

SHAKESPEARE IN MUSIC FESTIVAL

20-23 April 2026

www.shakespeareinmusic.org

SHAKESPEARE IN MUSIC FESTIVAL







Our Patrons: Jane Glover Robert Lloyd Roderick Williams

Festival Administrator for the second SIM Festival is Amanda Laidler, assisted by a team of local volunteers who you will meet in Stratford-upon-Avon at the Festival in April.

This brochure highlights close to fifty artists who will perform in a dozen varied events over the four days of the Festival. They range from opera to play-reading, from harp to organ, through solo, duet and ensemble singing from a repertoire that stretches from the Renaissance to Rap. And there are four illustrated talks on related musical subjects that instruct as well as entertain.

We all look forward to seeing you in Stratford from Monday April 20th to Shakespeare's Birthday, Thursday April 23rd.

The Trustees of the Second Shakespeare in Music Festival

Martyn Bond, Michael Dobson, Siri Fischer Hansen
Paul Higgins, Bruce O'Neil and Tim Raistrick

Festival at a glance

Monday 20th April

10am - Shakespeare Songs, Ancient & Modern - The Painted Fall
12.30pm - The Sweet Power of Music - Bruce O'Neil
3pm - Elizabethan and Jacobean Madrigals - The Arcadian Singers
7.30pm - Two Dark Ladies of the Sonnets

Tuesday 21st April

10am - Songs from Shakespeare - William Drakett
12.30pm - Shakespeare's Drinking Songs - Jen Waghorn
3pm - Shakespearean Music for 'Broken Consort' - Bloomsbury Baroque Ensemble
7.30pm - From Shakespeare to Shearing - The Stratford Chamber Choir

Wednesday 22nd April

10am - Songs for Countertenor - Benjamin Irvine-Capel
12.30pm - Composers, Actors, Orchestras - Sir Laurence Olivier & William Walton's Shakespeare Scores - Michael Dobson
3pm - 'All Fancy Sick I Am for Love' - Shakespearean Revival in the 18th Century - Bloomsbury Baroque Ensemble
7.30pm - Love, Fate & Fire: Arias from the Shakespeare Operatic Legacy - Rose Opera Singers

Thursday 23rd April (Shakespeare's Birthday)

10am - 'Facets of Time' - Music for Lute & Tenor from Shakespeare's Age - Dowland's Foundry
12.30pm - Shakespeare and Rap - Devon Glover (The Sonnet Man)
3pm - A Celebration of Shakespeare's Birthday in Song
First Award of the Fischer Fund Prize for best new Shakespeare Song composed in 2025
7.30pm - Annual Shakespeare Organ Recital - Rachel Mahon

BOOK TICKETS

https://www.tickettailor.com/events/shakespeareinmusic

MONDAY 20 APRIL

TIME: 10.00 -11.00 **VENUE:** United Reformed Church

Shakespeare Songs, Ancient & Modern
The Painted Fall

In The Painted Fall, Imogen Emmett and Laura Moisey Gray combine harp, viola and voice to politely take the mothballs off the Bard, linking the songs of Shakespeare's day with contemporary re-takes on similar themes, putting Morley and Dowland alongside Taylor Swift and Elvis. It highlights classics and polishes up contemporary composers with delightful delicacy.

Both performers trained initially at Trinity Laban Conservatoire and between them have a wonderfully diverse range of performances – at King's Place, Cadogan Hall, the Royal Albert Hall, the Southbank Centre, Ronnie Scott's and the Theatre Royal. And now they add the Shakespeare in Music Festival in Stratford.



TIME: 12.30 -13.30 **VENUE:** United Reformed Church

"The Sweet Power of Music"
Bruce O'Neil

Bruce O'Neil is the former Head of Music for the Royal Shakespeare Company. He was Music Director & Supervisor for over 50 RSC productions, including their global hit *Matilda*, and *Shakespeare Live!*, a BBC TV live broadcast from the Royal Shakespeare Theatre marking the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death in 2016, which was nominated for a BAFTA Television award.



Since 2013 he has been Music Supervisor of the RSC's Music & Speech recordings, comprising music commissioned by the RSC for every Shakespeare play, including scores composed for the recent survey through the canon between 2013 – 2022 as well as music held at Shakespeare Birthplace Trust archive, composed for productions in Stratford throughout the 20th Century.

TIME: 15.00 -16.00 **VENUE:** United Reformed Church

Elizabethan and Jacobean Madrigals
The Arcadian Singers
directed by Gerard Lim



Gerard Lim is an international award-winning conductor, who has worked with many choirs, including the BBC Singers. He holds an MMus from the RAM and also from the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory in Singapore.

