

# RSNO

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL  
ORCHESTRA



# Come and Sing **Carmina Burana**

**Stephen Doughty** Conductor

**Alison McNeill** Soprano

**Christian Schneeberger** Tenor

**Phil Gault** Bass

**RSNO Youth Chorus 1**

**Royal Scottish National Orchestra**

And featuring:

**The Come and Sing Carmina Burana Chorus**

Glasgow Royal Concert Hall  
Sat 24 Jan 2026 7.30pm

# Welcome

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the RSNO's Come and Sing *Carmina Burana*, during which we will discover, relearn and rehearse one of the most popular choral works in the repertoire, a piece bursting with rhythm, drive and some truly spectacular moments.

Whether you are a participant in our wonderful Come and Sing Chorus or a member of our audience, you are all very welcome.

There are various pieces of music which are instantly recognisable, even to those who have no interest in classical music – the introduction to Handel's *Zadok the Priest*, for example, or perhaps the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's *Messiah*, sung in this very concert hall just a few weeks ago. It might be that this evening you're reminded of the Old Spice adverts or indeed *The X Factor* – there's no escaping the power and impact of *Carmina Burana*'s opening chords, so I am thrilled that we are joined by the RSNO, Scotland's National Orchestra, a stellar line-up of soloists and members of the RSNO Youth Chorus to perform the piece in its entirety.

If you've never attended a Come and Sing event before, I'm delighted you've taken the plunge today! These singing days are a wonderful opportunity to meet like-minded people, make new friends and perform amazing music together. I hope you enjoy yourselves!

**Stephen Doughty**

DIRECTOR, RSNO CHORUS

## Keep in touch with the RSNO

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Scottish Company No. 27809  
Scottish Charity No. SC010702

Carl Orff (1895-1982)

# Carmina Burana



**FIRST PERFORMANCE**

Frankfurt, 8 June 1937

**DURATION** 65 minutes

**FORTUNA IMPERATRIX MUNDI**  
(**Fortune, Empress of the World**)

1. *O fortuna*
2. *Fortune plango vulnera*

**I. PRIMO VERE** (Springtime)

3. *Veris leta facies*
4. *Omnia sol temperat*
5. *Ecce gratum*

**Uf dem Anger** (On the Green)

6. *Tanz*
7. *Floret silva nobilis*
8. *Chrämer, gip die varwe mir*
9. *Reie: Swaz hie gat umbe*
10. *Were diu werlt alle min*

**II. IN TABERNA** (In the Tavern)

11. *Estuans interius*
12. *Olim lacus colueram*
13. *Ego sum abbas Cucaniensis*
14. *In taberna quando sumus*

**III. COURS D'AMOURS** (Court of Love)

15. *Amor volat undique*
16. *Dies, nox et omnia*
17. *Stetit puella*
18. *Circa mea pectora*
19. *Si puer cum puellula*
20. *Veni, veni, venias*
21. *In trutina mentis dubia*
22. *Tempus est iocundum*
23. *Dulcissime*

**Blanziflor et Helena** (Blanziflor and Helena)

24. *Ave formosissima*
25. *O fortuna*

Despite a thorough musical training as a child and graduating from the Munich Academy of Music in 1914, Carl Orff composed relatively little during the first 40 years of his life. The music of Debussy had a profound impact on his early work, although it was the likes of Schoenberg, Richard Strauss and Pfitzner who were to leave the most lasting impressions. Otherwise, Orff was largely occupied with his 'true' vocation as one of Germany's most important music educators.

Following military service towards the end of the Great War, in 1924 Orff joined forces with Dorothee Günther to inaugurate Munich's Güntherschule, a progressive institution dedicated to finding complementary areas of discipline within the arts – principally music, dance and gymnastics. As a result, Orff began work on his mammoth *Schulwerk*, the first volume of which was published in 1930 and on which he was still working right up to the time of his death.

Orff's practical music skills came into their own between 1930 and 1933, when he was appointed conductor of the Munich Bach Society, although it was as the composer of *Carmina Burana* (1937) that he first won fame. The rest of his long life was devoted to his educational work and a series of music dramas, most notably *Antigonae* (1949), *Oedipus* (1959) and *Prometheus* (1968).

