

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY

St Mary's Church, Nantwich

Saturday 19 March 2016

J S Bach

St John Passion

Rogers Covey-Crump – Evangelist

Peter Edge – Christus

James Hall – Pilate

Natalie Clifton-Griffith – soprano

Harriet Goodwin – mezzo soprano

Tim Kennedy – tenor

Jake Muffett – baritone

The Nantwich Sinfonia – leader Alison Loram

John Naylor - conductor

Chairman's Welcome

On behalf of the Nantwich Choral Society I would like to welcome you to our concert. The choir, now in its 43rd 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 ten 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.

Our programme tonight is one of the greatest works of the choral repertoire, Bach's *St John Passion*, which is, of course, a particularly appropriate work to perform at this time of year, and which is an intensely moving experience for believers and non-believers alike. We hope that we will do it justice. Among our fine array of soloists we are particularly pleased to have secured the internationally-renowned tenor, Rogers Covey-Crump, to sing the key role of the Evangelist. In complete contrast, our 2015-6 season will conclude with Will Todd's *Mass in Blue* and, on a lighter note, some choral arrangements of classic popular songs.

The resources required to put on these 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. 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.

In particular I would like to mention that we were fortunate, just before Christmas last year, to find ourselves among the beneficiaries of the will of the late Joyce Clegg of Crewe, who left the greater part of her estate to various charities with which she had been involved. Joyce sang with us for about forty years until her health prevented her from doing so about four years before she died, and she was much loved and is fondly remembered by many of the choir. Thanks to her generosity we have been able to purchase a high-quality digital harpsichord/chamber organ/continuo which we will be using for the first time in tonight's performance, and expect to use for many of our concerts to come.

Kay Foster

Reflections on Bach's St John Passion

Perhaps we have just turned on the television, the radio or opened a newspaper. We notice an international news item and see local leaders in the Middle East protesting with loud and frightening indignation about some issue or other. We observe the self-serving proconsul of an occupying power seeking to justify his actions, and a frenzied mob crying for blood. Some might ask themselves what has changed in two thousand years?

Nevertheless, especially if we are Christians, we ourselves know why an apparently similar incident that otherwise might long ago have been consigned to the footnotes of history should have made such an impact on the development of the world's beliefs, philosophy and history.

Bach lived in a society when one of the main ways of retelling, explaining and pondering on this most important event of all was through the Good Friday services of the Lutheran Church. He began composing his Passion according to St John after his appointment as Cantor at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig in 1723 in anticipation of performing it on the Good Friday in 1724.

The version performed this evening is a relatively new English version by Neil Jenkins, himself a distinguished interpreter of the Evangelist's role. His concern with the Gospel text has been to make the Authorised Version of the King James Bible fit Bach's original German vocal line as nearly as possible. Bach's non-biblical texts, extracted from a variety of sources, have either been newly translated or considerably revised, especially where previous translations now sound quaint to modern ears.

I had no hesitation in deciding to perform in English rather than in Bach's original German. I feel strongly that the importance of telling the Passion story in language all of us can understand (surely Bach's purpose) outweighs considerations of language authenticity.

The narrative is assigned in recitative form to the Evangelist and to the main protagonists, Jesus and Pilate. As in a Greek tragedy the Chorus also take part in the story but their words are set to more elaborate music. From time to time they step aside from the unfolding narrative and sing chorales which comment in detached observations upon each development as it unfolds. The Lutheran hymn tunes Bach selected for these chorales would have been very familiar to contemporary congregations.

In contrast to the relative simplicity of the recitatives, four separate soloists reflect on the Passion Story in musically complex arias. Their extended reflections draw Christian inspiration from the narrative whilst challenging the listener with deeply thoughtful interpretations and insights.

Bach's orchestral accompaniment is often lean and sinuous: two instruments form trios with the singers of the arias, supported only by the continuo players. Elsewhere the harmonic structure is much more rich and complex, especially when orchestra and chorus have independent parts in the full-blooded crowd scenes.

Unlike St Matthew's gospel, St John's version of the Passion is pared down almost to a bare bones account. Much of the story recounted by the other evangelists is omitted, including the Last Supper, the Garden of Gethsemane and Pilate's wife's dream. However, Bach cannot resist adding drama to the story by borrowing Peter's remorse and the earthquake from St Matthew.

The main dramatic focus is on Jesus' summary trial before Pilate and his immediate crucifixion. Pilate seems to attempt to make some sort of logic of the case put before him whilst the mob outside, egged on by the High Priests, howl for blood. Of the three narrative roles, that of Jesus is the most brief. Jesus is portrayed as a passive human being, somewhat otherworldly, rising above and almost detached from the situation in which he finds himself.

Despite his intellectual curiosity about Jesus' position and motivation, Pilate is ever the wily Roman bureaucrat with an eye to how his actions may be interpreted by his superiors. Although he clearly despises the Jews and can find no case proven against Jesus, he gives in to the crowd's blackmailing threat - releasing a local troublemaker might not read well in Rome. He wins a petty victory by insisting that his ironic superscription over the cross should stand despite the High Priests' protests, and taunts the Jews sarcastically about the crucifixion of their king. But only weakness and expediency has prompted him to execute a man who in his heart he knows to be innocent.

The St John Passion is arguably Bach's most vividly dramatic work. St John's lean narrative has a compelling urgency which Bach illuminates through rich word painting in the Evangelist's part (a 'cock a doodle do' arpeggio for the cock crow and intense chromaticism for Peter's bitter weeping) and in the dramatic polyphony of the crowd scenes.