Prior to moving to the UK, Gerard was for nine years director of music for a church choir and conducted several masses for the Archdiocese of Singapore. He is also co-founder of Chroma, a Singapore collective of singers presenting thematic choral programmes.

Gerard was conducting scholar at Westminster Cathedral from 2023-2024 and now conducts the Westminster Cathedral Junior Voices. He is Music Director of the London Concord Singers as well as the The Arcadian Singers of Oxford.

Founded in 1976 as a madrigal choir, The Arcadian Singers are Oxford's premier independent chamber choir, providing a platform for young singers and excellent music-making. The choir participates in a wide range of musical ventures both in and outside the city. Its programming is both innovative and eclectic, ranging from early to contemporary choral music and including commissioned works by both young and established composers.

The choir has recorded three successful CDs, premiered several contemporary works, broadcast on BBC Radio 3, and organised regular tours abroad. As well as performing in the many churches and college chapels in Oxfordshire, it has sung services at St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey.



Two Dark Ladies of the Sonnets

TIME: 19.30 - 21:30 **VENUE:** Holy Trinity Church

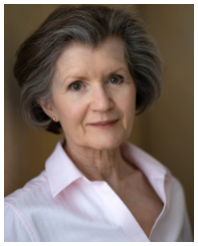


George Bernard Shaw put Shakespeare on stage in his play *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets,* and so did Philip Hagemann in his opera of the same name. Murray Rosenthal arranged the lyrics for the opera and – incidentally – became vice-chair of the Shaw Society along the way. He comes from New York with three Tony Awards from Broadway for production to his credit, as well as a distinguished earlier career in dentistry that taught him more about the vocal cords more vital for stage performance than you probably want to know. Murray directs the opera with Paul Beech directing the play.



Paul has a passion for both Shakespeare and Shaw, fostered by fine productions of all of Shakespeare's and many of Shaw's plays. Even before he became a professional actor he directed three Shakespeare favourites - *The Comedy of Errors, King John* and *Titus Andronicus*, the latter with a cast of over 100 enthusiastic students. His major professional Shakespeare performance was as King Lear in a Jonathan Miller production of the play, and among his Shaw performances as The Emperor in *Androcles and the Lion*.

First the Actors, then the Singers



Lynette Edwards
Queen Elizabeth



James Dinsmore
William Shakespeare



Rebecca Charles
The Dark Lady



Adam Phillip Bloom
The Beefeater



Sarah Champion
Queen Elizabeth



Charne Rockford
William Shakespeare



Leila Alexander
The Dark Lady



Frazer Scott
The Beefeater

TUESDAY 21 April

Songs from Shakespeare
by Mario Castelnuovo Tedesco, Kenneth Leighton & Erich Korngold

William Drakett accompanied by Simon Carrey

TIME: 10.00 -11.00 **VENUE:** United Reformed Church



William Drakett studied singing under Prof. Konrad Jarnot at the Robert Schumann Conservatoire in Düsseldorf, following organ and harpsichord studies at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. His vocal studies have been further enriched by masterclasses with artists including Brigitte Fassbaender, Juliane Banse, Hans Eijsackers, Neal Davies, Eric Schneider, Christianne Stotijn & Henk Neven.

William has a particular love of the art song repertoire, and enjoys collaborating with pianists including Hans Eijsackers, Benjamin Mead, Edward Picton-Turbervill, Simon Carrey & Reinild Mees. He now lives in Wells where he is a Vicar Choral in the choir of Wells Cathedral, and continues his vocal studies privately with John Evans.

Over thirty years ago Simon began piano performance as a child prodigy in his hometown Conservatory in Tarbes, France. He then studied in Toulouse and Boulogne-Billancourt under the direction of Hortense Cartier-Bresson. Alongside the pianoforte he also studied organ, harpsichord and bassoon. Moving to London he subsequently graduated at the Royal College of Music, where he received his Masters with Distinction in piano performance. He also holds a Master's degree from the Paris Conservatoire National Supèrieur de Musique.

Simon has performed as soloist and accompanist in a wide variety of concert halls and music festivals across Europe, notably in France but also in Romania and the UK, including St. Martin-in-the-Fields, the Britten Theatre and the Amaryllis Flemming Concert Hall in London.

