

SEBASTIAN THOMSON, Choral Director, Organist and Teacher BA, FRCO (DipCHD)

Sebastian Thomson is Head of Academic Music and Assistant Director of Music at Bloxham School. He was a chorister at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford before moving to Harrow School with the top music scholarship. Sebastian was then awarded the Bristol University Organ Scholarship where he studied with Mark Lee. After three years, he moved to Chichester Cathedral as Organ Scholar. From here, Sebastian moved to the position of Director of Music at St Matthew's Church, Northampton whilst teaching piano, organ and theory at Eton College.

Sebastian currently directs and accompanies a number of Oxford's finest professional choirs, examines for the RSCM, and is a staff member for the Eton Choral Courses. Sebastian combines this with a busy recital schedule which has recently included, Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral, King's College Cambridge and St Paul's Cathedral. As part of his commitment to new music, an organ piece by David Bednall was commissioned and recently premiered at St Paul's Cathedral. Further commissions are in the pipeline for 2012 and 2013.

Whilst working in Northampton, Sebastian was in constant demand as a choral director, organist and singer. St Matthew's has a deserved reputation as having an excellent musical tradition. The choir performs twice a week to a consistently high standard and under the direction of Sebastian, was described by Dr. John Bertalot (former Director of Music 1958-1964) as "*a choir which already can sing the socks off many other fine church choirs but also whose prospects for the near future are even more bright.*"

After a fifteen year absence, Sebastian restored the musical commissioning scheme which the late Walter Hussey introduced to St Matthew's so successfully. David Briggs wrote a Toccata for St Matthew's Day which was premiered on 21st September 2008 for solo organ and a Missa Brevis was written for choir and organ in 2009 by David Bednall.

Sebastian made an appearance as organist and speaker on Radio 3 in November 2006 with a performance of Benjamin Britten's *Prelude and Fugue on a theme of Vittoria*, a work commissioned by St Matthew's in 1946. Organ studies continue with international recitalists, David Goode and David Briggs. As well as being a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, Sebastian was a prize winner in the Choral Training Diploma examination from the College. For further information, please visit to www.sebastianthomson.co.uk

Sebastian's debut CD *A Theme of Vittoria* was released on the Priory label with excellent reviews:

"For me, the final work (Brigg's Greensleeves variations) is the highlight of a disc which is overall, a fine recording of both player and the justly celebrated instrument, captured with clarity - at times thrilling."
(Organists' Review February 2009)

"Sebastian Thomson's playing is energetic, expressive and secure. An enjoyable disc and very much worth hearing."
(Church Music Quarterly, March 2009)

"This is a thoughtful tribute to a monumental cathedral-sized organ: if the Britten seems insipid, then this says more about the work itself than about Sebastian Thomson's excellent playing."
(Choir & Organ, May 2009)