

AERCO Academy

ACCADEMIA CORALE



AERCO

Academic Year 2024-2025

MASTERCLASS & CONCERT *The Magnificat by John Rutter*

Teacher: John Rutter

Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 March 2025

Rimini (Italy), Atti Theatre and Galli Theatre

Info and application:

www.aerco.academy

mail: aercobologna@gmail.com



MASTERCLASS & CONCERT

The Magnificat by John Rutter

Teacher: John Rutter

To approach the figure of composer John Rutter (b. 1945) is somehow to confront the last forty years of English sacred music history, through its most prominent exponents and its prestigious choral ensembles.

John Rutter's *Magnificat* is a musical interpretation of the biblical canticle of the Magnificat, completed in 1990. The composition consists of seven movements for soprano or mezzo-soprano solo, mixed choir and orchestra (or chamber ensemble) and is based on the Latin text, interspersed with 'Of a Rose, a lovely Rose', an anonymous English poem on Marian themes, the beginning of the Sanctus and a prayer to Mary. The music includes elements of Latin American music. The composer conducted the first performance at Carnegie Hall on 26 May 1990 and the first recording with the Cambridge Singers and the City of London Sinfonia. Oxford University Press published *Magnificat* in 1991 and *Of a Rose, a lovely Rose* separately in 1998. While the Magnificat canticle has often been set to music, being a regular part of Catholic vespers and Anglican afternoons, Rutter's work is one of the few extended versions, along with the same composition by Bach.

The composer wrote:

'The Magnificat - a poetic expression of praise, joy and trust in God, ascribed by Luke to the Virgin Mary on learning that she would give birth to Christ - has always been one of the most familiar and beloved scriptural texts, not least because of its inclusion as a canticle in the Catholic Office of Vespers and the Anglican Evensong. Musical compositions abound, though surprisingly few of them, since the time of J.S. Bach, deal with the text extensively. I had long wanted to write an extended Magnificat but was unsure how to approach it until I found my starting point in the text's association with the Virgin Mary. In countries like Spain, Mexico and Puerto Rico, the Virgin's feasts are joyful occasions for people to take to the streets and celebrate with singing, dancing and processions. These images of open-air celebrations were, I think, somewhere in my mind as I was writing, although I was not fully aware of them until a certain point. I was aware that I was following Bach's example in adding to the liturgical text the beautiful English poem "Of a Rose" and the prayer "Sancta Maria" (both reinforcing the Marian link) and the Gregorian chant of the "Sanctus" from the Missa Cum Jubilo interpolated in the third movement. The composition of the Magnificat occupied several hectic weeks in early 1990, and the premiere took place in May of that year at New York's Carnegie Hall.

Musicologist John Bawden notes that Rutter's work has several features in common with Bach's composition: both repeat material from the first movement in the last, use Gregorian chant melodies, dedicate the 'most reflective verses' to a soloist, and insert additional texts related to Christmas.

The first day (29 March) and the morning of the second (30 March) of the masterclass will be dedicated to an in-depth study of the Magnificat with the composer himself conducting. On the afternoon of Sunday 30 March 2025, a public performance of the work is planned with the participants' choir, soloists and orchestra.

Where and When:

Rimini, Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 March 2025. Rimini, [Teatro degli Atti](#) and [Teatro Galli](#)

Hours:

Saturday 29 March: from 14:00 to 19:00 (rehearsals with choir, soloists and piano, Teatro Atti)

Sunday 30 March: 9:30 to 13:00 (rehearsals with choir, soloists and orchestra, Teatro Galli)

Sunday 30 March: 14:30 to 16:00 (rehearsals with choir, soloists and orchestra, Teatro Galli)

Sunday 30 March: 18:00 (concert of the Magnificat and other music for a total of about 60 min.)



Exterior façade of the Galli Theatre



Interior of the Galli Theatre

- Costs

60 € TOTAL for those who sing in choirs associated with AERCO or the FENIARCO, ANDCI, AISCGRE network (50 € for groups of more than 10 participants) - Early Bird Discount (registration by 31/10/2024: 50 € individuals, 40 € groups)

90 € TOTAL for those who DO NOT sing in AERCO/FENIARCO member choirs (80 € for groups of more than 10 participants) - Early Bird Discount (registration by 31/10/2024: 80 € individuals, 70 € groups)

- Accommodation and meals

The prices indicated do not include accommodation and meals. AERCO will commission a tour operator to find accommodation at the best conditions.

- Sheet music required

Sheet music will be provided for home study only. Midi files for study will also be provided. Each participant will be required to obtain an original (or licensed) copy for the masterclass in Rimini and related concert:

Printed edition: [buy here](#)

Digital edition: [buy here](#)

- Registration:

> Go to <https://form.jotform.com/aercobologna/iscrizioneaccademiacorale>

Then Look for the 'Masterclass con John Rutter'

John Rutter (UK)



Born in London, he studied at Highgate School with John Tavener. He also studied music at Clare College, Cambridge University, where he was later appointed professor of organ first and then choral conducting from 1975 to 1979. In 1981 he founded the Cambridge Singers choir, which he continues to conduct today and with who has recorded a vast repertoire of sacred music (including his own compositions), specifically with his own record company, Collegium Records. He lives near Cambridge and is often called upon to conduct other leading professional and amateur choirs and orchestras around the world. Rutter's compositions are mainly aimed at choral music of the a cappella motet genre, but also of a more structurally complex nature with very extensive works such as the Gloria and the Requiem. In 2002 his version of Psalm 150, commissioned for the Queen's Golden Jubilee, was performed for Thanksgiving Mass at St Paul's Cathedral, London. Rutter also composed a work for young people called Bang! His compositions are published primarily by Oxford University Press but also by his music publishing house Collegium. Rutter's music clearly shows influences from the contemporary English and French choral tradition, as well as pop music and the American choral tradition. Although he has often composed and conducted religious music, Rutter told the US television program 60 Minutes in 2003 that he is not a particularly practicing person, but that he receives particular inspiration from the spirituality of sacred verses and prayers. The 60 Minutes episode, which aired a week before Christmas 2003, focused on Rutter's vast popularity with choral groups in the United States, Britain and elsewhere, and on his composition Mass of the Children. Children"), composed after the untimely death of his son Christopher, a young student.

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aercobologna@gmail.com

AERCO
Associazione Emiliano-Romagnola Cori
Via Barberia 9
40123 Bologna
Italia

