



RSNO

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL
ORCHESTRA

RSNO Chorus *All-Night Vigil*

Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh
Fri 6 Mar 2026 8pm

St Aloysius' Church, Glasgow
Sat 7 Mar 8pm

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RSNO Chorus

All-Night Vigil

Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh Fri 6 Mar 2026 8pm

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Luminous, serene and rooted in a profound and quiet faith, Rachmaninov's *All-Night Vigil* was the composition he loved the most. It gave its composer 'an hour of the most complete satisfaction', and every performance creates a quite unmistakable atmosphere. For RSNO Chorus Director Stephen Doughty it's a labour of love; this is music that glows in the dark, and in the beautiful surroundings of two historic churches, it will speak straight to the heart – and soul.

RACHMANINOV All-Night Vigil Op37 [65']
Sung in Russian

RSNO Chorus
Stephen Doughty Conductor
Paul Whittaker BSL Performer (*Glasgow Only*)

If viewing these notes at the concert, please do so considerately and not during performances.

Please silence all mobile telephones and alerts, and refrain from taking photographs, without flash, until the end of each piece.

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

All-Night Vigil

Op37



FIRST PERFORMANCE

Moscow, 23 March 1915

DURATION 65 minutes

Rachmaninov's *All-Night Vigil* is one of only two compositions which he scored for unaccompanied chorus, the other being the *Liturgy of St John Chrysostom* (1910). Dating from 1915 and composed within just two weeks, the *All-Night Vigil* is structured in 15 sections, all settings of texts chosen from the Russian Orthodox All-Night Vigil ceremony. Ten of the 15 sections are based on Russian Orthodox chants, while the other five (1, 3, 6, 10 and 11) are so influenced by chant that the composer self-deprecatingly described them as 'conscious counterfeits'. Here he wrote new melodies in the style and spirit of the old chants, very pure and direct and often using stepwise motion. Equally, many of his orchestral and chamber works include melodies similarly influenced by the stepwise motion characteristic of chant: two examples are the first theme of his Third Piano Concerto and the very opening of his Third Symphony.

The name 'Vespers' which is sometimes applied to the *All-Night Vigil* is inaccurate, because only the first six movements or sections are settings of texts from the Russian Orthodox canonical hour of Vespers, the remaining nine relating to Matins, the jubilant celebration of Christ's Resurrection. This combined service of Vespers and Matins is held in the Orthodox church every Saturday night and on the eve of important liturgical feasts. Tchaikovsky had composed his own setting of the *All-Night Vigil* in 1882, also using some of the same chants, but Rachmaninov's is harmonically richer.

The low register of Russian basses is justly famous. The end of the fifth section demands of them a downward scale extending to a low B flat. Rachmaninov recalled that when he was preparing the premiere (given by an all-male choir) the conductor Nikolai Danilin worried: 'Now where on earth are we to find such basses? They are as rare as asparagus at Christmas!' Nevertheless, as the composer remembered: '... he did find them. I knew the voices of my countrymen.' However, his use of this lowest register is sparing, intelligently reserved for climaxes.

As Francis Maes has written in *A History of Russian Music*:

No composition represents the end of an era so clearly as this liturgical work. Once Tchaikovsky had broken the monopoly of the Court Chapel in St Petersburg, Orthodox liturgical music enjoyed a brief blossoming period in Moscow, to disappear abruptly with the advent of the [Russian] Revolution.

Rachmaninov's *All-Night Vigil* is considered among his very greatest works, combining fervour and radiance.

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Deacon (**Ken Allen**): Blessed Master
 Priest (**Andy Clifford**): Glory to the Holy,
 Consubstantial, life-creating, and Undivided
 Trinity, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.
 Chorus: Amen

1.
 Come, let us worship God, our King.
 Come, let us worship and fall down
 before Christ, our King and our God.
 Come, let us worship and fall down
 before Christ Himself, our King and our God.
 Come, let us worship and fall down before Him.

