

## NCO Recital, 11<sup>th</sup> February – Ben Watkins

### Biography

Ben began singing in Nottingham aged 8 with the Nottingham Boys' Choir. While still a treble Ben was an auditioned member of the Diamond Choir, which performed the anthem at The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Service at St Paul's Cathedral in 2012.



Ben joined St Peter's Choir in 2012 and has performed solos in works such as Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *Lutheran Mass* in F. Ben performed Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs* with the choir as part of their tour to Riga, Latvia, in August of 2019. From 2016-2018, Ben was also an Auxiliary Lay Clerk at Southwell Minster, singing occasional services with the professional choir.

Ben won the singing prize at the 2017 Nottingham Young Musician of the Year Competition, as well as first prizes in several classes in the Leicester Music Fest.

Ben is currently a Lay Clerk at Magdalen College, having sung there for three years as a history undergraduate. As well as singing six services a week with the college's renowned choir, Ben studies singing with Carys Lane, and has participated in masterclasses with Marcus Farnsworth, James Newby and Roderick Williams. Ben is also grateful to have received occasional lessons from Gillian Humphreys OBE in London, through the Concordia Foundation scheme.

During his time with Magdalen, Ben has performed in various concerts both in the UK and abroad, including the American Cathedral in Paris and the Antwerp AMUZ. Ben also performed with the choir in a concert conducted by John Rutter broadcast on Classic FM in December 2019. Ben features on two disks recorded by the college choir, the next which will be released in May 2022.

Ben is an alumnus of the Eton Choral Courses, and worked with directors such as Stephen Cleobury, Andrew Nethsingha, Paul Spicer, and Ben Parry. Ben is also a current member of the Rodolfus Choir, conducted by Ralph Allwood, with whom he recorded a disc of works by John Taverner and Francis Grier and performed at the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester. Ben was also part of the Stile Antico Youth Consort in August 2019, and has deputised for ensembles around Oxford, such as Fount and Origin and Ensemble Nova.

Ben was appointed as a Choral Scholar with the Oxford Bach Soloists in September 2021, and has since performed in several concerts, both as a soloist and chorus member, alongside renowned singers and orchestral players. Ben looks forward to future engagements this year, which include performing the Bass solos in both Brahms' *Requiem* with the Nottingham Harmonic Choir, and Bach's *St John's Passion* with Luceat Choir.