

Stephen Cleobury CBE Director of Music, Choir of King's College, Cambridge

This is Stephen Cleobury's final season at King's, as he is due to retire as Director of the Choir of King's College, Cambridge in the summer of 2019. By then he will have completed 36 years at the College – longer than the innings of his two predecessors, Sir David Willcocks and Sir Philip Ledger, put together.

Like David and Philip before him, he was conscious of inheriting an outstanding choir and he has made it his life's work not only to maintain the Choir's high reputation but to build upon their work, keeping King's at the forefront of technological innovation, developing its activities in broadcasting, recording and touring, commissioning new music from leading composers to ensure that the tradition of choral music remains a living one and, above all, never settling for anything less than the highest standards of performance.

He introduced the annual festival, Easter at King's, from which the BBC regularly broadcasts, and, in its wake, a series of high-profile performances throughout the year, Concerts at King's. A particularly enjoyable aspect of his role at King's has been the relationships he has built up over the years with leading orchestras and soloists, among them the Philharmonia, the BBC Concert Orchestra, the Hanover Band, the Academy of Ancient Music, the Britten Sinfonia and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

During his time many outstanding musicians have passed through King's Choir and many now are prominent in the profession. His former choral scholars can be found singing roles in the world's foremost opera houses and conducting leading orchestras, and a number of cathedral and collegiate choirs are directed by his former organ scholars. Stephen is delighted that one of these, Daniel Hyde, is returning to King's as his successor.

He has always complemented and refreshed his work in Cambridge through the many other musical activities in which he engages. From 1995 to 2007 he was Chief Conductor of the BBC Singers and is now Conductor Laureate. He was much praised for creating an integrated choral sound from this group of first-class professional singers and for the many premieres he conducted. In Cambridge he has nurtured generations of young musicians during his many years as Conductor of the Cambridge University Music Society, one of the oldest music societies in the world; he became the Society's first Conductor Laureate in 2016.

Working with so many generations of singers of the Choir of King's College, Cambridge has been an enormous privilege, but it has entailed daily morning rehearsals with the boys of the choir at the College's school and almost daily rehearsals and services with the full choir in the Chapel, as well as many tours and concert engagements. Stephen hopes now to have much more time for his freelance work beyond Cambridge, both as an active organ recitalist and as a conductor.

He is a past President of the Royal College of Organists and is currently President of the Friends of Cathedral Music. He was appointed CBE in 2009 and received an honorary doctorate from the University of York earlier this year.

stephencleobury.com

Stephen Cleobury is represented by Edition Peters Artist Management. Please contact Robin Tyson at robin.tyson@editionpeters.com for further information.

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