

Gavin Carr – Conductor

The son of Covent Garden *Prima Donna* Una Hale and the internationally-renowned theatre consultant Martin Carr, and the brother of composer Paul Carr, **Gavin Carr** is today one of the UK's busiest conductors, working with leading orchestras and choruses in a hugely varied repertoire. A multi-faceted musician, a trained artist, poet, and composer, his celebrated energy and sense of positivity flows into all his activities.

He commenced his training as a bass choral scholar in the choir of King's College, Cambridge, before establishing a career as a baritone that has seen him perform all over the globe, with recital, concert and opera appearances in the USA, Australia, China, South America, Russia and throughout Europe. He sang the title role in *The Barber of Seville* for English National Opera opposite Lesley Garrett, and also appeared for ENO as Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas* with Sarah Connolly, and St Ignatius in *Four Saints in Three Acts*. Concert appearances have included Britten's *War Requiem* for the Teatro Municipal in Santiago, Chile, with the Novaya Opera in Moscow, and in Tallin with the Estonian Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus. He sang the baritone part in Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* in Beijing and Shanghai in the mainland Chinese premiere of the work in 2009, and has appeared in Golijov's *Ainadamar* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under Robert Spano. Active in Australia, particularly in contemporary music, he appeared as the composer Tchaikovsky in Michael Finnissy's *Shameful Vice* for the Sydney Transfigured Nights festival, and gave many world-premieres whilst resident vocalist with the Pipeline Ensemble in Melbourne. His performance with the Elision Ensemble in Michael Smetanin's *Skinless Kiss of Angels* was recorded by ABC Classics.

In 2001 he took up conducting alongside his singing career, and quickly gained a reputation in this field. Working as Staff Conductor at the Wexford Opera Festival and at the Cantiere d'Arte di Montepulciano, he made his operatic conducting debut with the acclaimed production of *La Tragédie de Carmen* at the 2007 Wexford Festival, which was nominated for an Irish Times National Arts Award. In 2009 he became the founder-director of the new Wexford Festival Opera Chorus, which he developed as the Young Artists Programme for the Wexford Festival, nurturing major talent and enhancing the festival's reputation in this field. In opera other productions include *Un ballo in maschera* and *Eugene Onegin* for Dorset Opera, the latter being named by the Guardian newspaper as a standout production of the year. He became chorus director of the Bournemouth Symphony Chorus (BSC) in 2008, and has led them to international acclaim with world-premiere recordings, tours, and a host of innovative programmes. In 2014 he instigated a new tradition of Bach *Passions* in Easter Week with the BSC at the Lighthouse in Poole – next Easter sees the BSC perform the *St Matthew Passion* with a team of international soloists and in English – a feature of these performances for which Carr is a passionate advocate. After guest conducting with the

Philharmonia Chorus, in 2018 Carr was appointed chorus master of this celebrated ensemble, whom he now leads in major projects across Europe, including Berlioz *Grande messe des morts* at St Paul's Cathedral, and a cycle of the Mahler Symphonies with the Orchestre National de Lille. Alongside his work in Bournemouth and London, current music directorships include the Bath Minerva Choir, and his own professional choir, Chorus Angelorum, with whom he has recorded two of his brother Paul Carr's large-scale choral works, *Requiem for an Angel* and *Seven Last Words from the Cross*. He was previously music director of the Bristol Bach Choir (a tenure notable for ambitious projects and tours), of the Athenaeum Singers, Warminster, and chorus master of South West Festival Chorus.

He made his conducting debut with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in September 2011, in Richard Blackford's *Not in Our Time*, with performances at the Cheltenham Festival and Poole Lighthouse; his recording of the work on the Nimbus label shot to the top of the classical charts on its release. He made his German debut conducting the same work with the Bremen Philharmonic in 2012. At the centenary commemorations of the onset of World War I he conducted Britten's *War Requiem* in Poole with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Chorus on Remembrance Sunday 2014 with soloists James Gilchrist, Svetlana Kasyan and Stephan Loges. For the London Jazz Festival at the South Bank Centre he led the premiere performances of inspirational jazz composer Robert Mitchell's *Invocation*, a large-scale work for jazz ensemble and chorus, and in 2015 he conducted the first performance in Poole of Mahler's *Symphony No.8* with the BSC, Bath Minerva Choir and the Aurora Orchestra. Other previous and upcoming performances of the major choral-orchestral repertoire with these two choruses include Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, the Mozart *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Mass in C*, Bruckner's *Mass in F*, the Dvorák *Stabat Mater*, Handel's *Messiah* and Britten's *Saint Nicholas*.

A happy association with the Symphony Orchestra of India began in 2015 when he conducted *Messiah* for them at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Mumbai and in Goa. March 2018 saw him make a return appearance conducting Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* and Haydn's *Nelson Mass* in Mumbai.

In September 2017, Carr was appointed to the Vocal Faculty of the Royal Academy of Music, where he teaches classes in Oratorio, German Lieder and English Song to the younger generation of world-class talent.