

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY

Come and Sing

HANDEL'S

MESSIAH

Alice Privett - soprano

Rosamund Thomas - mezzo-soprano

Richard Dowling - tenor

Jacob Phillips - bass

Nantwich Sinfonia

Alison Loram - Leader

John Naylor - Conductor

St Mary's Church, Nantwich

Saturday 7th January 2017 6.00 pm

On behalf of the Nantwich Choral Society I would like to welcome you to our concert. The choir, now in its 44th season, began its life as an evening class but rapidly took on a life of its own and has become one of the most accomplished and well-regarded choirs in the North West of England. For the last eleven years we have been fortunate to have the inspirational John Naylor as our Music Director and we are also blest with a fine accompanist, Simon Russell.

Tonight's concert is the end product of one of our popular annual 'Come and Sing' events, in which members of our choir are joined by singers from many other choirs in the area to rehearse a work during the day and perform it in the evening. These events have an educational purpose in widening singers' experience and knowledge of repertoire, as well as making an enjoyable day out. *Messiah* is a work that is often performed under such conditions, and we make no apology for choosing this familiar and much-loved work for our event today. To make tonight that bit more special, we are delighted to welcome the Nantwich Sinfonia, with their leader Alison Loram, and four young soloists from the Royal Academy of Music.

The resources required to put on our concerts are considerable, and we wish to acknowledge our gratitude for the legacies, sponsorships, gifts, grants and donations which help us maintain and develop our musical standards. Recently we have received grants from Cheshire East and Nantwich Town Council, and we are very grateful for ongoing support from the Harding Trust. Without the generosity of these bodies and others it would not be possible for our choral society to have the opportunity to take part in concerts of a high standard, using professional soloists and orchestral players as required; and it would not be possible for you, the audience, to listen to great choral works here in the wonderful setting of St Mary's Church.

Kay Foster

Acknowledgements

Nantwich Choral Society gratefully acknowledges the support during the recent past from The Harding Trust, Cheshire East Council, Nantwich Town Council, Barclays Bank, the advertisers in our programmes and other sponsors and donors.



Commentary

MESSIAH

Today's performance of *Messiah* will unite many people who have gathered from far and wide to sing, play and hear this, the best known of all the works in the choral repertoire. Indeed, there is no more fitting work than *Messiah* for us to mark musically and spiritually the beginning of another new year. The previous successes of our early January 'Come and Sing' events have encouraged us to perform with orchestral accompaniment on this occasion. We very much hope that it will be enjoyed by all involved.

Handel may have passed quite close to Nantwich on his way to give the first performance of *Messiah* in Dublin on April 13th, 1742. It is certainly possible, because he travelled from London to Chester (by which road remains unknown) where he was delayed by bad weather on the crossing route. Anxious to make good use of the time available, he prevailed upon the cathedral organist to arrange a 'sing through' of his new work with some members of the cathedral choir who, quite reasonably, he expected to be proficient readers of music. He was very put out by one of them who, when the singer gave a very poor account of the music placed before him, told a dismayed Handel that he could sing at sight 'but not at first sight!'

We know that Handel wrote *Messiah* in an amazingly short burst of inspiration, between Saturday August 22nd, 1741 and Saturday September 12th 1741 in preparation for the series of concerts he was to give in Dublin, borrowing very little from previous compositions. He was uncertain what musical resources he would have at his disposal when he arrived, so he designed the work for very sparing orchestration – only continuo, strings and brief appearances by trumpets and kettledrums.

The majority of the arias have an obbligato accompaniment by a single instrumental part with continuo. The chorus, though planned to be relatively few in number, is given a much more prominent role than in most of Handel's previous compositions. All this was designed for economy of cost, especially since the first performance was presented to raise funds for Dublin's Charitable Music Society.

Charles Jennens, Handel's regular librettist, selected the words from the Authorised Version of the Bible and from the Book of Common Prayer. This combination of familiar Old Testament and New Testament texts illustrates the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies of Messiah in the Gospel story. The work is divided into three parts:

Part One: Prophecies of Christ's coming, the Annunciation and the Nativity.

Part Two: Christ's sacrifice, his Suffering, Resurrection and Ascension, the Evangelism of the Apostles and a glorious view of the Kingdom of God.

Part Three: Christ's redemption and the immortality of the Christian soul.