The fact that *Carmina Burana* – arguably the most popular choral piece of the 20th century – came into existence at all was serendipitous in the extreme. It was on Maundy Thursday 1934 that Orff received an anthology of medieval poetry from a Würzburg second-hand bookseller, who thought he might find them diverting. The original had been published in 1847 by the Court Librarian at Munich, Johann Schmeller, itself based on a manuscript dating from around the middle of the 13th century which had been unearthed in a Bavarian abbey. Indeed, it was

Schmeller who originally devised the work's title: *Carmina Burana* (Songs of Buren).

The manuscript that had so fortuitously come into Orff's possession contained some 200 ancient songs and poems, meticulously categorised according to subject matter and then alphabetised. Some were in Latin, others Middle High German, and a number in a curious amalgam of the two. But perhaps the most extraordinary feature of this collection is its breathtaking range of moral tone. Some are religious stories and poems expressing strong disapproval of the decline in standards among the clergy and those in authority, while others are of a more sensual nature, extolling the virtues of a life based on eating, drinking, gambling – and making love.

Orff fell instantly in love with the collection, citing in particular 'the infectious rhythms and vividness of the poems and, not least, the musicality and peculiar concision of the Latin language with its high density of vowels'. With the help of archivist Michael Hofmann, he set to work on producing a collection of texts that suggested themselves as particularly suitable for musical settings. He then arranged the poems into a 'happening', subtitled 'Secular songs for soloists and choruses, accompanied by instruments and magical images'. The actual music itself appears to have caused Orff very few problems: 'The whole work was playable within a matter of weeks,' he later enthused. 'The music was already in my head. So vivid was it, indeed, that I had no need of any written aid.'

In complete contrast to the complexity of innumerable scores of the period, Orff went back to basics in terms of the rhythms, harmonies and textures he employed. Most of the work is strongly key-centred and the material is predominantly sequential or based on reiterated rhythmic ostinati, which give the piece a distinctly 'primitivist' feel. There is an almost total avoidance of contrapuntal or fugal devices

and a clear emphasis on unison writing. Equally revolutionary is Orff's handling of the orchestra, with its concentration on crystal-clear textures and strong differentiation of the various vocal and instrumental groups – percussion in particular. Indeed, simplicity is the watchword here, yet such is the sheer quality of Orff's invention that the music never becomes merely facile.

The triumphant premiere was given as a staged production on 8 June 1937 at the Frankfurt Opera under Oskar Waelterlin. Such was its success around the world that Orff promptly instructed his publisher to destroy 'everything that I have written so far and which you've unfortunately published. ... My collected works now begin with *Carmina Burana*.'

There are 25 numbers in all, framed by the score's most celebrated passage, *O fortuna*, a physically imposing, breathtakingly resplendent invocation to the goddess of Fate and Fortune. The remainder is subdivided into three main sections dealing with Springtime (*Primo Vere*), In the Tavern (*In Taberna*) and Love (*Cours d'amours*).

The first three numbers of *Primo Vere* combine as a celebration of the delights of springtime, progressing from the semi-liturgical unisons of *Veris leta facies* to *Ecce gratum*, in which a boundlessly energetic chorus invites the listener to taste freely in the joys of love. The orchestral dance that follows is a riot of exuberant rhythmic misplacements and constantly changing metre. The central section features a duet for flute and timpani, a reference to an old Bavarian tradition known as *Aufspielen*, in which the literal meaning 'playing up' should be interpreted more as representing a musical accompaniment to the dance tune proper. This metrical unpredictability spills over into *Floret silva nobilis*, a maiden's lament of moving simplicity.

*Chramer, gip die varve mir* finds a group of young coquettish maidens attempting to seduce the

menfolk with fine displays of the art of make-up, to the accompaniment of sleigh bells. Their male counterparts respond in less than enthusiastic terms, opening an excited sequence that climaxes in *Were diu werlt alle min*, an orgiastic invocation to the Queen of England. Exactly which 'queen' we are not told, although the latest research would appear to indicate Eleanor of Aquitaine, who was apparently forlorn at being separated from her husband, Henry II of England.

If the first part of *Carmina Burana* is generally full of high spirits, *In Taberna* is positively riotous a great deal of the time. The baritone solo, *Estuans interius*, is a tongue-in-cheek confession of having worshipped the ribald way of life. We hear the falsetto voice of the swan as it slowly braises in the pot (*Olim lacus colueram*, a delightful take-off of buffa tenor stratospherics), the patron saint of gambling in a thoroughly inebriated state appointing himself the 'Abbot of Cloud-Cuckoo Land' (*Ego sum abbas Cucaniensis*), and a gloriously unbuttoned chorus (*In taberna quando sumus*) that revels in the joys of drinking.

