

exmoor singers of london
music director **james jarvis**

biography

James Jarvis' involvement in music-making developed while he was studying physics at Imperial College, London, where he helped found a chamber choir later known as Exmoor Singers of London. In 1983 he began conducting the group and was subsequently appointed its music director, steering the group from its days singing in student halls through to its current position as one of the UK's finest amateur choirs. Since 1996 James has also been founder-director of Giltspur Chamber Choir, in the City of London.

Exmoor Singers and James undertake a busy and varied schedule and regularly perform in prestigious venues in London and further afield - most recently in the Purcell Room of the South Bank Centre. Other recent performances have included concerts at St. John's, Smith Square, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, the National Portrait Gallery and King's College, Cambridge. The choir regularly performs with period instrument ensemble Charivari Agréable – most recently for a performance of Mozart's Requiem.

The group's '*sounds: voices of our time*' programme commenced in 2001 to promote the music of living composers through dedicated concerts and recordings, and new commissions. The first concert in the '*sounds*' programme was given in 2002 in the Purcell Room and received a four-star review in *The Times*. Recordings from a new CD '*CURTAIN*' - as the first of a trilogy of recordings evolving from '*sounds*' - have featured on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM. For the latter, the choir was chosen as the first amateur choir to have recordings broadcast on '*Full Works*'.

In October 2007 the choir undertook a live collaboration with rock group *Bloc Party* for the BBC *Electric Proms* - performing special arrangements of *Bloc Party* songs with the band in front of some 3,000 fans at the Camden Roundhouse, with broadcasts on BBC2 television and BBC Radio 1. Members of the choir have also performed live with rock group *Snow Patrol* on '*LATER ... With Jools Holland*' on BBC2. The choir features on the albums '*Intimacy*' by *Bloc Party* and '*A Hundred Million Suns*' by *Snow Patrol*.

Other recording projects include *Songs of Praise* for BBC1 television, a BBC documentary on Handel's *Messiah* with Howard Goodall, a commissioned recording for *Private Passions* on BBC Radio 3, a documentary soundtrack on The Crusades, an art-sound installation on Orford Ness, Suffolk, for The National Trust, and two CDs for The Tablet magazine, '*My Kind of Hymn*' and '*My Kind of Carol*'.

Accolades awarded James and the choir include Sainsbury's Mixed Voice Choir of the Year 1998, overall winners of the Sligo International Choral Festival 2001, and winners in the North Wales Choir Festival 2003.

As hosts of the *Tallis Festival*, Exmoor Singers has commissioned two new 40-part works to be written as companion pieces to Thomas Tallis' 40-part motet '*Spem in alium*'. The second Festival Commission, '*Love you big as the sky*' by Peter McGarr, was given its first performance in 2007. BBC Radio 3 broadcast the entire work and made a major feature of the Festival in its flagship choral programme '*The Choir*'.