Almost unbearable intensity flows from the focus on the political conflict with the Jews and the psychological, curiously academic dialogue between Pilate and Jesus. This piles increasing emotional pressure on the listener as the tragedy moves to its appallingly inevitable conclusion.

Much has been made of the ingenious palindromic structure of the work which begins and ends with two great choruses. The first sets the scene, and appears to depict a bustling, darkly murmuring Jerusalem welcoming the Lord and Master. However, it is soon apparent that it is a more general commentary on the triumph of the Resurrection

after the agony of the Cross and Passion. In contrast, the last full chorus 'Sleep well, and rest in God's safekeeping' is a tender Song of Farewell to the dead Jesus.

Pilate seems to be seeking some way out for Jesus until No 40 ('Our Lord in prison cell confined') after which the mob blackmail him and howl for blood. Bach ingeniously uses the same music in the four choruses before and the four choruses after this point. He couples the music for the soldiers' mocking of Jesus as the 'King of the Jews' with that for the High Priests' demand that Pilate should change the wording on the superscription 'King of the Jews'. The same fugue is used both when the Jews pompously assert the implications of their own law, and also when, as this fails, they then craftily invoke Roman law. The same chorale music reflects both on the bitterness of Peter's denial and later on the tenderness of Jesus' provision for his mother. The disturbing dissonance of the oboes playing in sevenths, first heard in the opening chorus, pervades those subsequent choruses which depict the blood lust of the crowd as they scream 'Crucify, crucify!'

Bach's word painting in the arias also shows his genius in full flow. There is a complex interweaving of melodic lines, like the twisted cords of a rope, in the Alto aria 'From the bondage of iniquity'. As the Soprano sings 'I follow thee gladly' the accompanying flute dutifully follows the voice two beats later. In the great Tenor aria 'Behold him!' the rainbow of God's love after the flood of man's sin is described in an arcing phrase of no less than sixty three semi-quavers. In the Bass aria 'Haste, haste', urgency is conveyed by a two bar rising scale of semi-quavers followed by injunctions to 'Fly' described in longer and flowing four bar phrases.

Bach's setting of the St Matthew Passion also ends with a Song of Farewell, its lullaby poignantly interrupted by a discordant B natural which agonisingly merges into the final chord of C minor as Jesus is left in the tomb.

But in the St John Passion there is more. After the sadness of the final extended chorus (which also ends in C minor) Bach adds a final simple but thrilling chorale in which all join: 'O Jesus when I come to die, let angels bear my soul on high And when from Death you waken me ... let my eyes see... my Saviour and my risen Lord'.

After such a telling of the 'merits and most precious death and passion of God's dear Son', there can be no greater affirmation of the Christian's belief that we are 'heirs through hope of God's everlasting kingdom'.

John Naylor

TEXT

PART ONE

Chorus: Hail, Lord and Master; every tongue shall offer praises to thy name. Show by thy Cross and Passion that thou art God's redeeming Son, who humbly came to save mankind from depths of shame: and rose on high to reign. Then blessed be thy name.

Evangelist: Jesus went with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into which he entered with his disciples. Judas also, which did betray him, knew the place full well, for Jesus resorted thither oft together with his disciples. Therefore Judas, having received a band of men and of officers from the Chief Priests and the Pharisees, he cometh thither with lanterns, torches and with weapons. Therefore Jesus knowing all things that were to come upon him, He went forth and said unto them:

Jesus: Whom seek ye?

Evangelist: And they answered Him:

Chorus: Jesus of Nazareth!

Evangelist: Jesus saith to them:

Jesus: I am He.

Evangelist: Judas also, which did betray Him, was standing with them. As soon then as He had said "I am He" they went backward and fell to the ground. Then asked He them a second time:

Jesus: Whom seek ye?

Evangelist: Again they answered:

Chorus: Jesus of Nazareth

Evangelist: Jesus answered them:

Jesus: I told you but now, I am He. If ye seek for Me, let these men go their way.

Chorale:

O mighty love, O Love beyond all measure,
that leads Thee on this path of such displeasure.
I live with all the joys the world can offer;
yet Thou must suffer.

Evangelist: So that the saying might be fulfilled which He had spoken "Of them which thou gavest to me, of them have I lost not one". Then Simon Peter, having a sword, he drew it out and smote at the High Priest's serving man, and cut his right ear off; and his name was Malchus. Then said Jesus to Peter:

Jesus: Put up thy sword in the scabbard! Shall I not drink the cup which my Father hath given Me?

Chorale:

Thy will O God be always done,
on earth as round thy heavenly throne.
In time of sorrow patience give,
that we obediently may live.
With thy restraining Spirit fill
each heart that strives against thy will.

Evangelist: The band then, together with the Captain and the soldiers of the Jews, took hold of Jesus and bound Him fast, and led Him away first unto Annas, who

was Caiphas' father-in-law, which that same year was the High Priest. Now it was Caiphas who had counselled the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

Alto: From the bondage of iniquity that ever binds me, my Redeemer sets me free. From the evils that immure me, fully He'll cure me by His death upon the tree.

Evangelist: Simon Peter followed Jesus afar off, with another disciple.

Soprano: I follow Thee gladly, my Lord and my Master, and keep Thee in sight, my life and my light. O let me not stray from Thy narrow way, when dangers surround me and torments confound me.