Finally, the *Cours d'amours*, in which the atmosphere becomes altogether more restrained, the art of courtly love winning (in this case) the upper hand. This does not mean that the language pulls any punches, as the no-holds-barred men's chorus *Si puer cum puellula* plainly shows. It is instructive to place this beside the quiet composure and sophistication of *In trutina mentis dubia*, a lady's confession of love for her knight. The final *O fortuna* finds the wheel coming full circle – a musical depiction of the wheel of fate emblazoned on the front cover of the 1847 edition of *Carmina Burana* that had inspired this stirring masterpiece into being in the first place.

© Julian Haylock

# Alison McNeill

**Soprano**



Alison McNeill is a trailblazing Scottish artist whose work blurs boundaries between classical, folk and world music. A soprano, conductor and fiddle player, she has built a richly diverse career shaped by cross-disciplinary and immersive performance. A graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with a Masters in Performance, Alison further honed her artistry in Spain studying with the late Teresa Berganza.

Career highlights include solo work with Ditirambo Early Music Ensemble in Mexico, performances of Verdi's Requiem with the RSNO and winning the Andrés Segovia Prize for Spanish Song in Spain as the only non-native speaker to receive the award. She has headlined international festivals with folk-rock band Reely Jiggered, collaborated with acclaimed folk-pop band Beluga Lagoon, broadcast on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal, BBC Radio Scotland and BBC Radio 4, and appeared on Pakistani and Mexican national television.

Alison is Youth Chorus Master at Opera North, Associate Director of RSNO Youth Choruses, Conductor of the NYCOS National Boys Choir (Treble Voices) and Director of the RCS Summer Short Courses Choral Programme.

# Christian Schneeberger

**Tenor**



Christian Schneeberger was born in Glasgow and studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where he won the Glasgow Grand Society Opera Cup, the Hugh S Robertson Prize for Scottish Singing and the William Allan Prize.

Christian's solo highlights include Verdi's Requiem with the RSNO, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* with the Newton Stewart Singers, Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri* in Dundee's Caird Hall, Finzi's *Dies Natalis* with the Scottish Sinfonia, Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* and Handel's *Chandos Anthem No2*. In Bach's *St John Passion* with Stonehaven Chorus, he performed the Evangelist to critical acclaim.

Christian achieved a Distinction in the NOMEA International and Neapolitan Masters competitions, and reached the second round of the prestigious Neue Stimmen competition. He performs regularly with Scottish Opera, most recently in *La bohème* and currently in the world premiere of *The Great Wave*. He also appears with Opera Bohemia, Opera Alba and Scozzesi.

Alongside performing, Christian is a voice teacher at Hutchesons' Grammar School, George Heriot's School and the University of St Andrews.

# Phil Gault

## Bass



Welsh-Irish baritone Phil has performed internationally in roles ranging from the Count (Mozart's *Il nozze di Figaro*), Dandini (Rossini's *La Cenerentola*) and Tarquinius (Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*) to the eponymous Don Giovanni, King Roger and even Carmen (in the critically acclaimed all-male *CarMen*). His concert repertoire includes *Dichterliebe*, *Chansons Gaillardes*, *Songs of Travel*, *Carmina Burana*, *A Sea Symphony* and the Bach Passions and cantatas. TV includes live broadcast recordings of the title roles in the award-nominated *Macbeth* and *Barbwr Sefil* with Opra Cymru. CDs include *Breathe Freely* (Wagstaff), *A Brontë Mass* (Wilby) and *Breathless Alleluia* (Wilby), the latter two with the Black Dyke Band.

# RSNO Chorus All-Night Vigil

**Fri 6 Mar 2026: 8pm**

**GREYFRIARS KIRK, EDINBURGH**

**Rachmaninov** All-Night Vigil (Vespers)

**Stephen Doughty** Conductor

**RSNO Chorus**

**Paul Whittaker** BSL Performer\*



**Sat 7 Mar 2026: 8pm**

**ST ALOYSIUS' CHURCH, GLASGOW\***

Book online at

**rsno.org.uk**



# Royal Scottish National Orchestra



Formed in 1891, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) plays an integral part in Scotland's musical life, with regular concerts in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Perth and Inverness. The Orchestra's artistic team is led by Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård, who was appointed Music Director in 2018.