Shakespeare's Drinking Songs

Jennifer Waghorn

TIME: 12.30 - 13.30 **VENUE:** United Reformed Church



Jennifer Waghorn is a theatre history researcher and musician. Her doctoral thesis explored the original music of Shakespeare's theatre company and the seventeenth-century composers who worked between the theatre and the court. She has published work on music in seventeenth-century theatrical revivals, Shakespearean actor-musicians, Shakespeare as "corpse and corpus", and the lives of early modern women connected to Shakespeare's theatre company. She has provided edited music and commentaries for critical editions of early modern plays and has advised on music history for RSC productions since 2018. She previously worked as a Lecturer for the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, and currently works for the Birmingham Museums Trust

Shakespearean Music for 'Broken Consort'

Bloomsbury Baroque Ensemble led by William Summers

TIME: 15:00 -16.00 **VENUE:** United Reformed Church

Bloomsbury Baroque is an ensemble of some of London's finest historically informed musicians. They perform on period instruments with a mission to illustrate the cultural life of the eighteenth century – and earlier. Formed to combine the repertoire of High Baroque composers with more local music of the same period, Bloomsbury Baroque has a particular association with Garrick's Temple to Shakespeare, where the actor David Garrick built a 'retirement project' in Hampton by the Thames, not far from Hampton Court Palace. It became a focus for entertainment and rehearsal - regularly involving notable contemporary composers such as Arne and Dibdin.



Members of Bloomsbury Baroque are active in a wide range of musical ventures, reflecting the diversity of London's current early music scene. They are performing for us in the Shakespeare in Music Festival both today and tomorrow. In this recital they concentrate on music relating to Shakespeare and his immediate legacy: Dowland, Morley, Byrd, Handel and Willem de Fesch.

Philippa Hyde *soprano*; Diane Moore *baroque violin*; William Summers *baroque flute and recorder*; Ibrahim Aziz *bass viol,* and Yeo Yat-Soon *harpsichord*.

From Shakespeare to Shearing

The Stratford Chamber Choir

Vaughan Williams, Shearing, Stephens, Bishop, Cook and Walker arrangements of a wide range of Shakespeare Songs

The Stratford Chamber Choir conducted by Stephen Dodsworth

with Tamara Ravenhill (soprano) & Richard Milnes (tenor)

Accompanied by Colin Millington (piano)

TIME: 19.30 - 21.30 **VENUE:** Holy Trinity Church

Founded by Stephen Dodsworth and Tim Raistrick in 1993, the Stratford Chamber Choir quickly established itself as one of the leading small choirs in the country. For over thirty years it has performed concerts and services in its home town, in UK cathedrals including Winchester and Westminster, and on tour in North America and continental Europe. Gifted amateurs working to professional standards, it has featured on BBC Songs of Praise and on Radio 3.

Its Festival programme will include the jazz settings of Shakespeare's words by George Shearing as well as others by Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Cook, R.J.S. Stevens, Henry Bishop, James Walker and John Cook.

Tamara will sing *Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes* as well as two short songs from Shakespeare's plays: *Where the bee sucks, there suck I* and *Full Fathom Five thy Father Lies* by Purcell. Richard will sing *Who is Sylvia*? by Schubert and also *Greensleeves* - which may or may not have been composed by Henry VIII.

These songs will be accompanied at the piano by Colin Millington, Director of Music at Holy Trinity Church.

Richard Milnes *Tamara Ravenhill* *Stratford Chamber Choir*







WEDNESDAY 22 April

Songs for countertenor

Benjamin Irvine-Capel
with lute accompaniment by Kristiina Watt

TIME: 10.00 -11.00 **VENUE:** United Reformed Church



Benjamin Irvine-Capel is a Choral Scholar of Exeter Cathedral and a recent graduate of Genesis Sixteen. He has previously sung in Portsmouth Cathedral Choir and as a Chorister of St Paul's Cathedral.

Since moving to Devon, he has performed as soloist for multiple groups including Wellington Choral Society, the Winkleigh Singers, the Three Spires Singers, Exmouth Choral Society, and at Powderham Castle, as well as a member of the Dumnonii Consort.

Further afield, he participated in Collegium Vocale, Gent's Bach Academy, Bruges 2025 and now tours with the group to destinations as diverse as South Korea, Germany, and The Netherlands. Closer to home, he continues to sing as a founder-member with Contrepoint – a recently established eight-part consort – as well as deputising for Westminster Cathedral Choir and Lady Clare's Consort.

A recent graduate of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Lutenist Kristiina Watt now performs regularly with leading groups in the historical music scene and beyond, such as the Academy of Ancient Music, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, BBC Singers, The English Concert, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and La Nuova Musica.



