



"One of Britain's very best choirs" (New York Times)

Choir | Consort | Orchestra | Education
Jeffrey Skidmore OBE Artistic Director & Conductor

12 November 2025

Images can be downloaded here:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/fmrjimu8r9vrybmeqc9fo/AC8mudtb_jr93taITWV4mAM?rlkey=06d8gfcso7l97h843bl0ot9i&dl=0

Ex Cathedra return with their magical Christmas Music by Candlelight concerts this December

- Ex Cathedra's *Christmas Music by Candlelight* is a traditional highlight of many people's festive season, with performances across the Midlands and London this December
- Expect seasonal favourites, little-known gems and inspirational new music, sung by one of Britain's very best choirs, surrounded by the flicker of candlelight
- Plus Ex Cathedra perform Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* at Town Hall on Sunday 7 December, in what promises to be a thrilling performance

Hushed anticipation and spellbinding seasonal music fill the air, and the choir is enveloped in the soft glow of candlelight...

Ex Cathedra bring their popular **Christmas Music by Candlelight** concerts to venues across the Midlands and London this December, in what is a traditional highlight of many people's festive season.

Ex Cathedra's singers will perform a spellbinding sequence of seasonal favourites, little-known gems, and inspirational new music.

Add a selection of readings that capture the mystery - and humour - of Christmas, and you won't want to miss these popular, atmospheric concerts.

Some pieces are well-known and much loved, an essential part of Christmas tradition - **Once in royal David's city, Away in a manger, Auld lang syne, Silent Night and Ding! dong! merrily on high.**

Some pieces have been written specially for Ex Cathedra, including a first performance of Roderick Williams' **O Radix Jesse**, commissioned back in 1998 as part of the

Millenium celebrations. Why the wait? In that year there was a Christmas postal strike and the manuscript arrived the day before the first concert, too late to perform this tricky piece which splits into 16 parts. It receives its debut now, some 27 years later.

Work by living and local composers is an essential part of the programme, including **Darkness into light** by our organist Rupert Jeffcoat, **Nesciens mater** by Christopher Churcher, formerly a member of the Academy of Vocal Music and now an undergraduate musician at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, and **Winter's Hymn** by Ruairi Edwards, the talented composer and member of our Education & Participation team.

The tour begins on 4 December at **St John's Church, Hagley**, before visiting **Hereford Cathedral**, **St Chad's Church Shrewsbury**, **St James the Greater in Leicester**, **Lichfield Cathedral**, **Coventry Cathedral**, **St Mary's Church, Moseley**, **St Martin-in-the-Fields** in Trafalgar Square, **St Peter's Wolverhampton** and **St Paul's Church** in **Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter**.

The festive season includes a performance of **Bach's Christmas Oratorio** at Birmingham's Town Hall on 7 December. From the moment it bursts into life in a blaze of virtuosic Baroque trumpets, drums, winds and strings, Bach's Christmas Oratorio fizzles with energy. This performance of all six cantatas is the perfect way to start your festive season, fortified by the infectious joy of Bach's brilliance.

Jeffrey Skidmore, Artistic Director of Ex Cathedra, comments "For many people, **Christmas Music by Candlelight** represents the start of Christmas. This year's unique programme will include an eclectic mixture of seasonal goodies, guaranteed to give some serenity to the festive rush. And you don't want to miss our performance of **Bach's Christmas Oratorio** at Town Hall, a masterpiece that fizzles with energy. The infectious joy of Bach's brilliant music makes December extra special."

Full details of the season can be found at www.excathedra.co.uk, with tickets available from £8 - £48.

Listings:

Bach Christmas Oratorio

Town Hall, Birmingham
Sun 7 Dec 2025, 4pm

EX CATHEDRA Choir & Baroque Orchestra

Jeffrey Skidmore conductor

James Robinson Evangelist

Margaret Lingas, Katie Trethewey soprano

Martha McLorinan, Gabriella Liandu, Laura Toomey alto

Daniel Marles tenor

Oliver Barker, Lawrence White bass

From the moment it bursts into life in a blaze of virtuosic Baroque trumpets, drums, winds and strings, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* fizzles with energy. This performance of all six cantatas is the perfect way to start your festive season, fortified by the infectious joy of Bach's brilliance.