The RSNO is supported by the Scottish Government and is one of Scotland's five National Performing Companies. The Orchestra appears regularly at the Edinburgh International

Festival and the BBC Proms, and has made recent tours to the USA, China and Europe.

The RSNO believes music can enrich lives, and aims to inspire, educate and entertain people throughout Scotland and beyond with its performances, recordings and engagement programmes. Supporting schools, families, young professionals and wider communities, the RSNO delivers high-quality initiatives for all ages and abilities.

## RSNO Youth Chorus

The RSNO Youth Chorus is one of the leading children and youth choirs in the UK. Formed in 1978 by Jean Kidd, the Youth Chorus is currently led by director Patrick Barrett and boasts over 400 members aged 7 to 18. It has built up a considerable reputation singing under some of the world's most distinguished conductors and appearing on radio and television.

RSNO Youth Chorus members sing regularly with Scotland's National Orchestra in major concert halls and festivals throughout the country, and in

2021 performed at COP26 in Glasgow. The Youth Chorus has also sung at BBC concerts and regularly appears at the Edinburgh International Festival.

The RSNO Youth Chorus gratefully acknowledges support from **Dunclay Charitable Trust**, **Rowena Alison Goffin Charitable Trust**, **W A Cargill Fund** and **W M Mann Foundation**.

# Stephen Doughty

## Conductor



Stephen Doughty has been Chorus Director of the RSNO Chorus since the start of the 2022:23 Season. Since his arrival the Chorus has seen an influx of new members, and an abundance of varied and critically acclaimed performances, including Verdi's *Requiem*, Britten's *War Requiem*, Bruckner's E Minor Mass and the Scottish premiere of Sir James MacMillan's *Christmas Oratorio*. He has also directed the Chorus in new and imaginative programmes in their own right, including Rheinberger's Mass in E flat for double choir, and concerts with percussion and organ featuring Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, the European premiere of McIntyre's *Missa Brevis* and Ives' final major choral work, *Psalm 90*.

Stephen's previous 12-year tenure as Chorus Master of Belfast Philharmonic Choir included a number of world premieres, most significantly James Whitbourn's *The Seven Heavens* and Philip Hammond's *Requiem for the Lost Souls of the Titanic*, performed exactly 100 years since the liner went down, and further European premieres of both Stuart Scott's *Requiem Brevis*, which saw

the 100-strong choir separated into eight choirs spaced around the audience, and Christopher Marshall's *Earthsong*.

Stephen particularly enjoys working with amateur singers, not least leading regular singing days frequently involving up to 800 amateur singers. He was Musical Director of Edinburgh Bach Choir for seven years and has enjoyed directing the Garleton Singers for over 30 years, performing with them recently at the Lammermuir Festival.

Stephen plays harpsichord/organ continuo and orchestral piano and has given frequent organ recitals, including several on the grand Mulholland Organ in the Ulster Hall, Belfast. He is also in demand as an arranger and orchestrator, with a large portfolio of work particularly for young voices. He has produced a plethora of arrangements of the music of pianist Christopher Norton, including two publications of piano duets and a suite for wind sextet, and has received commissions from Children's Classic Concerts, the Ulster Orchestra and the RSNO. Commissions from the BBC have seen his work being performed on BBC Alba and at the Last Night of the Proms, and his pieces feature on several recordings, including with the RSNO Chorus.

Stephen is an Examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music.

# RSNO

## **FIRST VIOLIN**

Igor Yuzefovich  
LEADER  
Shlomy Dobrinsky  
ASSOCIATE LEADER  
Tamás Fejes  
ASSISTANT LEADER  
Patrick Curlett  
Liam Lynch  
Veronica Marziano  
Susannah Lowdon  
Elizabeth Bamping  
Lorna Rough  
Joana Rodriguez  
Alan Manson  
Ursula Heidecker Allen  
Sharon Haslam  
Freya Hall

## **SECOND VIOLIN**

Marion Wilson  
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL  
Nigel Mason  
Paul Medd  
Anne Bünemann  
Sophie Lang  
Robin Wilson  
Kirstin Drew  
Colin McKee  
Helena Rose  
John Robinson  
Helena Quispe  
Sophie Hamilton