Evangelist: Now that other disciple was known unto the High Priest, and entered in with Jesus to the Palace of the High Priest. Simon Peter stood outside at the door. And then that other disciple who was known unto the High Priest went out and spake unto her that kept the door and brought Peter also within. Then saith the Maid, that kept the door, to Peter:

Maid: Art thou not also one of this man's disciples?

Evangelist: He said:

Peter: I am not.

Evangelist: The officers and the servants that stood there had made them a fire of coals (for it was cold) and warmed themselves. Peter also stood there among them and warmed himself. Then

did the High Priest Annas question Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine. Jesus made answer to him:

Jesus: I always spake openly and freely to the World. And at all times I have taught within the Synagogue and in the Temple whither the Jews always do resort, nor have I spoken in secret at all. Why dost thou ask Me of this? Ask ye rather them who have heard Me speaking, what I have said and what I have taught them. See now! For they themselves know all the things that I have said.

Evangelist: And when He had thus spoken, an officer who was standing by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, and said:

Officer: Dost Thou dare make answer unto the High Priest so?

Evangelist: Jesus answered unto him:

Jesus: If I have spoken evil, then do thou bear witness of the evil; but if I have spoken well, why smitest thou Me?

Chorale:

O Lord who dares to smite Thee?
And falsely to indict Thee?
Deride and mock Thee so?
Thou canst not need confession,
who knowest not transgression,
as we and all our children know.

Why doth the Saviour languish
beneath this heavy anguish?
Whence comes this mortal woe?
The justice that we merit,
the Sinless doth inherit,
and pays the debts His debtors owe.

PART TWO

Evangelist: Now Annas sent Him bound unto the other High Priest, Caiphas. Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Then said they unto him:

Chorus: Art thou not one of His disciples?

Evangelist: But Peter denied it and said:

Peter: I am not.

Evangelist: And then one of the High Priest's servants, being kin to him whose ear Peter cut off that night, said:

Servant: Did I not see him in the garden with Him?

Evangelist: Then did Peter deny a third time; and immediately afterward the cock crew. Then did Peter think upon the word of Jesus, and he went out and wept bitterly.

Tenor: Ah, my soul, where shall I hide my shame, where find some consolation? Shall I stay till the mountaintops fall on me in desolation? Doth this world my guilt record? And for vile and cruel denial shall I be abhorred? Yea, the servant hath denied his Lord.

Chorale:

Peter, with his faithless lies,
thrice denied his Saviour.
One look from those pitying eyes
saw him as a traitor.
Jesus, turn and look on me,
who persist in sinning.
Set my fettered conscience free
for a new beginning.

INTERVAL

Chorale:

Christ, whose life was as the light,
by His friends forsaken,
in the darkness of the night
like a thief was taken.
Judgement of a godless Court,
witness falsely proffered;
Bitter taunts and cruel sport,
as foretold He suffered.

Evangelist: And then they led forth Jesus from Caiphas to the Judgement Hall, and it was early. And they went not into the Judgement Hall, lest they should become defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. And then went Pilate out unto them, and said:

Pilate: What accusation bring ye now against this man?

Evangelist: And they answered and said unto him:

Chorus: If this man were not a malefactor, we had not delivered Him.

Evangelist: And Pilate said unto them:

Pilate: Then take ye Him away, and judge ye Him according to your law.

Evangelist: The Jews therefore said unto him:

Chorus: For us it is not lawful to put a man to death.

Evangelist: So that the saying might be fulfilled which He had spoken when He signified by what manner of death He

should die. And then went Pilate once more again to the Judgement Hall, called for Jesus, and said to Him:

Pilate: Art Thou the King of the Jews?

Evangelist: Jesus answered him:

Jesus: Dost thou say this of thyself, or rather did others tell it thee of Me?

Evangelist: And Pilate answered Him:

Pilate: Am I a Jew? The Chief Priests and Thine own nation have delivered Thee unto me; what hast thou done?

Evangelist: And Jesus answered him:

Jesus: My kingdom is not of this world; were My kingdom of this world, then My servants surely would be fighting, that I should not be delivered unto the Jews; but now is My kingdom not from hence.

Chorale:

O mighty King, how marvellous Thy glory!
How can our falt'ring tongues proclaim
Thy story?
No human heart can ever rightly show
Thee
how much we owe Thee.

With feeble power unworthy hymns we
fashion,
Wherewith to praise Thy mercy and
compassion.
Thou wert and art the source of every
blessing
That we're possessing.

Evangelist: Then Pilate said unto Him:

Pilate: Now tell me, art Thou a King, then?

Evangelist: Jesus answered him:

Jesus: Thou say'st I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came hither, that I should witness to the truth. Each one that is of the truth shall hearken to My voice.

Evangelist: Pilate saith unto Him:

Pilate: What is truth then?

Evangelist: And when he had thus spoken he went out again to the Jews, and saith to them:

Pilate: I find in Him no fault at all. But ye have a custom at this time that I release one unto you. Will ye then that I should release the King of the Jews?

Evangelist: Then cried they all with one accord, saying:

Chorus: Not this man, no, not this, but Barabbas.

Evangelist: Now this Barabbas was a robber. Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him.

Bass: Come, ponder O my soul, with fearful trepidation, with trembling hope and anxious expectation; thy highest good is Jesu's suff'ring. For thee the sharp thorns He is wearing like Heaven's fairest flowers will seem. For thee the sweetest fruit the wormwood tree is bearing. Then gaze, for ever gaze on Him.

