**PRESS RELEASE**

**For immediate release**

 **24 October 2018**

**New Musical Director marks 175th anniversary of the Cambridge University Symphony Chorus**

A former Director of the prestigious Hallé Youth Choir, and recently Chorus Master of the Leeds Philharmonic Chorus, Richard Wilberforce is taking up his post as successor to Stephen Cleobury CBE as the Musical Director of Cambridge University Symphonic Chorus (CUSC).

Richard shares his time between the UK and France. In the UK, he is Artistic Director of English Voices; and in France he directs the Jeune Choeur de Paris, the Maîtrise de Paris and the chamber choir OTrente. He continues to sing countertenor with the Monteverdi Choir.

Lawrence Wragg, President of CUSC, said "We look forward to Richard building on the legacy of his predecessor, Stephen Cleobury, and to an exciting future. We are marking our 175th anniversary with some exceptional concerts, including Bach's Christmas Oratorio this November in Saffron Hall. We also have a spectacular concert in King's College Chapel with Sir John Tomlinson saying his farewell to the role of Boris in extracts from Mussorgsky's Boris Godunov in June 2019."

Richard Wilberforce said: "I am thrilled to be taking the helm of this great and famous choir. Having cut my teeth in London, Manchester, Leeds and Paris, I am struck by the way in which music-making in Cambridge is omnipresent and of relentlessly high quality. CUSC offers its members the privilege of presenting the great large-scale symphonic choral works at a level that makes the City and University proud. I relish the prospect of steering this talented group of amateur singers towards ever-greater achievements".

One of the oldest and most distinguished university music societies in the world, Cambridge University Musical Society (CUMS) was founded by members of Peterhouse in 1843. It offers a world-class musical education for over 500 University members and local residents, the chance to work with professional soloists and conductors, and the ability to perform in venues such as King's College Chapel, Ely Cathedral and the new Saffron Hall as well as internationally.

CUMS has expanded since its foundation and now comprises the Symphony Chorus, Chamber Choir and seven instrumental ensembles. Visiting conductors and soloists have included Britten, Dvořák, Kodaly, Menuhin and Tchaikovsky. Sir Roger Norrington is the Principal Guest Conductor of CUMS.

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Attachments: Photo of Richard Wilberforce; programme of Chorus and Ensemble concerts 2018-19