



Ex Cathedra Vocal Ensemble

"brilliantly virtuosic and committed" The Telegraph

Website www.excathedra.co.uk
Contact Holly Skelton
Email holly@ikonarts.com

From its home city of Birmingham, Ex Cathedra has established an international reputation as one of the UK's leading choirs and Early Music ensembles. It aims to explore, research, and commission the finest choral music and to set the highest standards of excellence in performance and training.

Founded by Jeffrey Skidmore in 1969, Ex Cathedra has grown into a unique musical resource, comprising specialist choir, vocal consort, period-instrument orchestra, and thriving education programme. Its orchestra (leader Margaret Faultless) was founded in 1983-84, the first period-instrument orchestra to be established in an English regional city, and comprises the UK's leading orchestral players.

Ex Cathedra regularly performs concerts both in Birmingham, where it is an Associate Artist at Town Hall, and in London. Recent UK performances have included Stockhausen's *World Parliament* for the London 2012 Festival and the 2013 BBC Proms, and the premiere of Alec Roth's *A Time to Dance* in 2012. Recent tours have taken Ex Cathedra to Belgium, Germany, France, Spain, Italy and the USA, where it has performed music from Gabrieli, Scarlatti and Handel to the Latin American Baroque. Over the last three years, the group has collaborated with His Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts, Concerto Palatino, Fretwork, Birmingham Opera Company, Sinfonia New York, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Birmingham Royal Ballet, among others. Ex Cathedra has made a number of critically acclaimed recordings with Hyperion, Orchid Classics, SOMM Recordings, Signum, and on its own label. A disc of French Baroque celebrating the life and work of 18th century diva Marie Fel is due for release with Hyperion in 2014; also forthcoming is a recent recording of previously unrecorded Britten stage plays for NMC Records.

Much more than a choir, Ex Cathedra aims to share its knowledge, expertise and love of singing with as wide a range of people as possible, through high quality performances, workshops, education and training initiatives both across the UK and internationally.

Jeffrey Skidmore is one of the country's foremost choral conductors and is highly regarded by instrumentalists, singers and audiences for the high quality of his performances. He is well-known for exciting programming which is often challenging but always accessible. Jeffrey read music at Magdalen College, Oxford, before returning to his native Birmingham to develop Ex Cathedra into the internationally-renowned choral group it has become today.

Directing Ex Cathedra, and its associated Consort and Baroque Orchestra, Jeffrey has appeared in concert series and festivals across the UK and abroad and made more than a dozen highly-acclaimed recordings. He regularly conducts other ensembles, and in the last five years Jeffrey has commissioned more than ten new works and conducted many world premieres by both well-established composers and new, young talent. Composers include Fyfe Hutchins, Gabriel Jackson, John Joubert, Alec Roth, Daryl Runswick, Peter Sculthorpe, Philip Shepherd, Peter Wiegold and Roderick Williams.

Jeffrey is a pioneer in the field of research and performance of neglected choral works of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, and has won wide recognition in particular for his recordings of French and Latin American Baroque music with Ex Cathedra. An Honorary Fellow at Birmingham Conservatoire and a Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham, he has prepared new performing editions of works by Araujo, Charpentier, Lalande, Monteverdi and Rameau.

Jeffrey is Artistic Director of the Early Music Programme at Birmingham Conservatoire and Director of Ex Cathedra's wide-reaching education programme. He frequently gives choral training workshops and teaches at summer schools in the UK and overseas. He regularly directs the choral programme at Dartington International Summer School.

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