East, *The Clerks Songbook*, and *The Hours* – a 24-hour sound installation bringing together pre-recorded and live materials gathered from a wide variety of community and faith groups throughout

the UK. The Clerks' latest projects – *Tales from Babel* and *Phantom Voices*, both sponsored by Wellcome Trust – have entailed exploration, through new and old music, of the scientific issues surrounding text intelligibility and musical hallucinations.



RUTH KIANG, mezzo-soprano, studied at the Universities of Durham and Cambridge, where she was a choral scholar at Trinity College. She has a busy freelance career performing and recording regularly with a wide variety of professional vocal ensembles, including Gabrieli Consort; Academy of Ancient Music; Choir of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment; Polyphony; BBC Singers; Sonoro, and a variety of session choirs for film soundtracks. Recent work in 2016/17 includes concerts and a recording of Haydn's *Seasons* in Poland and London, and a European tour of an unaccompanied programme: "Of a Rose is all my Song" with Gabrieli Consort; Poulenc's *Stabat Mater* with BBC Singers, and Handel's *Coronation Anthems* with Academy of Ancient Music at 2016 BBC Proms. Recent solo engagements include Handel's *Judas Maccabeus* with Carshalton Choral Society, and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at St Martin-in-the-Fields. Future engagements in 2017 include: Sonoro's debut CD recording of Frank Martin and James MacMillan; Monteverdi's *Vespers* with Academy of Ancient Music; Handel's *Israel in Egypt* with Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at 2017 BBC Proms, and a European tour of Handel's *Messiah* with Gabrieli Consort. Ruth lives in North London with her husband, their son and newborn twin daughters.



CATHY BELL was a choral and academic scholar at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where she read English and took an MPhil in Medieval Literature. She studied singing as a postgraduate at Birmingham Conservatoire. Now based in London, she enjoys a varied singing career encompassing opera, choral and solo concert work. Notable roles include Carmen, Arsamenes (Handel *Xerxes*), Russian Nanny (Britten *Death in Venice*) for Garsington Opera, and Third Lady/Third Boy (Mozart *Die Zauberflöte*) for Diva Opera and the Palestine Mozart Festival. Chorus work has taken her to Scottish Opera, Garsington, Grange Park, Bergen Nasjonale Opera and the festivals in Aix-en-Provence and Beijing. Cathy particularly enjoys concert work, and has a busy schedule as an oratorio soloist and recitalist. Concerts this year have included Bach *St John Passion*, Handel *Messiah* and *Dixit Dominus* and Vivaldi *Introduzione e Gloria*. Recent recitals include Lully arias at the Wallace Collection, and a lecture-recital, "Handel by Candle", at the Handel House. Cathy works regularly with groups such as the BBC Singers, the AAM, Philharmonia Voices, Sonoro, Musica Poetica and EXAUDI. She lives in south-east London with her husband Jon, also a singer, and their baby daughter Rosie.



ALASTAIR BROOKSHAW read history at Cambridge University where he was a choral scholar at Trinity College and later a Lay Clerk at St John's. After graduating he completed

a foundation course run by the English National Opera and subsequently studied for a postgraduate degree at Mountview Academy, where he won the Dame Judi Dench Scholarship. Alastair performs with many of the country's top choirs, including the Choir of the Enlightenment, the Academy of Ancient Music, the Clerks, and the choirs of Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral. Recent solo concert engagements include performances at the Coliseum, the Royal Albert Hall, the Cardiff Millennium Theatre and St John's, Smith Square. Alastair is also a critically acclaimed West End actor. Most recently he appeared as Sipos in Menier Chocolate Factory's sell-out hit *She Loves Me*. Other recent theatre includes the English National Opera's 2015 production of *Sweeney Todd*, Jacobowsky in *The Grand Tour*, and Volodya in *Bed and Sofa*, both at the Finborough Theatre, Oscar Wilde in *De Profundis* at the Leicester Square Theatre, Leo Frank in *Parade* at the Southwark Playhouse, and Frederick in *The Pirates of Penzance* at the Minack Theatre. He has also appeared in West End productions of *Cabaret*, *Blood Brothers*, and *Shoes*.



ROY RASHBROOK is the taller of the two tenors in the Clerks, but usually carries the vocal line just beneath his co-conspirator – Al. When not singing with them, Roy is a tenor in the choir of Saint Paul's Cathedral or a singing teacher at Caldicott School in Berkshire and The Royal Grammar School in Guildford, depending on the time of day. In the occasional moments when he's not doing any of those, he can usually be found conducting or arranging music for his two amateur choirs – Chantry Singers (Guildford), and Hart Voices (Fleet). He has just completed the editing of a Vivaldi opera for *La Nuova Musica* and enjoys spending any remaining free time enthusiastically ignoring last year's unsorted tax receipts.



JAMES BIRCHALL studied at St John's College, Cambridge, the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. He has sung many of the major oratorio roles, notably Handel's *Messiah* and Beethoven's *Choral Symphony*, both with the CBSO in Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Bach's *St John Passion* with the London Mozart Players in St Paul's Cathedral, *Christmas Oratorio* and *Messiah* in Kristiansund, Norway and *St Matthew Passion* at the Royal Festival Hall with the Bach Choir. In 2010 he made his solo debut at the BBC Proms, performing Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music*, and has twice appeared as a soloist at the Three Choirs Festival. Operatic engagements have included *Messenger Belshazzar* at the Theatre du Capitole, Toulouse, Morales (cover) *Carmen* for Raymond Gubbay Ltd at the Royal Albert Hall and the O2 Arena, London, and Masetto/Commendatore *Don Giovanni* for Opera della Luna at the Iford Festival. Recent/forthcoming engagements include Noye *Noye's Fludde* in the Thaxted Festival, *Messiah* in Worcester Cathedral and in Poland and Norway, *Christmas Oratorio* at King's Place, *Mass in B Minor* at Cadogan Hall and Brahms' *German Requiem* and Mendelssohn's *St Paul* at Eton College. James lives in Hertfordshire with his wife and two young daughters.

The Musical Brain

LOOKING FORWARD

There are three common factors in Musical Brain events: multi-disciplinary programming, bringing together leading experts from different fields; accessible communication of fascinating but often complex ideas; and performances of the highest calibre to illuminate and conclude each day's discussions.

The Musical Brain is regularly invited by organisations as a partner and contributor to events, which can be enhanced by combining music with medical, scientific, philosophical or historical subject matter. Some people travel considerable distances to attend our London-based conferences, but we know that there are many music-lovers with wide-ranging curiosity who are interested but cannot easily attend. Therefore our teams welcome invitations to tour and collaborate.

Second *Why Sing?* conference:

The Power of Singing: Religion, Revolution and Tribalism

Friday 24 November 2017, The Church of the Order of St John

Third *Why Sing?* conference:

Singing Together: Well-being and Learning

Spring 2018



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