In order to accommodate as large an audience as possible, the Dublin Charitable Society's Stewards asked 'Ladies not to come with hoops' and Gentlemen 'to come without their swords'. On the day there were 700 people in the room, £400 was raised, and the Dublin Journal wrote: "Words are wanting to express the exquisite delight afforded to the admiring crowded Audience. The Sublime, the Grand and the Tender, adapted to the most elevated, majestick and moving Words, conspired to transport the ravish'd Heart and Ear."

But when Handel returned and gave the first London performance as part of his Lenten Oratorio season at Covent Garden Theatre in 1743, the reaction was underwhelming. Some critics piously questioned the suitability of a playhouse for the performance of sacred texts, and most patrons preferred Handel's *Samson* which was 'received with uncommon applause' whilst *Messiah* 'was but indifferently relish'd.'

Handel was born in Halle (Germany) in February 1685, and after youthful appointments as organist at the local cathedral and harpsichord player / violin player at the local opera house, he went to Italy in 1706 where he wrote numerous operas and cantatas in the Italian style.

He returned to Germany, but between 1710 and 1716 he commuted regularly to London where Italian opera had become very popular. He eventually settled in England in the service of the Duke of Chandos who, like many rich noblemen, maintained his own small musical establishment. In 1719 he became Music Director of The Royal Academy, formed by a group of noblemen to put on regular Italian opera performances.

This proved a musically successful but financially insecure venture, and so in 1729 he started seasonal programmes on his own account. During the 1730s he built up a flourishing and profitable reputation for seasons of Italian operas and English oratorios and odes at Covent Garden.

Thus Handel was essentially a man of the theatre, especially Italian opera, although he was also undoubtedly a man with a religious background. Biblical subjects (with which his audience would have been very familiar) proved a rich source for the libretti of very many of his compositions. After composing *Messiah* for Dublin he seems to have concentrated principally on oratorios to be performed in the theatre, but he did revive *Messiah* in 1745 and again in 1749.

Handel, by then 45 and more affluent, had become an establishment figure, and in 1750 began the English tradition of performing *Messiah* in support of good causes, in this case for the Foundling Hospital where he was a governor. All of a sudden *Messiah* 'was received with universal applause', its public reputation in England was transformed and it has enjoyed a uniquely unbroken history of performance ever since.

When King George II attended a performance he (allegedly) stood up at the beginning of the Hallelujah chorus, but nobody really knows why. The reasons may have been lofty,

they may have been prosaic. However, the audience followed protocol and also stood, a tradition was begun, and most audiences have stood for this great chorus ever since!

In the 18th century Mozart famously produced a version with more lush orchestration; in the 19th century it became customary to give performances with staggeringly large resources (up to 2,500 performers). Every choral society included *Messiah* in its repertoire, and it is tempting to speculate that the sentiments attached to performances at this time were as much socially worthy ('improving') as they were musical.

In the first part of the 20th century conductors including Thomas Beecham and Malcolm Sargent gave performances which today would be regarded as hopelessly romantic, but they were nevertheless very persuasive interpretations. In the latter part of the 20th century it became, and still is, more customary to perform baroque music with resources more closely aligned to those originally intended. Tonight's performance uses the forces available to us, and on this occasion it is just as much about performing as it is about hearing this glorious work.

Handel died in 1759, nine days after conducting his last performance of *Messiah*, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. He is regarded, with his contemporary J.S. Bach, as the greatest of all the many Baroque musicians and composers: certainly he is one of the greatest of all the English composers. In *Messiah* he left us a legacy which has truly stood the test of time.

Jennens quoted Virgil in the introduction to his libretto – *Majora canamus* (let us sing of Greater Things). *Messiah* was considered in Handel's day a 'Grand Musical Entertainment' and since then it has properly gained a unique place in musical performance. Even in a cynical and more secular age it has the power to move and inspire. The words are still well known by most of us, Handel's music is at once familiar and fresh and the work has a curious propensity to engage performers and audience alike in a corporate musical experience quite unlike any other.

Handel himself said of the audience at one performance: "I should be sorry if I only entertained them; I wished to make them better." In this performance tonight, may we all find a glimpse of some of the 'Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge' to which Jennens so appositely also referred.

May this occasion also inspire us to continue our tradition of meeting together at the beginning of each year to make music spontaneously for many years to come.

