

THE CHOIR OF ST. PAUL'S RESIDENCY AT WELLS CATHEDRAL



After three years of preparations and a farewell weekend of three services at St. Paul's, the Choir of St. Paul's journeyed to England to be in residence from Monday, July 18 through Sunday, July 24, 2022 at Wells Cathedral.

This magnificent Anglican cathedral dates from 1175, the first English cathedral built entirely in the Gothic style. Twenty-three singers from the Choir

of St. Paul's (6 current Choir School students ages 10-16, 4 Choir School alumni and 13 adult Chancel Choir members) journeyed with the director, organist and a chaperone. The choir sang for six services of Evensong and the Sunday morning Choral Eucharist at Wells Cathedral.



On the bus ride from Heathrow Airport to Wells in SW England, the choir visited Stonehenge. On Tuesday morning, the choir enjoyed an excursion to the exquisite Stourhead Gardens, despite record high temperatures, and on Friday toured the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey and hiked to the Glastonbury Tor.



On Tuesday evening, the choir made an impromptu recording of the Evensong anthem in the spectacular acoustic of the

Chapter House of Wells Cathedral, and performed midday concerts at Berkeley Castle (www.berkeley-castle.com) on Wednesday and the Chapel of the Bishop's Palace (<https://bishopspalace.org.uk>) on Saturday. The Wells Cathedral campus neighbors the exquisite grounds of the moated Bishop's Palace. The choir visited the gardens at the palace on Thursday, and enjoyed a Friends of Music Dinner there on Friday evening generously underwritten by a member of the choir.

Repertoire included 22 composers (12 women and 10 men; from Fanny Hensel and Charles Villiers Stanford to Margaret Burk and Ēriks Ešenvalds) in 12 anthems (including one new commission), 6 canticles, 1 mass setting, and 9 Anglican Chant. The choir sang 40 hymn stanzas and chanted 84 psalm verses, the latter in the Coverdale translation from 1539 included in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* through to the *Book of Common Prayer* in use in England today.



One of the highlights of the week was the attendance of Philadelphia-based Australian native Melissa Dunphy for the English premiere of her *Magnificat and Nunc dimittis* on Friday evening, commissioned for the residency through the Marcia McCowin Estate Fund. Melissa and her husband also attended the Friday Friends of Music dinner during which she had engaging discussion with the Choir School students. A portrait was drawn by UK-based Dutch artist Margit van der Zwan from a photo by Nick Akers of Melissa Dunphy in the Wells Quire, and the framed print has been added to the choir room composer timeline.



You may learn more and listen to videos by visiting Music at St. Paul's on FB, Instagram, and YouTube. A Wells Residency Report will follow the Sunday, September 25th Evensong, featuring a video and singers offering highlights of their experience.

The Choir of St. Paul's is deeply grateful for the amazing support of the parish of St. Paul's that made this residency possible.