2.
 Deacon (**Ken Allen**): Bless the Lord, O my soul
 Chorus: Amen
 Soloist: **Esther MacMillan**

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
 blessed art Thou, O Lord.
 O Lord my God, Thou art very great.
 Blessed art Thou, O Lord.
 Thou art clothed with honour and majesty.
 Blessed art Thou, O Lord.
 The waters stand upon the mountains.
 Marvellous are Thy works, O Lord.
 The waters flow between the hills.
 Marvellous are Thy works, O Lord.
 In wisdom hast Thou made all things.
 Glory to Thee, O Lord, who hast created all!

3.
 Chant: **Ruth Townsend** (Fri); **Jenny Cheung** (Sat)

Blessed is the man, who walks not in the counsel
 of the wicked.
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
 For the Lord knows the ways of the righteous,
 but the way of the wicked will perish. Alleluia ...
 Serve the Lord with fear
 and rejoice in him with trembling. Alleluia ...
 Blessed are all who take refuge in Him.
 Arise, O Lord! Save me, O my God! Alleluia ...
 Salvation is of the Lord;

and Thy blessing is upon Thy people. Alleluia ...
 Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the
 Holy Spirit,
 both now and for ever and unto ages of ages.
 Amen.
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, glory to Thee, O God!

4.
 Soloist: **Calum Lowe**

Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the Immortal
 One –
 the Heavenly Father, holy and blessed –
 O Jesus Christ!
 Now that we have come to the setting of the
 sun,
 and behold the light of evening,
 we praise the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – God.
 Thou art worthy at every moment
 to be praised in hymns by reverent voices.
 O Son of God, Thou art the Giver of Life;
 therefore all the world glorifies Thee.

5.
 Chant: **Lorna Robertson** (Fri);
Amelie Masters (Sat)
 Soloist: **Alex Rankine**

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant
 depart in peace, according to Thy word,
 for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,
 which Thou hast prepared before the face of all
 people –
 a light to enlighten the Gentiles,
 and the glory of Thy people Israel.

6.
 Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos,
 Mary full of grace, the Lord is with Thee.
 Blessed art Thou among women,
 and blessed is the Fruit of Thy womb,
 for Thou hast borne the Saviour of our souls.

7.

Chant: **Anne Murphy**

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace,
good will among men.
O Lord, open Thou my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim Thy praise.

8.

Praise the name of the Lord. Alleluia.
Praise the Lord, O you his Servants. Alleluia,
alleluia.
Blessed be the Lord from Zion,
He who dwells in Jerusalem. Alleluia.
O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good.
Alleluia, alleluia.
For His mercy endures forever. Alleluia.
O give thanks unto the God of Heaven.
Alleluia, alleluia.
For His mercy endures forever. Alleluia.

9.

Chant: **Findlay Peters** (Fri); **Keith Thomasson** (Sat)
Soloists: **Robert Paterson, Nathan Dunsmore**

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.

The angelic host was filled with awe,
when it saw Thee among the dead.
By destroying the power of death, O Saviour,
Thou didst raise Adam, and save all men from
hell!

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.

In the tomb the radiant angel cried to the
myrrhbearers:
'Why do you women mingle with your tears?
Look at the tomb and understand!
The Saviour is risen from the dead!'

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.

Very early in the morning
the myrrhbearers ran with sorrow to Thy tomb,
but an Angel came to them and said:
'The time for sorrow has come to an end!
Do not weep, but announce the resurrection to
the apostles!'

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.

The myrrhbearers were sorrowful
as they neared Thy tomb,
but the Angel said to them:
'Why do you number the living among the dead?
Since He is God, He is risen from the tomb!'

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the
Holy Spirit.

We worship the Father, and His Son, and the Holy
Spirit:
the Holy Trinity, one in essence!
We cry with the Seraphim:
'Holy, Holy, Holy art Thou, O Lord!'

Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Since Thou didst give birth to the Giver of Life, O
Virgin,
Thou didst deliver Adam from his sin!
Thou gavest joy to Eve instead of sadness!
The God-man who was born of Thee
has restored to life those who had fallen from it!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Glory to Thee, O God!

10.

Having beheld the resurrection of Christ,
let us worship the holy Lord Jesus,
the only Sinless One.
We venerate Thy cross, O Christ,
and we hymn and glorify Thy holy resurrection,
for Thou art our God, and we know no other than
Thee;

we call on Thy name.
 Come, all you faithful,
 let us venerate Christ's holy resurrection.
 For, behold, through the cross
 joy has come into all the world.
 Ever blessing the Lord,
 let us praise His resurrection,
 for by enduring the cross for us,
 He has destroyed death by death.