Tenor: Behold Him! See His body bruised and bleeding is interceding for us in Heaven above.

Evangelist: And when the soldiers had plaited Him a crown of thorns they put it upon His head, and put on Him a purple robe and said:

Chorus: See! We hail Thee King of Jews!

Evangelist: And they smote Him with their hands. Then Pilate therefore went out again and said to them:

Pilate: Behold, I bring Him forth unto you all, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him.

Evangelist: And then did Jesus come forth, still wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Then Pilate said to them:

Pilate: Behold, the man!

Evangelist: And when the Chief Priests and the officers saw Him, they all cried out saying:

Chorus: Crucify!

Evangelist: Then Pilate saith to them:

Pilate: Take ye Him away and crucify Him; for I find no fault in Him at all.

Evangelist: The Jews therefore answered him:

Chorus: We have a sacred law, and by this same law He should die, for He made Himself the Son of God.

Evangelist: And when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and he went in again to the Judgement Hall and saith to Jesus:

Pilate: From whence then art thou?

Evangelist: But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate to Him:

Pilate: Speakest Thou not to me? Knowest Thou not that I have the power to crucify, and also the power to release Thee?

Evangelist: Jesus answered him:

Jesus: Thou couldest have no power over Me had it not been given unto thee from above; therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.

Evangelist: And from thenceforward Pilate sought that he might release Him.

Chorale:

Our Lord, in prison cell confined,
releases us from prison.
And through his throne of grace we find
our freedom has arisen.
Had He not worn these bonds before,
our bonds had lasted evermore.

Evangelist: But the Jews cried out the more and said:

Chorus: If thou let this man go, then thou art not Caesar's friend; for, whoever maketh himself a King, he speaketh against Caesar.

Evangelist: And when Pilate heard that saying, straightway he brought Jesus

forth, and sat down upon the Judgement Seat, in a place that is called 'the High Pavement', but in the Hebrew: Gabbatha. And it was the Preparation of the Passover, about the sixth hour, and he saith to the Jews:

Pilate: Behold! Your King!

Evangelist: But they cried out:

Chorus: Away with Him, crucify Him!

Evangelist: Pilate saith unto them:

Pilate: Shall I crucify your King, then?

Evangelist: The Chief Priests answered and said to him:

Chorus: We have no King but Caesar.

Evangelist: And then he delivered Him to them, that they might crucify Him. And therefore they took Jesus and led Him away. And He bore His cross, and went forth to a place that is called "the Place of a Skull"; which is called in the Hebrew: Golgatha.

Bass: Haste all ye whose souls are weary. Leave your daily toil so dreary. Haste to Golgatha! With the wings of faith be flying. Fly, fly where He is dying; your new life awaits you there! (*During this aria the chorus interjects 'O where?'*)

Evangelist: And there crucified they Him, and with Him two others, on either side one. Jesus being in the midst. And Pilate also wrote out a title, and put it upon the cross, and there was written: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. This title

then read many of the Jews, for the place was nigh unto the city where Jesus was crucified. And it was written in Hebrew, and in Greek, and in Latin also. Then said the Chief Priests of the Jews unto Pilate:

Chorus: Write thou not; The King of the Jews, rather that He Himself said: 'I am the King of the Jews'.

Evangelist: But Pilate answered:

Pilate: What I have written, I have written.

Chorale:

Thy name, O Lord, is shining
upon me day and night,
With Thine own cross, enshrining
my innermost delight.
Thy patience and endurance
in suff'ring on the tree
Will give my soul assurance
Thy blood was shed for me.

Evangelist: And then did the soldiers, after they had crucified Jesus, take His garments, and make four parts, unto each of the soldiers there a part; and also His coat. Now the coat was without a seam, and from the top was woven through and through. They said therefore one to another:

Chorus: Let us not divide it, but cast lots upon it, whose it shall be.

Evangelist: So that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which is written "They took my raiment and they parted it among them, and for my vesture, yea my coat did they cast lots".

These things therefore the soldiers did then. Now standing beside the cross of Jesus was His mother and also His mother's sister, Maria, Cleophas' wife, also Mary Magdalene. And when Jesus therefore saw His mother and the disciple standing by her whom He loved, He saith unto His mother:

Jesus: Woman, behold thy son!

Evangelist: Then saith He to the disciple:

Jesus: Behold thy mother.

Chorale:

See Him in His agony,
thinking of another;
Bidding this disciple be
Son unto His mother.
O Mankind, be pure within;
love both God and neighbour;
live and die without a sin,
like your guiltless Saviour.

Evangelist: And from that hour he took her into his own home. After this, Jesus knowing that all was accomplished, that was written in the Scriptures, He saith:

Jesus: I thirst.

Evangelist: Now there was a vessel full of vinegar. They filled therefore a sponge with the vinegar, and placing it upon an hyssop, they put it up to His mouth. And when Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said:

Jesus: It is fulfilled.

Alto: "It is fulfilled!" Those words to save us He is sending. O tragic night: His task

on earth is ending. The Lion of Judah fought the fight and hath prevailed. "It is fulfilled!"

Evangelist: And bowing His head, He gave up the ghost.

Bass (with Chorale):

My Lord and Master let me ask Thee: at this Thy glorious crucifixion, was all fulfilled with Thy last breath? By dying hast Thou conquered death? Through Thine own pain and desolation shall we attain salvation? And has the World been saved today? Although Thy sufferings sorely task Thee, yet bow for us Thy head and say, in silence "Yea!"