John Naylor

THE TEXT OF *MESSIAH*

MAJORA CANAMUS

(Virgil, *Eclogue IV*)

And without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifested in the Flesh, justified by the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.

In whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.

(1 Timothy iii, 16; Colossians ii, 3)

(These words, selected by Jennens, the librettist, formed a preface to the wordbook of the first performance of *Messiah* in April 1742 in Dublin.)

PART ONE

1. Symphony

2. Tenor recitative: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. *Isaiah 40:1-3*

3. Tenor aria: Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low: the crooked straight, and the rough places plain. *Isaiah 40:4*

4. Chorus: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. *Isaiah 40:5*

5. Bass recitative: Thus saith the Lord of hosts; yet once, a little while, and I will

shake the heavens, and the earth, the sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come. *Haggai 2:6-7*

The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. *Malachi 3:1*

6. Contralto aria: But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire. *Malachi 3:2*

7. Chorus: And He shall purify the sons of Levi that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. *Malachi 3:3*

8. Contralto recitative: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, "God with us". *Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23*

9. Contralto aria and Chorus: O thou, that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou, that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! *Isaiah 40:9*

Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. *Isaiah 60:1*

10. Bass Recitative: For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. *Isaiah 60:2-3*

11. Bass Aria: The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. *Isaiah 9:2*

12. Chorus: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. *Isaiah 9:6*

13. Pifa (Pastoral Symphony)

14. Soprano Recitative: There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. *Luke 2:8-9*

15. Soprano recitative: And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. *Luke 2:10-11*

16. Soprano recitative: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying: *Luke 2:13*

17. Chorus: Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, goodwill toward men! *Luke 2:14*

18. Soprano aria: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is the righteous Saviour and He shall speak peace unto the heathen. *Zechariah 9:9-10*

19. Contralto recitative: Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. *Isaiah 35:5-6*

20. Contralto aria: He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: and He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. *Isaiah 40:11*

Soprano aria: Come unto Him, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him; for He is meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. *Matthew 11:28-29*

21. Chorus: His yoke is easy, His burthen is light. *Matthew 11:30*

Interval of 15 minutes

PART TWO

22. Chorus: Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. *John 1:29*

23. Contralto aria: He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. *Isaiah 53:3*

He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: He hid not His face from shame and spitting. *Isaiah 50:6*

24. Chorus: Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. *Isaiah 53:4-5*

25. Chorus: And with His stripes we are healed. *Isaiah 53:5*

26. Chorus: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. *Isaiah 53:6*

27. Tenor recitative: All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn: they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying, *Psalms 22:7*

28. Chorus: He trusted in God that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him. *Psalms 22:8*

29. Tenor recitative: Thy rebuke hath broken His heart; He is full of heaviness: He looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was no man; neither found He any to comfort Him. *Psalms 69:20*

30. Tenor Aria: Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow. *Lamentations 1:12*

31. Tenor recitative: He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of Thy people was He stricken. *Isaiah 53:8*

32. Tenor aria: But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell; nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption. *Psalms 16:10*

33. Chorus: Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in! Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in! Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory. *Psalms 24:7-10*

38. Soprano Aria: How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! *Romans 10:15*

40. Bass Aria: Why do the nations so furiously rage together, why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed. *Psalms 2:1-2*

42. Tenor recitative: He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn: the Lord shall have them in derision. *Psalms 2:4*

43. Air: Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. *Psalms 2:9*

44. Chorus: Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, Hallelujah! *Revelation 19:6*

The Kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever, Hallelujah! *Revelation 11:15*

King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and He shall reign for ever and ever, Hallelujah! *Revelation 19:16*

Pause

PART THREE

45. Soprano aria: I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. *Job 19:25-26*

For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep. *1 Corinthians 15:20*

46. Chorus: Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the

dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. *1 Corinthians 15:21-22*

47. Bass recitative: Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. *1 Corinthians 15:51-52*

48. Bass aria: The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. *1 Corinthians 15:52-53*

49. Contralto recitative: Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. *1 Corinthians 15:54*

50. Alto and Tenor duet,: O death, where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law. *1 Corinthians 15:55-56.*