## **VIOLA**

Felix Tanner  
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL  
Asher Zaccardelli  
Susan Buchan  
Nicola McWhirter  
Claire Dunn  
Maria Trittinger  
Francesca Hunt  
Beth Woodford  
Elaine Koene  
David McCreadie

## **CELLO**

Pei-Jee Ng  
PRINCIPAL  
Betsy Taylor  
Yuuki Bouterey-Ishido  
Sarah Digger  
Rachael Lee  
Robert Anderson  
Gunda Baranauskaitė  
Joseph Donmall

## **DOUBLE BASS**

Nikita Naumov  
PRINCIPAL  
Michael Rae  
Moray Jones  
Alexandre Cruz dos Santos  
Olaya Garcia Alvarez  
George Podkolzin

## **FLUTE**

Katherine Bryan  
PRINCIPAL  
Oliver Roberts  
Janet Richardson  
PRINCIPAL PICCOLO

## **OBOE**

Adrian Wilson  
PRINCIPAL  
Peter Dykes  
Henry Clay  
PRINCIPAL COR ANGLAIS

## **CLARINET**

Timothy Orpen  
PRINCIPAL  
William Knight  
Duncan Swindells  
PRINCIPAL BASS CLARINET

## **BASSOON**

Tom Donkin  
GUEST PRINCIPAL  
Rebecca Roberts  
Paolo Dutto  
PRINCIPAL CONTRABASSOON

## **HORN**

Amadea Dazeley-Gaist  
PRINCIPAL  
Alison Murray  
Andrew McLean  
David McClenaghan  
Martin Murphy

## **TRUMPET**

Christopher Hart  
PRINCIPAL  
Katie Bannister  
Mark Elvis

## **TROMBONE**

Dávur Juul Magnussen  
PRINCIPAL  
Cillian Ó Ceallaigh  
Alastair Sinclair  
PRINCIPAL BASS TROMBONE

## **TUBA**

John Whitener  
PRINCIPAL

## **TIMPANI**

Adrian Bending  
GUEST PRINCIPAL

## **PERCUSSION**

Simon Lowdon  
PRINCIPAL  
Tom Hunter  
Phil Hague  
Stuart Semple  
Colin Hyson  
Catriona Duncan

## **HARP**

Pippa Tunnell

## **PIANO/CELESTE**

Hebba Benyaghla  
Edward Cohen

# Youth Chorus 1

Aarnav Bhaat  
Anna Davis  
Ayva Kyle  
Bernadette Xin-Ying Kho  
Bronagh McKnight  
Bushan Gaddale  
Cara Thomson  
Catrin Ogle  
Colette Balmer  
Daisy Quinn  
Elise Job  
Elishka Foster  
Eunice Oyedokun  
Faith Junyen Wong  
Fiamma Milligan  
Forbes Louden  
Gabriella Mills  
Grace Nickson  
Grace Romans  
Honor Osmond  
Ingrid McGilvary  
Joy Lam  
Kiaan Kadwe

Kirsty McLean  
Layan Shaaban  
Lilianna Nemeth  
Lucia Fernandez-McCann  
Melissa Maffia  
Molly Kerr  
Neave MacLachlan  
Nethra Mantrala  
Netra Gaikwad  
Olivia Tang  
Osazee Orhionkapayo  
Penelope Leithead  
Rachel Ayers  
Rebecca Penman  
Rhea Elizabeth Oommen  
Rita El Obbadi  
Rory Cameron  
Saffron Spybey  
Sofia Jorge  
Sophie Waller  
Yiyi Myler  
Zach Baxter  
Zara Patel

## CONDUCTOR

Alison McNeill

## PIANIST

Edward Cohen

## RSNO CHORUS VOCAL COACH

Polly Beck



# RSNO

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL  
ORCHESTRA

Recommended by  
**CLASSIC** fm

# Season Finale Ode to Joy

**EDINBURGH**

FRI 12 JUN: 7.30pm

**GLASGOW**

SAT 13 JUN: 7.30pm

**Mendelssohn** The Hebrides Overture  
Fingal's Cave

**Sir James MacMillan** Three Scottish Songs  
**Beethoven** Symphony No9 Choral

**Patrick Hahn** Conductor

**Eleanor Dennis** Soprano

**Karen Cargill** Mezzo-soprano

**Joshua Ellicott** Tenor

**Andrew Hamilton** Bass

**RSNO Chorus**

**Stephen Doughty** Director, RSNO Chorus

**Paul Whittaker** BSL Performer



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