(During this aria the chorus sings:)

Jesu, Thou who tasted death,
livest now for ever!
When I take my final breath
Lord, forsake me never.
Help me, God's redeeming Son,
new life to inherit.
Grant me that which Thou hast won:
more I do not merit.

Evangelist: And then behold, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain, e'en from the top unto the bottom. And the earth and the rocks did quake, and were rent asunder, and the graves were opened up, and there arose many bodies of the Holy Ones.

Tenor: My heart, see how the world itself is suff'ring while our Lord is dying: the sun eclipsed; its light denying; the veil is torn, the rocks are rent, the earth doth quake, the dead are rising to view their Master lifeless lying; and as for thee, what wilt thou do?

Soprano: O heart, melt in weeping, with tears overflowing; your homage bestowing. Reveal to the world every feeling of pain; thy Jesus is slain.

Evangelist: The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the Cross on the Sabbath Day (for that same Sabbath Day was an High Day) came they unto Pilate, beseeching their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers and brake the legs of the first one and the other that was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and they saw that He was already dead, then did they break not His legs. But one of the soldiers then pierced His side with a spear, and forthwith came there out water and blood.

And he that did see these things, he also bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth full well that he saith true, that ye might believe. For all these things were done that the Scriptures might then be fulfilled: "A bone of him shall not be broken". Again in the Scriptures another saith: "And they shall look on him whom they have pierced."

Chorale:

Help us, Christ, God's only Son,
by Thy bitter Passion.
Help us learn what Thou hast done
for Mankind's salvation.
As we gaze upon the tree,
watching Death enfold Thee,
let us, helpless though we be,
with our thanks extol Thee.

Evangelist: At last, after this, Joseph of Arimathia, who was also Jesus' disciple,

(but secretly, for fear of the Jews), went to Pilate to beg for the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave him leave. Therefore came he thither and took the body of Jesus away. And also there came Nicodemus, he who at first had come to Jesus in the night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and of aloes, about an hundred pound in weight. And then they took the body of Jesus and wound it in the linen cloths with the precious spices, as the Jewish manner is to bury.

Now there was in the place where He was crucified a garden, and in the garden was a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid. Therein laid they Jesus, for the Jewish Preparation Day, because the tomb was nigh at hand.

Chorus: Sleep well, and rest in God's safekeeping, who makes an end of all our weeping. Sleep well, and on His breast sleep well. The grave, that was prepared for Thee, from all our sorrows sets us free, and points the way to Heav'n and shuts the gates of Hell.

Chorale:

O Jesus, when I come to die,
let angels bear my soul on high,
to Abraham's protection.
And as in Death's repose I lie,
watch o'er me with a Father's eye,
until the Resurrection.
And when from Death You waken me,
let my unworthy eyes then see,
with tears of joy, my soul's reward;
my Saviour and my risen Lord!
O Jesus Christ, give ear to me,
give ear to me,
and let me praise thee endlessly!

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY

Honorary Members: Joy Roberts, Andrew Mildinhall, Jean Atkin

Music Director: John Naylor

Accompanist: Simon Russell

Soprano

Anne Barnard
Jan Brown
Jenny Brown
Tracey Coleman
Glenda Colemere
Gail Corfield
Phoebe Crewe
Rita Davies
Ann Ferguson
Marlene Flannery
Kay Foster
Mary Harris
Margaret Harvey
Rosemary Jones
Tina Jones
Bronwyn Kelly
Helen Kerr
Sheila Luke
Maire Pedder
Rachel Pentecost
Hannah Pilkington
Rachael Reeves
Jenny Seabridge
Carol Seed
Doreen Sillitoe
Sheila Swindale
Jane Tyre

Barbara Waters
Jane Whiteman

Helen Bevan
Sue Bridge
Sue Briscoe
Christine English
Joyce Foster
Janet Geeson
Cynthia Gorton
Janet Halligan
Grace Johnston
Elizabeth McCrone
Jenny Naylor
Steph Percy
Eileen Robertson
Wendy Scott
Barbara Shone
Kathryn Skerratt
Wendy Wren
Jan Wynn

Alto

Susan Cooke
Frances Durkin
Penny Evans
Trude Gorton
Gillian Handford

Lena Hogben
Elizabeth Lea
Geraldine Leighton
Anne Nicol
Barbara Schultz
Leslie Tuckwell
Ros Wells
Diane Wheatley
Sarah Worth

Judy Bryant
Judith Dooley
Mary Goodman
Ester Harries
Marian Hay
Anne Mckay
Brenda Midgley
Janet Miller
Kirsten Nottrot
Gwyneth Rollins
Joan Shaddick
Elizabeth Tilston
Margaret Whitehurst
Linda Wyatt

Tenor

Martyn Colley
Graham Harbage

Patrick Hay
Wal Kaye
Mike Moores
Barry Munslow
Richard Percival
Nick Smith
Philip Trinder
Bill Vallance
Joe Watson
John Whittingham

Bass

Roger Boulton
Paul Durant
Christopher Findlay
David Foster
Glyn Griffiths
Douglas Hollinshead
Samuel Jamison
David Johnston
David Jones
Martin Jones
Adrian Percy
Tony Powell
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THE NANTWICH SINFONIA