Kristiina plays a theorbo made by Klaus Jacobsen, a baroque guitar made by Dallas Sutherland and renaissance lutes by Martin Haycock. She particularly enjoys working with singers and regularly plays for consorts such as Ensemble Pro Victoria, The Marian Consort, Musica Sereta and Vache Baroque. She is featured on the Marian Consort's latest CD 'Un Poesia Muta' in which her performance was reviewed as 'flawless' by Gramophone Magazine.

Composers, Actors, Orchestras

Sir Laurence Olivier & William Walton's
Shakespeare Scores

Michael Dobson

TIME: 12.30 -13.30 **VENUE:** United Reformed Church

Laurence Olivier and William Walton were near contemporaries - Walton born 1902 and Olivier 1907 - but despite each being famous, they had never met before their collaboration on a propaganda film project in the Second World War.

A contemporary critic wrote in 1944 that Walton's music for *Henry V* was "a score that ranks with the best in film music". Four years later they collaborated again on a film of *Hamlet*, which another critic described as "a masterpiece of the stage made into one of the greatest of films." Their collaboration led in 1955 to another film *Richard III* which was equally well received, described in a review as "new art hand in hand with old genius".

Michael Dobson will lead us through more than a decade of collaboration by a great actor with a great composer. He is Director of the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon and Professor of Shakespeare Studies at the University of Birmingham. His publications include: The Making of the National Poet; England's Elizabeth (with Nicola Watson); The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare (with Stanley Wells); Performing Shakespeare's Tragedies Today; and Shakespeare and Amateur Performance.

"All Fancy Sick I Am For Love"

Music of the 18th century Shakespeare revival
The Bloomsbury Baroque Ensemble

Philippa Hyde *soprano,* **William Summers** *Baroque flute*
Diane Moore *Baroque violin,* **Ibrahim Aziz** *bass viol and* **Yeo Yat-Soon** *harpsichord*

TIME: 15.00 -16.00 **VENUE:** United Reformed Church



For their second recital in this year's Festival the Bloomsbury Baroque Ensemble concentrates on music of the eighteenth century, around the time of the revival of Shakespeare's work led by David Garrick. It was Garrick's celebration of Shakespeare's Jubilee in 1769 that put Stratford on the tourist map for all enthusiasts for the Bard, and two composers of the time particularly close to the great actor were Thomas Arne and Charles Dibdin. Discover them and others still in this recital.

Love, Fate and Fire

Favourite arias from Shakespeare's operatic legacy

presented by Rose Opera

Tamara Ravenhill *soprano,* **Deborah Holborn** *mezzo*
Stephen Cviic *tenor,* **Richard Milnes** *tenor,* **Adam Brown** *baritone*
and **Andrew Robinson** *piano*

TIME: 19.30 - 21.30 **VENUE:** Holy Trinity Church

In this concert, performed by Rose Opera, arias and ensembles by Verdi, Wagner, Gounod, Nicolai, Berlioz, Britten and Bernstein reflect the influence of Shakespeare on operatic composition across the ages.

For more than four centuries, Shakespeare's characters and stories have shaped the arts in every form — literature, theatre, music and beyond. Opera, with its heightened emotions and grand expressive range, has always been especially drawn to the worlds he created. From Verdi's searing Otello and Falstaff to Wagner's early explorations of Shakespearean drama, from Gounod and Nicolai to Britten and Bernstein, the great composers could not resist the Bard's blend of passion, wit, tragedy and enchantment.

In this gala evening, Rose Opera's soloists bring these timeless stories to life with the immediacy and intimacy of voice and piano. Love and jealousy, fate and folly, magic and mischief — all the fire of Shakespeare's imagination finds new resonance in the operatic masterpieces it inspired.

Join us for Operatic Shakespeare (or Love, Fate & Fire): a celebration of the Bard's enduring power, refracted through the music of those who transformed his words into unforgettable sound.



THURSDAY 23rd

Facets of Time

Music for Lute and Tenor from Shakespeare's Age

Dowland's Foundry: Sam Brown and Daniel Thomson

TIME: 10.00 - 11.00 **VENUE:** The Guild Chapel

Facets of Time is a dramatic lute-song programme, based around one of the Renaissance's central fascinations - Old Father Time - with music by John Dowland, John Daniel, Alfonso Ferrabosco, Thomas Morley and Barry Mills all to words by William Shakespeare.