Running time approx. 3 hours, 10 minutes including interval.

Tickets: £21 - £48

Age up to 17 & students: £8

Aged 18-30: £15

<https://excathedra.co.uk/event/2526-christmas-oratorio/>

Christmas Music by Candlelight

EX CATHEDRA

Jeffrey Skidmore conductor

Rupert Jeffcoat, Nicholas Wearne organ

Take an evening to escape the festive rush and immerse yourself in a concert of spellbinding seasonal music, performed by candlelight. Expect some of your favourite carols, and discover a treasure trove of gorgeous new - and old - music and readings that explore the magic, humour and peace of Christmas.

Early booking is advised to avoid disappointment.

Running time approx. 2 hours 10 minutes, including interval.

St John's Church, Hagley

Tue 2 Dec 2025, 7pm

<https://excathedra.co.uk/event/2526-christmas-music-hagley/>

St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

Thu 4 Dec 2025, 7pm

<https://excathedra.co.uk/event/2526-christmas-music-shrewsbury/>

Lichfield Cathedral

Fri 5 Dec 2025, 7pm

Co-presented with Lichfield Festival

<https://excathedra.co.uk/event/2526-christmas-music-lichfield/>

Hereford Cathedral

Wed 10 Dec 2025, 7pm

Performed by our Consort of 10 singers

<https://excathedra.co.uk/event/2526-christmas-music-hereford/>

Coventry Cathedral

Thu 11 Dec 2025, 7pm

<https://excathedra.co.uk/event/2526-christmas-coventry/>

St Martin-in-the-Fields, London

Fri 12 & Mon 15 Dec 2025, 7pm

<https://excathedra.co.uk/event/2526-christmas-music-london/>

St Peter's Church, Wolverhampton

Sat 13 Dec 2025, 7pm

Performed by our Consort of 10 singers

<https://excathedra.co.uk/event/2526-christmas-music-wolverhampton/>

St James the Greater, Leicester

Tue 16 Dec 2025, 7pm

Performed by our Consort of 10 singers

<https://excathedra.co.uk/event/2526-christmas-music-leicester/>

St Mary's Church, Moseley

Wed 17 Dec 2025, 7pm

<https://excathedra.co.uk/event/2526-christmas-music-moseley/>

St Paul's Church, Birmingham

Fri 19 Dec 2025, 7pm

Sat 20 Dec 2025, 4pm

Mon 22 Dec 2025, 7pm

<https://excathedra.co.uk/event/2526-christmas-music-birmingham/>

Tickets: £21 - £48

Age up to 17 & students: £8

Aged 18-30: £15

For tickets and more details visit www.excathedra.co.uk

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For more information please contact Helen Stallard on Helen@helenstallard.co.uk or 0774 033 9604.

Notes for Editors

Ex Cathedra is unique, a world-class choir that leads the choral sector in the fields of performance, learning and wellbeing. For more than 50 years the group has been producing inspirational concerts and participatory projects.

Ex Cathedra has developed an international reputation for its performances of the best, the unfamiliar and the unexpected in the choral repertoire, from the Latin American Baroque to living composers. The group takes pride in developing the choral artform - researching and reviving hidden gems, commissioning new work, and developing inclusive, co-creative ways of engaging audiences and participants.

The group places training and development at the heart of its work and has developed a holistic pathway from parent-and-toddler groups, through its Academy of Vocal Music training choirs (to age 18), Student Scholars, graduate Scholars, Associate Conductors and emerging soloists.

Ex Cathedra's team of expert Vocal Tutors delivers an extensive programme of award-winning projects that support learning and wellbeing in schools, communities and healthcare. The group has worked in over 1,000 primary schools across the UK and abroad. Its suite of Singing Medicine projects provide wellbeing benefits for children in hospital, young people receiving mental health support, plus stroke, dementia and Long Covid patients.

Awarded an OBE for services to choral music, **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-acclaimed choral group it has become today.