53. Chorus: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. *Revelation 5:12-14*

54. Chorus: Amen

Nantwich Sinfonia

Alison Loram Julia Hargreaves Jac McKeigue	Violin 1
Caroline Nowotarski Sarah Heald	Violin 2
Della Hickey Kathi von Colson	Viola
Ruth Henley Becca Nelson	Cello
Tim Jones	Bass
Richard Weigall Marcia Ferran	Oboe
John Hargreaves	Bassoon
Wendy Jones Stuart Jones	Trumpet
Richard Moulton	Timpani
Simon Russell	Keyboard continuo

Alice Privett - soprano

Alice trained at both the Guildhall School of Music and the Royal Academy of Music, and graduated from the opera course at the Academy as a Sickle Foundation Scholar in 2014. Operatic experience includes Ginevra *Ariodante* (RAO), Carolina *The Secret Marriage* (British Youth Opera), Nerone *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (Aldeburgh Festival), Gretel (West Green Opera), Romilda *Xerxes* (Longborough Festival Opera), Giulietta *I Capuletti e i Montecchi* (Pop up Opera), Susanna *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Pop up Opera at the Kilden Theatre, Norway), and Mimi (Opera Holland Park as a Christine Collins Young Artist). She has extensive concert experience which includes performances at Kings Place (2014, Berg and Scheonberg lieder), the Amersham Festival (2015, Mozart concert arias and 2016, *Vier Leztze Lieder*), recitals as part of the London Handel Festival, and a performance of Birtwistle songs as part of the BBC Proms on radio 3. She has sung as a soloist with choral societies around the UK; highlights include *Israel in Egypt* with

the Huddersfield choral society, and *The Messiah* with the London Handel Festival at St George's, Hannover Square.

In 2015 she was a finalist in both the London Handel Competition and the Kathleen Ferrier Competition, and has several performances planned with the London Handel festival this year. She was awarded both the Helen Clarke Award (2013), and the Leonard Ingrams Award (2015) by Garsington Opera, and is generously supported by Opera Prelude. This year she looks forward to reprising the role of Giulietta on tour, and appearing again with Holland Park as Bianca in *La Rondine*.

Rosamond Thomas - mezzo-soprano

Rosamond is currently in the second year of an undergraduate degree at the Royal Academy of Music, studying with a scholarship under Mary Nelson. She recently represented the Academy at the Kathleen Ferrier Bursary Award, and has achieved the Arthur Burcher Memorial Prize and Arthur S Sykes Award.

Rosamond first began singing at Salisbury Cathedral, and was Head Chorister in her final year. She was on the Hampshire Specialist Music Course at Peter Symonds College, and also studied at the Junior RAM. Her recent solo engagements include numerous *Messiah* concerts, the Pie Jesu from Durufle's Requiem for the Laudate Choir, and Mendelssohn's Elijah for Seaton Choral Society. Her stage work includes scenes from Eugene Onegin (Olga) and The Pirates of Penzance (Ruth). She was a member of the Welsh National Youth Opera 2015, performing scenes from Dido and Aeneas (Sorceress) and sang in the Dorset Opera Festival chorus in 2014. She is looking forward to performing the role of Julius Caesar for King's College Opera in March 2017.

Rosamond was a member of Genesis 16 2014-15, and continues her ensemble work singing with groups such as The Mousai Singers, The Carice Singers and Scherzo.

Richard Dowling - tenor

Richard is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music's Opera Course, where he performed the roles of Tom Rakewell in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* & 'Le Prince' in Massenet's *Cendrillon*.

He recently performed the role of Ferrando in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with West Green Opera and worked with Graham Vick, performing the role of the 'Sailor' in Birmingham Opera Company production of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. He has also performed the role of Nemorino in Donizetti's *Elisir d'amore* with Jackdaws OperaPLUS.

With Garsington Opera he has performed as the 'Glassmaker' in Britten's *Death in Venice* conducted by Stuart Bedford, as 'Selimo' in Rossini's *Maometto II*, and as 'Mosquito' in Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen* and was awarded Garsington Opera's 2014 Simon Sandbach Award. He has also been a young artist with Mid Wales Opera in the role of 'Count Almaviva' in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*.

Richard is a keen recitalist and experienced oratorio artist. Notable engagements include Britten's *Ballad of Heroes* and Mozart's *Requiem* in the Bridgewater Hall, Finzi's *Dies Natalis* in Brentwood Cathedral, and Janacek's *Otcenas* in Gorton Monastery.