Alison Loram David Joyce Clare Horgan Nigel Stubbs Andrew Hughes	1st violin
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Sarah Fairbank Helen Schilsky Nick Smith	Viola
John Fairbank Ruth Henley Becca Nelson	Cello
Tim Jones	Bass
Jenny Thomas Emma Lindsay	Flute
Richard Weigall Marcia Ferran	Oboe
John Hargreaves	Bassoon
Simon Russell	Organ / Harpsichord

BIOGRAPHIES

Evangelist: Rogers Covey-Crump - Tenor

Although a founder member of *Gothic Voices* and one of the six singers in the first British recording of Stockhausen's *Stimmung*, Rogers spent three decades as a core member of the Hilliard Ensemble, a male voice quartet known globally not only for its concerts and recordings of Early Music but also commissioned works from living composers and acclaimed first recordings of the vocal works of Arvo Pärt. In 1994 a collaboration with saxophonist, Jan Garbarek, produced a unique artistic fusion in the highly acclaimed album *Officium*. Two issues followed in the wake of its success: *Mnemosyne* in 1999 and *Officium Novum* in 2010. Hundreds of live performances were given, spanning two decades. In 2008 the ensemble premiered a music theatre piece at the Edinburgh Festival, *I went to the house but did not enter*, by the German composer and director, Heiner Goebbels. This was subsequently staged all around Europe, in the USA and in South Korea. The Ensemble retired in December 2014 after a forty-one year career.

Alongside his work with the Hilliard Ensemble Rogers has enjoyed a solo career spanning forty-nine years, appearing at the BBC Promenade concerts, cathedrals and other major venues around Britain, on the Continent and in North America, notably as Evangelist in the Bach Passions. His solo recordings include the secular songs of Dufay and Ockeghem, albums of lute songs with Jakob Lindberg and Paul O'Dette, and five albums of late 18thC song with Café Mozart, a chamber ensemble based in Windsor. However he has also recorded much Baroque repertoire, especially the Bach Passions with Andrew Parrott, Stephen Cleobury and Roy Goodman, and also the ceremonial and the church music of Purcell with the King's Consort on Hyperion.

Christus: Peter Edge - Bass / Baritone

Peter Edge is a bass-baritone studying at the Royal Northern College of Music under the tutelage of Quentin Hayes. Recent opera roles include Pooh-Bah in the *Mikado* and Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* (2014), Snug in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2015) and Robin/Sir Ruthven in *Ruddigore* (2016). Peter also enjoys singing oratorios and recently performed the Bass Solos in Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, with Nantwich Choral Society, and King Wenceslas in Chilcott's *Wenceslas*, with Ashley Parish Church. Peter will perform the bass solos in Bach's *Magnificat* next month.

Peter has won numerous competitions, most notably Chester's People to People Vocal Scholarship in 2012 – 2015 and the International Medal at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod. As well as this, Peter was also a finalist in the Courtney Kenny English

Song Award and Highly Commended in the Kathleen Ferrier Competition. Peter made his debut on international television in 2010 at Llangollen and has since performed on BBC Radio Three, including singing solo on BBC In Tune this January. Peter is also passionate about performing chamber music and spent last year as a member of Harry Christopher's Genesis Sixteen. Future choral projects include returning to sing in Southwark Cathedral and Westminster Abbey later this year.

Pilate: James Hall - Baritone

Born in Oxfordshire, James practices as a Chartered Surveyor in Cheshire. As a chorister at Christ Church Cathedral School in Oxford, he sang at Exeter College Chapel and Christ Church Cathedral under the direction of Simon Preston and Francis Grier. During that period he toured with the choir in Belgium and performed at its first promenade concerts with Christopher Hogwood and The Academy of Ancient Music, together with the Soprano, Emma Kirkby. James also sang with Peter Pears in *St Nicholas* and performed in Benjamin Britten's *Gloriana*.

After leaving Oxford, James attended Pangbourne Nautical College where the choir toured in Holland and he joined a choral course at Uppingham College, under the direction of Ralph Allwood. He then studied Land Agency at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester where he directed the College Choir.

Based at Cholmondeley, where he is agent to Cholmondeley Estates, James now directs the chamber choir Vox Vocavit and assists Simon Davies with the Border Singers.

He has been Baritone soloist with the Malpas Festival Choir performing Mozart's *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah* and with the Cradely Singers, Vivaldi's *Gloria* and J S Bach's *Magnificat*. Recently, he has sung with the Rivendell Singers performing the Tenor solo in Handel's *Utrecht Jubilate* and George Butterworth settings of *A Shropshire Lad*.

Natalie Clifton-Griffith - Soprano

Natalie is an Honorary Member of the Birmingham Conservatoire from which she graduated in 1996, winning the B.Mus. Graduates' Year Prize. While training at the Royal College of Music with Elizabeth Robson she won the 1998 Bach-Handel Prize, Second Prize at the 1998 Great Elm Vocal Awards and was a finalist in the 1997 Lies Askonas Competition. After winning a prize at the first London Handel Society Competition in 2002, Natalie is gaining a reputation for her performances of the Baroque and Classical

repertoire and has worked with many leading ensembles and orchestras including the English Chamber Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Birmingham Bach Choir and I Fagiolini.

