

**What?** A course for solo and choral singers  
**Where?** At Colditz Castle, Saxony  
**When?** Between Sunday August 16th and Tuesday August 25, (see main text)  
**How much?** €453 per person sharing en-suite room for 9 nights + £130 course fee  
 €627 per person en-suite room for single use for 9 nights + £130 course fee  
 A seven day stay is possible, but may affect the ability to take part in concerts.

John Huw Davies is again organising a continental course for choral and solo singers. Originally held in Savoie, France this year it will be held, for the second time, at Schloss Colditz, Saxony, one of the most famous castles in Germany.

Colditz Castle was a prisoner of war camp in WW2, from which escape was said to be impossible, and made famous by the 1971 film 'Escape from Colditz', a TV series and many books. Escape (and entry), however, is now easy, as you have a key to your room and to the front door! Part of the castle has been converted into an excellent hostel (photo at bottom right), with en-suite rooms (mostly double), a restaurant, a lift to the upper floors, very good rehearsal facilities, and easy access to the town square with inexpensive shops and cafés. Those who attended in 2008 (about 60 singers) found that the accommodation (opened in 2007) is as efficiently German as Savoie's was quaintly French, but contained within the walls of a castle first heard of in the 11th century, and largely constructed in the 16th. The town guide says 'The many historic buildings of Colditz bear witness to its eventful past. In the centre there is the main square with the Renaissance town hall, the church of St Egidien and the chapel of St Nicolas. The town lies along both sides of the Zwickauer Mulde river and has a population of 5000. The historic centre is on the east side of the river. A visit to the escape tunnels in the castle is an unforgettable experience. By 2009 a music school will have been opened on the same site". In 2008 visits to other local castles was arranged as well as a visit to Leipzig for sight seeing and to sing at St. Thomas' church (where Bach was Cantor for many years). This year we shall visit other major centres including Dresden and Meissen (all coaches, including those to and from airports, will be charged at what it costs us to provide them-cheaper than British coaches).

The course will be for Chamber Choir and soloists (numbers will be limited). We shall perform at the Kreuzkirche, Dresden, and have been asked to take part in the morning service at the Nikolaikirche, Leipzig. In the first four years of this course concerts, amongst others, were given at L'Eglise de Lescheraines and Motte en Bauge in 2005, at St Swithun's, Aix les Baines, and La Compote in 2006, in 2007 in the Chapel of the Chateau of the Dukes of Chambéry, with choral Mass being sung at Saint-Offenge-Dessous on Sunday morning), and in 2008 at St. Thomas' Leipzig and in the church at Colditz castle.

The concerts will consist of both choral and solo items. This ensures that a. we can achieve a high standard of choral performance by not attempting too many items, and b. solo and ensemble items can be included to provide a balanced concert. Time will be available for leisure activities, and to assist this, we expect all singers to look at the main items to be performed before hand so that little time has to be given to note-learning (see programme below). We are fortunate that several local residents both German and British are assisting with various aspects of the course.

As a reasonable balance of voices will be necessary, we reserve the right to decline applications to achieve this.

**Provisional timetable (timings will be varied where necessary to suit each day's activities):**

9.30-11.00		Rehearsal	A similar pattern will be used each day, depending on the rehearsal time needed to learn concert repertoire, and to fit in leisure activities. It is anticipated that as well as normal free time, one day will be entirely available for sight seeing.
11.30-13.00		Rehearsal	
14.00- 17.00	Arrive(Sunday)	Free time	
17.00		Rehearsal	
19.30		Dinner	
21.00		Informal concerts and activities	

Music sessions will normally take place each morning and early evening. All will be expected to take part in these sessions in order to achieve a high standard of performance for our concerts. Additional solo sessions will take place for specialist solo singers. John Huw Davies is particularly interested in vocal development for choral singers, and to further this, some solo work will be introduced into choral sessions. This innovative technique gives a much more interesting and varied session than the usual choral rehearsal. Solo singers are able to perform pieces to an informed audience (as in masterclasses) and receive tuition. This allows choral singers to hear the kind of comments and suggestions normally only made in a solo singing lesson, thus gaining insights into how to improve their own singing, as well as listening to an interesting and varied song repertoire. John Huw Davies will encourage choral singers to use and adapt the comments they have heard to their own singing during the choral rehearsals.

All are invited to bring items to perform in the informal concerts (a very successful part of previous courses). Occasionally items performed at these concerts have been included in public concerts. Black skirts/trousers and white blouses/shirts will be worn for public concerts. Many brought more formal wear for evening dinner, and for the course concerts etc.

Repertoire for concerts will be mainly European, and selected from the following list depending on the balance of voices (other pieces by the same composers may be used).