Richard originally studied Chemical Engineering and went on to complete a PhD in the field of crystallisation while working as a Lay Clerk at Manchester Cathedral.

Jacob Phillips - bass

Jacob was born in London and raised in Cheshire where he was a student at Knutsford High School. He additionally joined the J.R.N.C.M at the age of fifteen where he studied singing with Thomas Schulze.

Jacob was awarded an entrance scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music where he now studies under the guidance of Professor Mark Wildman and Matthew Fletcher. He was the recipient of the Rutson Memorial Prize after his first year at The Academy and continues to study with the generous support of the Philip Hattey Scholarship. Jacob is the 2016 winner of the Kathleen Ferrier Society competition for young singers.

Jacob's future plans involve a performance of Handel's *Messiah* in London and a solo recital in 2017 at the Lymm Festival on the 30th of June.

Simon Russell - keyboard continuo and rehearsal accompanist

Simon was born in Liverpool. He studied organ at Birkenhead School with Timothy Lawford and gained his ARCM and FTCL diplomas while still at school then on to Cambridge as Organ Scholar at St. Catharine's College, where he continued studies with Dame Gillian Weir and the late Peter Le Huray.

After Cambridge he was appointed Assistant Organist at Chester Cathedral but decided after a while to keep music as a hobby and gain his fortune from computer keyboards.

He was firstly accompanist and then Music Director of the Hoylake Choral Society from 1982 until he moved, in 2000, to Nantwich where he is Organist at St Mary's Parish Church. He is an annual recitalist at Bangor and Chester Cathedrals and is on the 'reserve' organist list playing for visiting choirs and covering holiday periods and other absences. He is also in demand as an organ, piano and theory tutor and has many Associated Board and other pupil distinctions and diploma successes to his credit.

Since May 2014, he has been a full-time professional freelance musician and as well as being accompanist to the Nantwich Choral Society, he is also accompanist to the Jubilate Chamber Choir, based in Cheltenham. Simon is also an examiner for the London College of Music and the Regional Coordinator for the North of England for the Royal School of Church Music.

The Nantwich Sinfonia – leader Alison Loram

The Nantwich Sinfonia consists of experienced professional musicians gathered together mostly from the region, but some from much further afield. Their leader **Alison Loram** began playing the violin first as a pupil of John Flint through Shropshire's County Music Service and later with Robin Thurlby. She led the Shropshire Schools' Symphony Orchestra from 1980-81, and in 1983 she was one of the joint equal winners of The Shropshire Concerto Competition. Alison went on to study at the Royal College of Music with Hugh Bean, John Ludlow and Rodney Friend, subsequently leading the orchestra of the National Centre for Orchestral Studies at Goldsmith's College, with which she was also soloist in a performance of Barber's Violin Concerto.

A persistent shoulder problem led Alison to the Alexander Technique which she studied with Brian Door, qualifying as a member of the Professional Association of Alexander Teachers in

1992. Since that time, in addition to teaching the Technique at Birmingham Conservatoire, Alison has developed a career as a research scientist gaining a BSc and a PhD from the University of Birmingham and working as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Sheffield.

Alison now has resumed her career as a freelance concert violinist. As a member of the British Association for Performing Arts Medicine, she combines her experiences in music, teaching and science into research into the neuromuscular aspects of playing the violin and viola. Alison lives in Crewe and is a member of the Lydian Singers.

John Naylor – conductor, singer and organist

John combines extensive performance experience in world-class choirs with a lifelong passionate interest in choral music and its performance. Following a successful business career he now devotes most of his activities to conducting and choir development. His original training was as a choral scholar at St John's College, Cambridge with the great Dr George Guest after keyboard studies with Conrad Eden at Durham Cathedral where he was a chorister, a music scholarship at Rossall School and singing studies with Wilfrid Brown and Lyndon van der Pump from The Royal College of Music.

He subsequently became a professional member of the Chapel Royal Choir of St Peter ad Vincula at H.M. Tower of London and The Monteverdi Choir and Louis Halsey Singers, appearing at The Proms, The South Bank, The Aldeburgh Festival and in numerous broadcasts and recordings. He has sung in the cathedral choirs of Carlisle, Christ Church Oxford and Chester where until recently he could still be occasionally spotted on the back row!

John has been Director of The Lydian Singers since founding the choir in 1980. They are now one of the leading chamber choirs in the North West and have performed extensively in the North West, Spain, France, Italy and in most of the cathedrals in Great Britain, often returning several times by invitation. He also conducts The Open University Chapel Choir.