11.

Chant: **Ruby Ginoris**

My soul magnifies the Lord,
 and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.

Refrain:

More honourable than the Cherubim
 and more glorious beyond compare than the
 Seraphim,
 without defilement Thou gavest birth
 to God the Word,
 try Theotokos, we magnify Thee.
 For he has regarded the low estate of His
 handmaiden.
 For behold, henceforth all generations will call
 me blessed.

For He who is mighty has done great things for
 me,
 and holy is His name, and His mercy is on those
 who fear Him from generation to generation ...

He has put down the mighty from their thrones,
 and has exalted those of low degree;
 He has filled the hungry with
 good things, and the rich He has sent empty
 away.

He has helped His servant Israel,
 in remembrance of His mercy,
 as He spoke to our fathers,
 to Abraham and to his posterity forever.

12.

Chant: **Lauren Hadley**

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,
 Good will toward men.

We praise Thee, we bless Thee,
 we worship Thee, we glorify Thee,
 we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory.
 O Lord, Heavenly King, God the Father almighty.
 O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ
 and the Holy Spirit.

O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
 who takest away the sin of the world, have
 mercy on us.

Thou who takest away the sin of the world,
 receive our prayer.

Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father,
 have mercy on us.

For Thou art holy,
 Thou alone art the Lord, Jesus Christ,
 to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Every day I will bless Thee
 and praise Thy name forever and ever.
 Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without
 sin.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, God of our fathers,
 and praised and glorified is Thy name forever.
 Amen.

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us,
 as we have set our hope on Thee.
 Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.
 Lord, Thou hast been our refuge
 from generation to generation.

I said: Lord, have mercy on me,
 heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.
 Lord, I flee to Thee,
 teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God;
 for with Thee is the fountain of life,
 and in Thy light we shall see light.

Continue Thy mercy on those who know Thee.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal,
have mercy on us.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the
Holy Spirit,
both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.
Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.
Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal,
have mercy on us.

13.

Chant: **Nathan Dunsmore**

Today salvation has come to the world.
Let us sing to Him who rose from the dead,
the Author of our life.
Having destroyed death by death,
He has given us the victory and great mercy.

14.

Thou didst rise from the tomb and burst the
bonds of Hades!
Thou didst destroy the condemnation of death,
O Lord,
releasing all mankind from the snares of the
enemy!
Thou didst show Thyself to Thine apostles,
and didst send them forth to proclaim Thee;
and through them Thou has granted Thy peace
to the world,
O Thou who art plenteous in mercy!

15.

Chant: **Laurie Nelson**

To Thee, the victorious Leader of triumphant
hosts,
we Thy servants, delivered from evil,
offer hymns of thanksgiving,
O Theotokos!
Since Thou dost possess invincible might,
set us free from all calamities,
so that we may cry to Thee:
'Rejoice, O unwedded Bride!'

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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, *Psalms 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.

Paul Whittaker

BSL Performer



Paul Whittaker was born in Huddersfield in 1964 and has been deaf all his life. After being awarded a music degree from Wadham College Oxford and a postgraduate diploma from the Royal Northern College of Music, he founded Music and the Deaf, a charity he ran for 27 years before leaving to pursue a freelance career.

Paul has signed many shows and concerts across the UK, and performed with The King's Singers, Voces 8, Tenebrae, Children's Classic Concerts, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and at many festivals, including the Cumnock Tryst and the BBC Proms. He previously signed with the RSNO for the Scottish premiere of Sir James MacMillan's *Christmas Oratorio* in November 2023, and the New Year 2026 performance of Handel's *Messiah*.

Paul was awarded an OBE for services to music in 2007 and continues to promote music and deafness wherever possible.

RSNO Chorus



The RSNO Chorus performs in around six different programmes in up to 20 concerts across Scotland with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra each year. The RSNO Chorus has also had great success in recording with the Orchestra. Its recordings, among others, of Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*, conducted by Neeme Järvi, and Holst's *The Planets*, conducted by David Lloyd-Jones, have both attracted high critical acclaim.