France, Charpentier-Mass, Regina Coeli,  
 Spain, Comes-Lamentacione, Guerrero -Canite Tuba  
 Italy, Cavalli-Magnificat, Monteverdi-Nisi Dominus, Motets,  
 Germany, Schütz-Cantate Domino, Brahms-Motets.

Lighter items will be chosen from  
 Rutter-Birthday Madrigals,  
 Stanford-Part songs,  
 Spicer-English part songs  
 Lighter arrangements will also be available

**We aim for a high standard of performance, and hope that you will look at notes beforehand. We will decide on the main pieces when when final numbers and balance is known, and are prepared to send music out before hand.**

The photographs on the cover show (from the top) the Schloss, Heinrich Schütz, Kantor of Kreuzkirche (where we will perform) Dresden for fifty five years, the Nikolaikirche (where we will take part in the Sunday morning service), two horse power bus in Dresden, and the hostel, in the main courtyard of the the castle at Colditz.-

John Huw Davies is a professional singer, conductor, broadcaster and teacher. He has given Radio 3 recitals and conducted the BBC Singers. Major choral and orchestral works conducted this year include Messiah, Bruckner's F minor Mass, Will Todd's Mass in Blue, Brahms' choral works with orchestra and Jongen's Mass. He taught at Trinity College of Music, London, and is involved with many courses, including Charterhouse Summer School (now CSSM), North Wales Summer School and the Stockport Festival Chorus, all of which he directs. He teaches at Canford SS and gives numerous weekend courses in the UK and the continent. Over four hundred solo and choral singers attend his courses every year.

Jane Roberts (assistant director) is at present Head of Strings at the Cyprus Music Centre, and has taught in Germany and North Wales. She is also a keyboard player, and performs regularly on violin, viola and piano. She accompanies singers and instrumentalists and conducts choirs, as part of her work, and in many concerts and courses during the year.

Colditz, within a few miles of Leipzig, can be reached by car via Belgian and German motorways. Suggested airports are:

a. Berlin (Schoenefeld) served by Easyjet once a day (we will meet the Sunday flight with a coach). Whilst this is the furthest from Colditz, we suggest it as the best option for those from the North West, as although the coach will cost more, the flight is quicker, does not involve changes and is much cheaper than flights from Manchester to Leipzig with a change at Frankfurt or Dusseldorf (Early booking is recommended).

b. Leipzig/Altenburg airport (28 miles away) served by Ryanair (from Stansted once a day) is the better option for those in the South East. Our local contacts will arrange transfers where necessary.

Very low fares are available for both these routes at time of writing.

c. Leipzig/Halle. This has the largest number of flights from Manchester and Heathrow each day, but all involve changes, It is possible to get to Leipzig by airport bus, then from the Hauptbahnhof to Grossbothen by train, and then a six mile bus journey to Colditz (two hourly service). We would also be able to arrange taxis (not expensive if shared)

Fees:

Course Fee £130 (£100 for resident non-singing partners)

Participant requiring full board with en-suite room for single use (9 nights) €627

Participants requiring full board sharing en-suite room – per person (9 nights) €453

No transport costs are included in these sums, which pay for board & lodging. It is the Course fee which pays for tuition, administration etc.

As we have to make accommodation payments in Euros, final fee payments paid in £ will be adjusted depending on the exchange rate available at the time (in 2008 the euro varied between 1.35 and 1.17 approx.). Fees should be paid by May 31st 2009.

It is suggested that you pay your deposit (see application form) as soon as possible as the number of rooms available is very limited.

We reserve the right to cancel the course (and return all fees) if we are overtaken by unforeseen circumstances. We shall bank deposit cheques as soon after receipt as possible, and this will confirm your acceptance on the course. If you cancel a booking after we have incurred accommodation costs or turned down other applicants, we shall ask you to pay the cost we have incurred. We will deal with problems of this kind as sympathetically as possible, and hope that you in return will understand the difficulties we face in running this course, and insure your costs.

Please give information regarding your transport arrangements on the application form, or let us have details as soon as possible.

Please return application form to: John Huw Davies (Colditz course), Craig y Don, St. David's Road, Caernarfon, LL55 1EL (johnhuwdavies@btinternet.com 01286 673401)

LL55 1EL (e mail johnhuwdavies@btinternet.com Phone 01286 673401)



# SMS

## SUMMER MUSIC FOR SINGERS COLDITZ CASTLE, SAXONY

DIRECTOR  
JOHN HUW DAVIES

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
JANE ROBERTS

A COURSE FOR  
CHORAL AND SOLO SINGERS

AUGUST 16 – 25 2009