John was appointed Music Director of Nantwich Choral Society in September 2005 for whom he has now conducted highly acclaimed performances of works in the mainstream choral repertoire including Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Bach's *St John Passion* and *St Matthew Passion* (both in Chester Cathedral), and Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, Fauré's *Requiem*, Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man* with Ensemble Vocal Arpège de Mâcon, Mozart's *Requiem* and Bach's *B minor Mass* with the 18th Century Concert Orchestra, Vaughan Williams *Sea Symphony* and *The Lark Ascending*, Haydn's *The Seasons* and Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* in Chester Cathedral, Coleridge Taylor's *Hiawatha* and Elgar *Enigma Variations* with the Northern Concordia Orchestra, and Handel *Coronation Anthems* and the *Dettingen Te Deum* with the 18th Century Sinfonia.

Performances in 2015 and 2016 included Handel's *Judas Maccabeus*, Haydn's *Harmoniemesse* and Duruflé's *Requiem* with NCS, Tewkesbury Abbey, Brecon Cathedral and Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and Schubert *Mass in G* at The Lymm Festival with The Lydian Singers, and Ely, Ripon and St Albans cathedrals with OUCC. Future plans include, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Verdi *Requiem* with NCS, Lichfield, Durham and Peterborough cathedrals with The Lydian Singers and Blackburn, Liverpool and Oxford cathedrals with OUCC.



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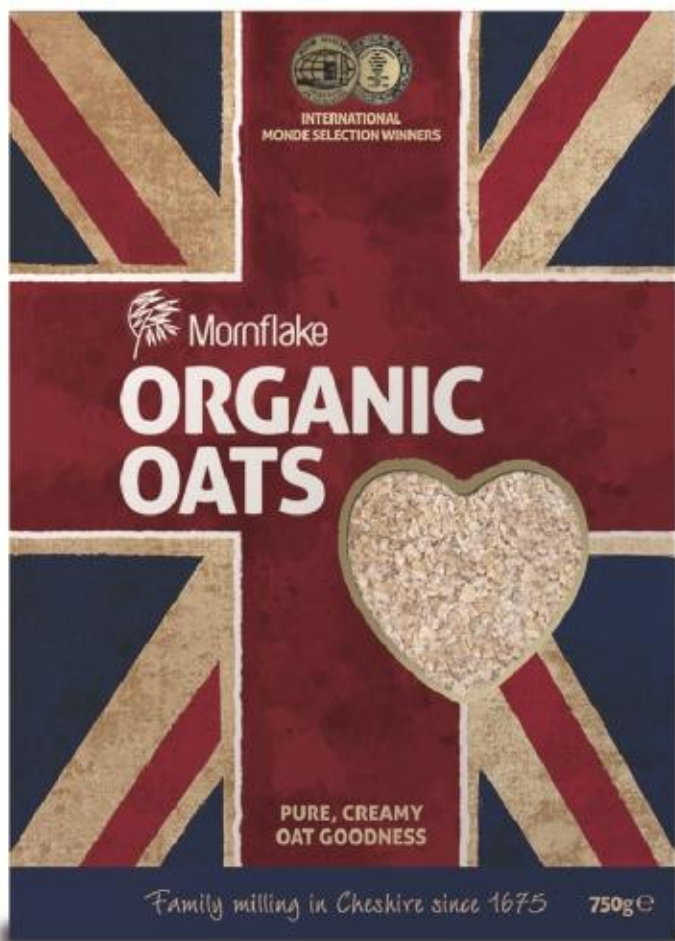
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Programme of events

2017

Sunday 26 March 2017, **3.30 pm**

Nantwich Civic Hall

Mendelssohn: Elijah

with The Northern Concordia Orchestra

Saturday 15 July 2017, 7.30 pm

St Mary's Nantwich

John Rutter: The Sprig of Thyme and Magnificat

with Ensemble Arpège de Mâcon and

The Nantwich Sinfonia

Sunday 22 October 2017, **3.30 pm**

Victoria Hall, Hanley

Verdi: Requiem

with Ceramic City Choir and

The Northern Concordia Orchestra

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY

Please join our

200 Club

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For an application form, contact tonight's Front of House team

or email ncs200club@gmail.com