Her many and varied engagements have included Filia Iepthae in Carissimi's *Jephtha*; Purcell's *The Fairy-Queen*; J.S. Bach's *Magnificat* and *St. John Passion*; Canteloube's *Songs of the Auvergne*; Ancilla in *The Denial of St Peter*; de Lalande's *Dies Irae*; Handel's *Messiah* and *Ode on Queen Anne's Birthday*; Solomon in *Queen Solomon*; Mystery in *The Fairy Queen*; First Fairy in Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; the Monteverdi *Vespers of 1610*; Villa-Lobos' *Bachianas Brasileiras*; Orff's *Carmina Burana*; two concerts at the 2003 London Handel Society's Festival; John Rutter's *Psalmfest*; and Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* and *Coronation Mass*.

She has recorded Rodrigo's *Ausencias de Dulcinea* and *Himnos de los neófitos de Qumran* and de Lalande's *Te Deum*. Natalie works frequently with the organist Alexander Mason, and together they have toured Norway. Operatic roles have included Venus in *Venus and Adonis*; Amore in *L'Egisto*; Barbarina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*; The Princess in *L'enfant et les sortilèges*; the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte*; Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas*; Timea in *La Libertà Contenta*; and, most recently, Jane in *Boys and Girls Come Out to Play* by Robin Holloway.

Harriet Goodwin - Mezzo-soprano

Harriet Goodwin read English Literature at Balliol College, Oxford before embarking upon postgraduate vocal training at the Royal Northern College of Music, where she studied with Nicholas Powell and received a scholarship from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust. As a student Harriet also studied at the Britten-Pears School for Advanced Musical Studies and sang with The Sixteen and The Monteverdi Choir.

A solo artist of broad and varied repertoire, Harriet has performed at numerous venues throughout the country, including Cadogan Hall (Mozart's *Requiem* with the Southbank Sinfonia/Simon Over), St Martin-in-the-Fields (Haydn's *Nelson Mass*), the Barbican (Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with Richard Hickox), St John's, Smith Square (Monteverdi's *Vespers* with The Corydon Singers) and Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford (Mozart's *Requiem* with Oxford Philomusica). She has also appeared at the English Haydn Festival and has sung a number of oratorios in Worcester Cathedral with Worcester Festival Chorus/Adrian Lucas, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in Lincoln Cathedral and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in Birmingham Town Hall with Birmingham Festival Chorus.

Recent engagements include performances of Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *Mass in B Minor* and Elgar's *The Music Makers*. Harriet is a regular performer with Nantwich Choral

Society, including Haydn Masses last summer, Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *B minor Mass* and (with 24 hours' notice) Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in Chester Cathedral.

Harriet was shortlisted for the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition in 2003. She lives in Staffordshire with her husband and four children.

Tim Kennedy - Tenor

Tim began his musical career singing for the Queen, as a treble at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, and was then a music scholar at Winchester College. He spent his gap year performing at Truro Cathedral, then studied music at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. He has now been based in Manchester for more than ten years pursuing a varied freelance career. His singing work is mainly as a freelance lyric tenor soloist, specialising in recitals and oratorio, but he also works as a consort singer, piano accompanist, organist and vocal coach. As part of this work, he works as a staff accompanist for singers at the Royal Northern College of Music. For more information, his website can be found at www.tim-kennedy.co.uk.

Tim studied singing for a number of years with Colin Iveson, a former Principal Vocal Tutor at the Royal Northern College of Music, on a private basis, but now works with a number of different coaches. He regularly attends the renowned annual AIMS singing course run by tenor Neil Jenkins, and does regular solo recitals in a number of places in the North of England including Manchester, Shrewsbury, Blackburn, Sheffield and Buxton. Recent oratorio engagements have been with a wide variety of choirs and choral societies across England and Wales. This has included performances of Handel's *Messiah* and *Semele*, Bach's Passions and Oratorios, Mozart's *Requiem* and *Vespers*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and Britten's *St Nicholas*. In 2015 he was one of the soloists for the UK première of the newly-rediscovered *Requiem* by Luigi Gatti, with Salford Choral Society, Manchester Camerata, and conductor Matthew Hamilton.

Jake Muffett - Baritone

23 year old baritone Jake Muffett graduated from the University of York with a BA (Hons) in Music and holds a Licentiate with the Royal Schools of Music in vocal performance. Roles of note include Count Almaviva (*Nozze di Figaro*), Don Giovanni and Sid in Benjamin Britten's *Albert Herring*. Jake is currently studying on the Artist Masters course in vocal performance at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama where he receives vocal tuition from John Evans. Jake's studies are generously supported by the Behrens Foundation,

the Tillett Trust, the Grantham Music Club and Grantham Choral Society. In September 2016 Jake will be progressing on to the prestigious opera programme at GSMD where he will continue his studies with John.

Jake recently made his international concert debut when he performed Baritone solos in Monteverdi's *Vespers* with Sir John Eliot Gardiner, the English Baroque Soloists and the Monteverdi Choir. Jake will also make his London concert debut in a major venue as the baritone soloist in *Carmina Burana* at the Royal Albert Hall with Bob Chilcott, the English Festival Orchestra and The Really Big Chorus in July 2016. His most recent operatic role was the role of Noye in Britten's *Noye's Fludde* conducted by John Lubbock which took place in Oxford in October 2015.

Having recently completed his apprenticeship with The Monteverdi Choir he is now a full member and sings with the choir regularly in concerts across Europe and America. As well as a singer, Jake is a keen Clarinettist and has played with a variety of amateur/semi-professional orchestras and ensembles and is also running his own Wind-Chamber Ensemble the York Wind Soloists. Jake still occasionally appears in instrumental concerts in London as well as Musical Theatre productions playing Clarinets, Saxes, Flute and Oboe.

