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Epsom Choral Society to stage world premiere

15 June 2025



A world premiere blending sharp wit, choral storytelling, and jazz rhythms will take centre stage at Epsom Choral Society's summer concert this month.

On **Saturday 21st June at 7.30pm**, the Society will unveil *True Story*, a brand new choral piece composed by **Russell Hepplewhite** with text by renowned writer and former Children's Laureate **Michael Rosen**. The performance takes place at **St Andrew's Church, Cheam (SM2 2HF)**.

Described as "witty and wonderfully offbeat", *True Story* is based on Rosen's chaotic and comic account of the birth of his son Joe. Known for his distinctive humour and accessible lyricism, Rosen's writing lends itself to vivid musical interpretation. Composer Hepplewhite's score is full of energy and character, promising a premiere that's both playful and poignant.

The new work forms part of *Living Voices*, a national project from publishers **Stainer & Bell** pairing contemporary British poets with composers to explore modern life through choral music. Other pieces in the collection reflect on themes including youth, memory, health, and landscape—ranging from the light-hearted to the deeply moving.

For Epsom audiences, *True Story* headlines a lively summer programme entitled **'All That Jazz'**, which also features:

- **Mass in Blue** by **Will Todd** – a jazz-infused setting of the Latin Mass blending gospel influences with the classical choral tradition. The Society will be joined by soprano **Lisa Swayne** and a professional jazz trio for this soulful and energetic work.
- **Birthday Madrigals** by **John Rutter** – a playful, jazz-inspired cycle of songs combining Renaissance style with swing-era harmonies.
- **Evening Prayer** by Norwegian composer **Ola Gjeilo**, offering a more serene interlude with choir, piano, and saxophone.

Speaking ahead of the concert, the Society's musical director **Julian Collings** said the programme celebrates the range and vitality of contemporary choral music:

"This concert combines the best of tradition with innovation—bold new work alongside modern classics. We're especially proud to present a world premiere here in Epsom as part of a major national project."

Tickets are £20 (under-25s half price) and are available at:
 www.ticketsource.co.uk/epsom-choral-society/t-molojed
 Box Office: 01372 274418

Image of St Andrews – Google Street view.

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