Caught between the scientific and the superstitious, Elizabethan England was deeply fascinated – and often unsettled – by the figure of Old Time. Winged, withered, with scythe in hand, Time was for the Elizabethans a fearful, all-consuming figure, and a potent vehicle for many vital themes. In this programme of words and music, we encounter Time's many forms: in sleep, in music, and death; as a playful challenge to stubborn lovers and as the ultimate test of true love.

Shakespeare and Rap

Devon Glover - the Sonnet Man from New York

TIME: 12.30 - 13.30 **VENUE:** Guild Chapel



Devon Glover, an artist from Brooklyn, New York, brings Shakespeare's sonnets to life through Hip-Hop as The Sonnet Man. He's a teacher, rapper, poet, playwright, and actor who performs in schools and theatres across the globe.

His work has been featured on NBC, MSNBC, and BBC. He's also presented at major conferences and festivals worldwide, including in Stratford, Ontario and Stratford-upon-Avon. Devon has taught with esteemed organisations such as the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Shakespeare Behind Bars.

A notable achievement includes his 2016 Sonnet Marathon tour, where he rapped all 154 of Shakespeare's sonnets in succession to mark the 400th anniversary of the Bard's death.

A Celebration of Shakespeare's Birthday in Song
including the presentation of the Fischer Fund Prize for the best Shakespeare Song
with Nigel Foster, Founder of the London Song Festival, at the piano

TIME: 15.00 - 16.00 **VENUE:** United Reformed Church



Nigel Foster is Founder-Director of the London Song Festival and has played for numerous renowned singers including Dame Sarah Connolly, Susan Bullock, Roderick Williams and Nadine Benjamin. Nigel has given master-classes and led workshops in the song repertoire at summer courses and music programmes all over the UK and abroad: Opera Plus, Asolo, Saarburg and Vianden Festivals, Summit City Art Song Festival, University of Toledo.

This Festival is special because of the award of the first Fischer Shakespeare Song Prize for the best Shakespeare Song composed in 2025. The Prize will be awarded by Manuela Perteghella MP for Stratford-upon-Avon and Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Shakespeare.

The Annual Shakespeare Organ Recital
with Rachel Mahon

TIME: 19.30 - 21.30 **VENUE:** Holy Trinity Church



Rachel Mahon is Director of Music at Coventry Cathedral. Previously she was Organ Scholar at St. Paul's Cathedral - the first female organist in the Cathedral's 1400 year history.

She combines a career as a busy Cathedral musician with an international recital schedule which included a triumphant performance of the Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony in the BBC 2025 Proms.

This concert is being organised by the Friends of the Music of Holy Trinity Church and tickets are being sold from their website.

https://www.htcfom.co.uk/concerts

Become a Friend of Shakespeare in Music and support the annual Festival in Stratford

(Registered Charity no. 1208674)

SIM offers three levels of sponsorship for Friends of the Festival

Annual membership costs as little as £50 per year with options for supporters who wish to become more involved in our innovative work by donating something more.

Ariel Friends are our core supporters. Paying £50 a year gives Ariels the advantage of concessionary prices on all SIM events and priority booking a month before the general public.

Miranda/Ferdinand Friends offer stronger support for SIM. For £100 Mirandas and Ferdinands receive all the advantages of Ariels plus regular updates on developments as the Festival programme is created, opportunities to attend rehearsals and the chance to meet the artists after performances.

Prospero Friends are prepared to go one step further. They direct their support to where they choose. For as little as £250 Prosperos can sponsor a lunchtime lecture or a daytime recital of their choice. In addition to all other Friends' advantages, they contribute to the choices SIM makes in structuring the Festival and their name will appear on the programme notes of the event of their choice.

To become an Ariel, Ferdinand or Miranda Friend visit:
https://www.tickettailor.com/events/shakespeareinmusic/store

If you would like to become a Prospero Friend and offer SIM this level of support, please contact the Chairman of Trustees – martyn.bond@cantab.net

If you are eligible for Gift Aid, SIM can claim a further 25p for every £1 of your donation, and higher rate taxpayers may claim a tax credit on their donation.

The Shakespeare in Music Festival is supported by
Stratford-on-Avon District Council and by Stratford Town Trust.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Stratford Town Trust
creating a vibrant and connected community

Venues



Holy Trinity Church
1 Old Town
CV37 6BG



The Guild Chapel
Chapel Street
CV37 6EP



United Reformed
Church
11 Rother Street
CV37 6LU

Book Here

https://www.tickettailor.com/events/shakespeareinmusic



www.shakespeareinmusic.org