

**Francis Pott** [b.1957] began musical life as a chorister at New College, Oxford. He held an open music scholarship at Winchester College and then at Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he studied composition with Robin Holloway and Hugh Wood while also pursuing piano studies privately in London with the distinguished British artist, Hamish Milne. After an initial career teaching in the secondary independent sector, throughout the 1990s Francis was John Bennett Lecturer in Music at St Hilda's College, Oxford, and also a lay clerk in the Choir of Winchester Cathedral, under the directorship of Dr David Hill. In 2001 he became Head of London College of Music, University of West London, later leading research across the University's wider Faculty of Arts and acceding in 2007 to its first ever Chair in Composition. He holds M.A. and postgraduate Mus.B. degrees from the University of Cambridge, a Fellowship of London College of Music and a Ph.D.

Francis Pott has become recognised particularly for his sacred choral and organ music. His work has been performed in concert and on radio in some three dozen countries worldwide, published by four major houses within the UK and released extensively on CD. Winner of four national composition awards, in 1997 he received First Prize in the piano solo section of the S.S. Prokofiev Composing Competition in Moscow, for his *Toccata* (dedicated to his friend, the French-Canadian virtuoso Marc-André Hamelin). In 2006 and 2011 he was a nominated finalist in the BASCA Annual Composer Awards, staged in association with the BBC. In August 1999 *A Song on the End of the World*, his oratorio for soloists, chorus and orchestra, named after a poem written in Nazi-occupied Warsaw by Czesław Miłosz, was the acclaimed millennial Elgar Commission of The Three Choirs Festival, held at Worcester. The work was hailed in *The Times* as '*thrilling music, ...contemporary and original, ...impressive and profoundly affecting*', and in *The Birmingham Post* as '*a stunning première, ...apocalyptic and luminous*'. In 2006 a further oratorio for tenor soloist, double chorus and organ, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, was acclaimed by Richard Morrison in *The Times*: '*A sincere, intelligent and admirably unsensational meditation on the darkness at the heart of man. ...One sometimes writes, hyperbolically, of a performance moving one to tears. But at the end of Francis Pott's The Cloud of Unknowing, genuine tears were shed*'.

Francis lives with his wife and two children in a village on the outskirts of Winchester. He is especially pleased that Christian Wilson is performing *Christus* in Keble College Chapel, since on 05 July 1855 Francis's direct ancestor, the Ven. Alfred Pott, Archdeacon of Berkshire (1822-1908), married Emily Harriet Gibbs, of the same family as William Gibbs of Tyntesfield, through whose philanthropy Keble Chapel was built in the mid- 1870s.