



Credit: John Rutter.com

Composer Profile: John Rutter

John Rutter was born in London and wanted to be a musician ever since he could walk and talk. He first discovered music at home when he lifted the lid of the old upright piano in his parent's apartment and started to prod the keys. Whilst at nursery school he sang loudly along with all the other children in morning assembly each day. At aged seven, his parents sent him for piano lessons where his piano teacher told him to be a composer, or singer (or anything but please not a pianist).

Fortunately, the boys' school his parents sent him to had a strong musical tradition, with daily choral workshop led by the choir, of which John needed no second bidding to join. The director of music, Edward Chapman, was a gifted composer himself, encouraged all to think composition was normal and pointed John in the direction of Cambridge University.

John studied at Clare College and much of his early work consisted of church music and other choral pieces including Christmas carols.

He met David Willcocks, the legendary director of Kings College Choir, who took an interest in John's compositions, encouraged him to conduct and recommended him to Oxford University Press, who signed him up whilst still a student.

Since 1979, John has divided his time between composition and conducting.

In 1983 he formed his own professional chamber choir, the Cambridge Singers, with whom he has made over fifty recordings, on the Collegium record label which he established.

John has enjoyed a long association with Clare College, Cambridge – first as student, then Director of Music, later as parent, and recording producer for their renowned choir.

Nowadays, John composes, conducts and produces recordings. But in some ways still feels just as a kid, doodling at the piano with his interventions, but only now he gets paid for it.

Today his compositions, including the concert-length works of Requiem, Magnificat, Mass of the Children, The Gift of Life and Visions are performed around the world.

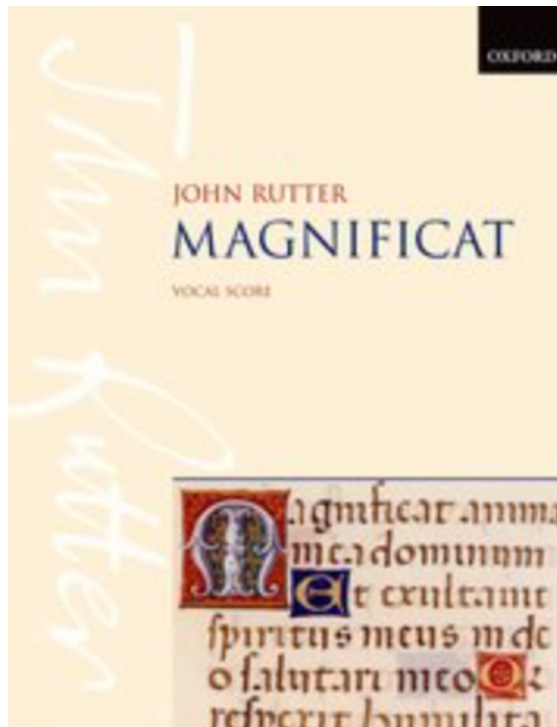
His music has featured in a number of British royal occasions, including the two most recent royal weddings.

John edits the Oxford Choral Classics series, and with Sir David Willcocks, co-edited four volumes of Carols for Choirs.

He appears regularly in several countries as guest conductor and choral ambassador.

He holds the Lambeth Doctorate in Music and in 2007 was awarded a CBE for services to music.

Composer's Notes: Magnificat



1. Magnificat anima mea
2. Of a Rose, a lovely Rose
3. Quia fecit mihi magna
4. Et misericordia
5. Fecit potentiam
6. Esurientes
7. Gloria Patri

John Rutter's *Magnificat* is a joyous celebration of the Virgin Mary, inspired by feast-day festivities in countries such as Spain, Mexico and Puerto Rico.

The passage from St Luke (chapter 1, verses 46-55), known as the *Magnificat*, is a poetic outpouring of praise, joy and trust in God, ascribed by Luke to the Virgin Mary on learning that she was to give birth to Christ.

It has always been one of the most familiar and well-loved of scriptural texts, not least because of its inclusion as a canticle in the Catholic office of Vespers and in Anglican Evensong. Musical settings of it abound, though surprisingly few of them, since J.S. Bach's, give the text extended treatment.

I had long wished to write an extended *Magnificat*, but was not sure how to approach it until I found my starting point in the association of the text with the Virgin Mary. In many countries such as Spain, Mexico and Puerto Rico, feast days of the Virgin are joyous opportunities for people to take to the streets and celebrate with singing, dancing and processions. These images of outdoor celebration were. I think, somewhere in my mind as I wrote, though I was not fully conscious of the fact until afterwards.

I was conscious of following Bach's example in adding to the liturgical text – with the lovely old (15th century) English poem *Of a Rose* and the prayer *Sancta Maria*, both of which strengthen the Marian connection, and with the interpolated *Sanctus* (to the Gregorian chant of the *Missa cum jublio*) in the third movement, which seems to grow out of the immediately preceding thought *et sanctum nomen eius*.

The composition of *Magnificat* occupied several hectic weeks early in 1990, and the première took place in May of that year in Carnegie Hall, New York.

Credit to: John Rutter 2011