In addition to its commitment to the Orchestra, the RSNO Chorus performs independently and has been invited to perform with orchestras in many parts of the world, establishing an international status and touring to Copenhagen, Hong Kong, Israel, Germany, Belfast, Australia, Trondheim, Amsterdam, Prague and, most recently, Budapest, performing with the MAV Orchestra in the Liszt Academy and Matthias Church, directed by Stephen Doughty. In 2018 it performed Britten's

War Requiem with the RSNO at the BBC Proms, joining the Orchestra again in the Royal Albert Hall in 2024 for Classic FM Live.

The RSNO Chorus evolved from a choir formed in 1843 to sing the first full performance of Handel's *Messiah* in Scotland. Today it is one of the most successful choruses in the UK. In recent years it has performed practically every work in the standard choral repertoire along with contemporary works by renowned composers, including John Adams, Magnus Lindberg, Howard Shore and, most recently, the critically acclaimed Scottish Premiere of Sir James MacMillan's *Christmas Oratorio*.

The RSNO Chorus is directed by Stephen Doughty, who was appointed to the role at the start of the 2022:23 Season.

SOPRANO 1

Alison Blair
 Alison Pryce-Jones
 Becky Ward
 Caroline Cradock
 Catherine Taylor
 Charlotte McKechnie
 Heather Keating
 Joan Lacy
 Joanna Beaton
 Karman Leung
 Katherine Szumowski
 Mhairi Hendry
 Miriam MacDonald
 Morven MacDonald
 Rhona Christie
 Roberta Yule
 Sarah Greer
 Seonaid Eadie

SOPRANO 2

Amelie Masters
 Beth Kean
 Carole Sim Sayce
 Eleanor Gaskell
 Elspeth Waugh
 Frances Kennedy
 Helen Hyland
 Jennifer Stoddart
 Jenny Cheung
 Judith Pexton
 Kate Adams
 Katie Dew
 Laura Gorman
 Leila Inglis
 Lorna Robertson
 Lynsey Brook
 Lynsey Scott
 Mairi Therese Cleary
 Ruby Ginoris
 Sally Sandground
 Theresa Hoare

ALTO 1

Ailie MacDougall
 Angela McDonald
 Anne Browning
 Anne Murphy
 Anne Thies
 Brenda Williamson
 Catriona Eadie
 Esther McMillan
 Fiona Murray
 Fiona Taylor

Harriet Skipworth
 Julia Haddow
 Julia King
 June Thomas
 Laura Macdonald
 Lauren Hadley
 Linda McLauchlan
 Louise Reid
 Marita McMillan
 Marrian Murray
 Mary Taylor
 Maureen McCroskie
 Ruth Townsend
 Siobhán Rodger
 Sophy Ying
 Steve Halfyard
 Uta Engelbrecht

ALTO 2

Alison Bryce
 Ann Firth
 Anne Newlands
 Carol Leddy
 Catharine Perrin
 Denny Henderson
 Eleanor McLaren
 Elizabeth Scobie
 Elizabeth Stevenson
 Gillian Downie
 Jane Stansfield
 Janette Morrison
 Martha Colvin
 Moira Allingham
 Sonja Crossan

TENOR 1

Alex Rankine
 Andrew Clifford
 Calum Lowe
 David Miller
 Nathan Dunsmore

TENOR 2

Alex Jamieson
 Cosma Gottardi
 George Lloyd
 Graham Parsonage
 John Harvey
 Kerr Noble
 Laurie Nelson
 Robert Paterson
 Sandy Eadie
 Stuart Tait

BASS 1

Alistair Laird
 Andrew Lyons
 Andrew Matheson
 Fraser Dalziel
 Ian MacKay
 Keith Thomasson
 Mark Higginson
 Mark Millington
 Martin Engelbrecht
 Peter McMahan
 Peter Saunders
 Robin Watson
 Stephen Penman
 Stuart Corkindale
 Toby Reed

BASS 2

Alan Maxwell
 Anton Atlas
 Brian Watt
 Chris Morris
 Chris Spencer
 Findlay Peters
 Graeme Simpson
 Ian Gray
 John MacLellan
 Kenneth Allen
 Melvyn Davies
 Richard Goldie
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 Stewart McMillan
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DIRECTOR**

Stephen Doughty

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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

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