

EASTERN EARLY MUSIC FORUM

Heinrich Schütz, *Schwanengesang*

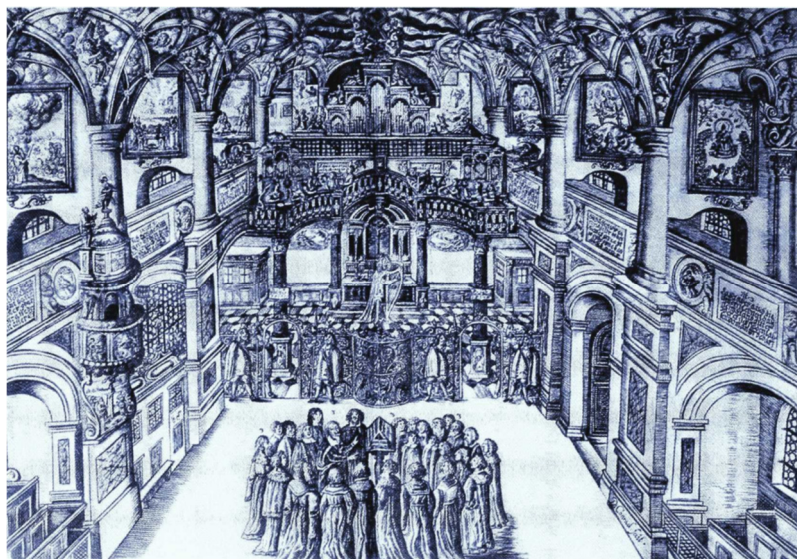
A weekend workshop for voices
and instruments

directed by

George Parris

11th – 12th October 2025

**Parish Church of St John
the Baptist, Thaxted**



EEMF is delighted to hold its fourth weekend workshop in the beautiful parish church of St John the Baptist, Thaxted, Essex.

This will be a rare chance to discover and perform Heinrich Schütz's final, testamental work composed in the year before his death (yet only officially uncovered in 1900, and first published in 1984). To showcase the fruits of a whole career is one thing, yet in setting an extensive text (Psalm 119) across a cycle of 11 separate motets Schütz was exceeding the conventional dimensions of a 17th-century musical work.

He clearly had personal reasons for setting this text: the music dances between moods of sorrow, reverence, and jubilation incorporating Venetian styles he had gained from Gabrieli and Monteverdi while confidently asserting the new German style he had cultivated in Dresden.

The space available in Thaxted Church will allow us to recreate something akin to Schütz's request for the work to be performed from the two organ lofts of Dresden's Schlosskapell: two choirs with instruments *ad libitum* in direct dialogue with each other.

This workshop is open to voices, continuo instruments, cornetti, sackbuts, curtals, viols and other stringed instruments. The *Schwanengesang* will be sung in German. Music will be provided, and pitch will be A = 440. Although we will include as many applicants as possible, we need to have a balance between singers and instrumentalists, and between the parts. We may not therefore be able to confirm you have a place on the workshop immediately we receive your application.

Tutors: George Parris and Emily Saville

Our choral leader and conductor will be **George Parris**. George trained as an early-music singer and then studied choral conducting and ensemble singing at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. In 2011 he founded The Carice Singers, now a professional ensemble, and today conducts the award-winning Finnish choir Spira Ensemble. As a singer he often performs with the Helsinki Chamber Choir and alongside the Helsinki and Finnish Baroque Orchestras. George has also been invited to conduct the Croatian Radio Choir and Coro Casa da Música in Portugal and is delighted to be one of

Ex Cathedra's Associate Conductors.

George will be joined by historical trombonist **Emily Saville**, who will work separately with the brass players on Saturday with additional repertoire items which will be decided according to the forces present. Emily is sought after for her music-centred approach. In 2023 she won Early Music Vancouver's Emerging Artist Competition for her focus on vocality when teaching. She was guest teacher for historical trombone at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in 2023–4, and, as of 2025, she teaches historical trombone at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis Musikschule.

Venues:

Our primary venue is the beautiful and spacious church of St. John the Baptist with Our Lady and St. Laurence. In addition, brass players will have the use of the medieval Guildhall. Sunday morning, while there are services, we will use nearby Bolford Street hall, and both lunch and afternoon tea on Sunday will be provided at the Swan Hotel, opposite the church. There is ample parking in Thaxted.

Provisional timetable:

Registration for the weekend will begin at 10.00 Saturday morning in the church, with music starting promptly at 10.30. The weekend will finish with a 'workshop performance' at 5.00pm in the Church, to which guests are invited. Admission is free, with a retiring collection.

Saturday 11th October:

10.30 am to 5 pm (with appropriate breaks for lunch and other refreshments). Singers and continuo players will be in the church, brass players at the Guildhall. Coffee and tea will be available at the venues, but participants will need to provide their own lunches.

Sunday 12th October:

10.30 am – 12.30 pm All instruments and voices, in Bolford Street Hall

12.45 buffet lunch at The Swan

2 pm to 4 pm All instruments and voices in Thaxted Parish Church

4 pm tea and coffee at The Swan

5 pm Performance in Thaxted Parish Church

The cost for the weekend will be £110 for members of EEMF or other Fora and £120 for non-members. This includes scores and parts, Sunday lunch, and teas and coffees on both days. (NB The cost of joining EEMF is only £6 per annum – please ask for details.) Please note that, although this is more than two normal separate day EEMF workshops, this two-day event costs considerably more to mount than normal workshops. If you feel excluded from this event by the cost, please contact Janet Tanburn (details below) to discuss a possible reduction.

COVID precautions

We expect participants to be respectful of the health of others, and not attend if they have symptoms of COVID or any other virus. If COVID is prevalent at the time of the workshop, we may ask participants to take a lateral flow test before attending. If anyone is forced to withdraw from the workshop for health reasons, a full refund will be given.

Please see the attached Word document for details of how to apply.