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. As a member of the British Association for Performing Arts Medicine, Alison 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

As 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 *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 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 and Ripon cathedrals with OUCC.

Future plans include *Elijah* and Verdi *Requiem* with NCS, Worcester Cathedral and Tewkesbury Abbey with The Lydian Singers and Peterborough and St Albans cathedrals with OUCC.

Programme of Events planned for 2017

Saturday 5 January 2017

**Come and Sing: Handel's *Messiah*
with The Nantwich Sinfonia**

Sunday 25 March 2017

**Nantwich Civic Hall
Mendelssohn: *Elijah*
with The Northern Concordia Orchestra**

Saturday July 1 2017

**St Mary's Nantwich
John Rutter: *The Sprig of Thyme* and *Magnificat*
with Ensemble Vocal Arpege Macon and
The Northern Concordia Sinfonia**

Sunday October 22 2017

**Victoria Hall Hanley
Verdi: *Requiem*
with Ceramic City Choir and
The Northern Concordia Orchestra**

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.

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Come and Sing: Haydn's Creation

St Mary's Church, Nantwich

Saturday 30th April 2016

Rehearsals: 11.00 – 12.30
13.45 – 16.30

Performance: 18.30

Milly Forrest - soprano
Christopher Barnes – tenor
Jacob Philips - baritone

Conductor
John Naylor
with
Simon Russell (organ)

Registration forms are available on our website www.nantwichchoral.org.uk or from
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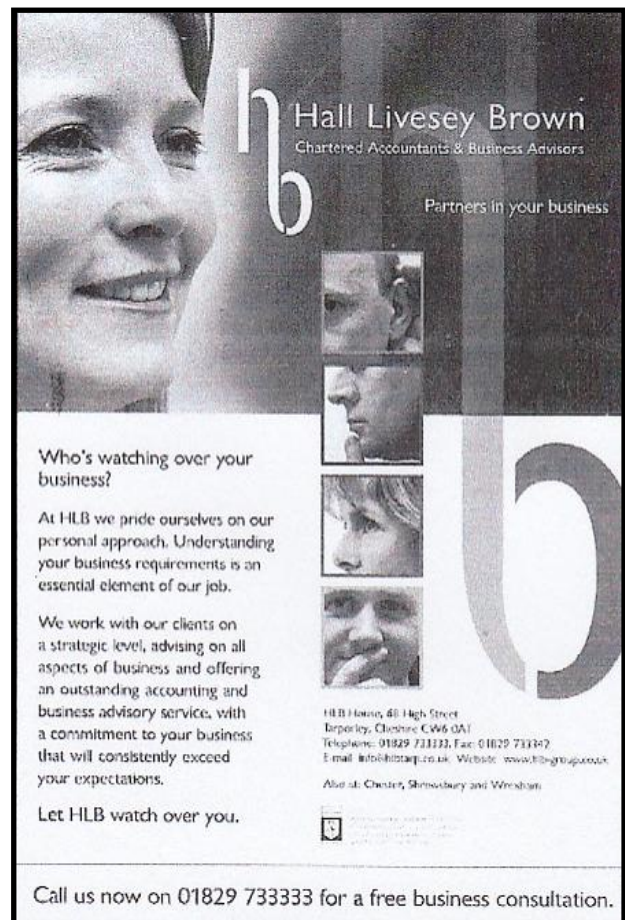
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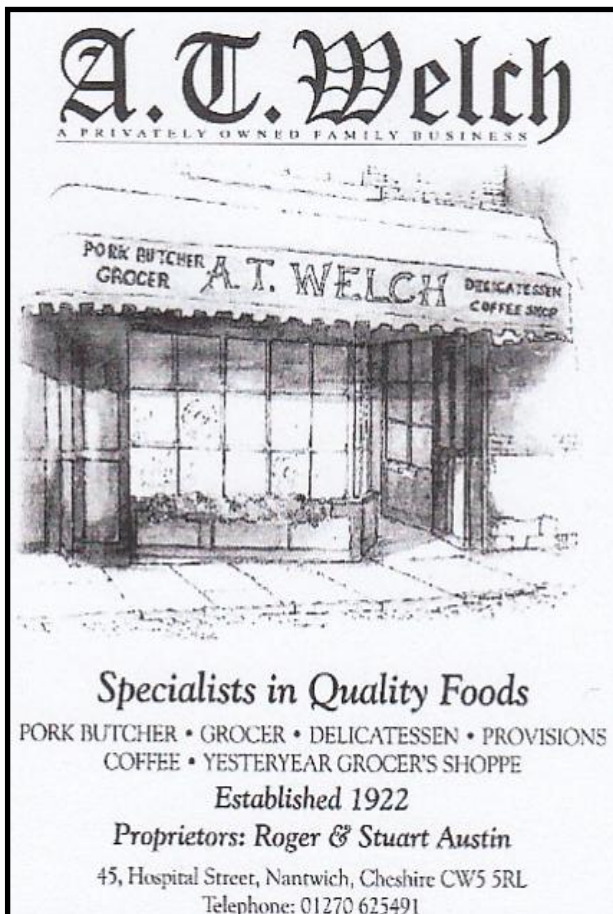
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Programme of Events 2016

Saturday 30 April 2016

St Mary's Nantwich

Come and Sing: Haydn's Creation

Saturday 25 June 2016

St Mary's Nantwich

Mass (and more) in Blue

Mass in Blue – Will Todd

Choral arrangements of Classic Popular Songs

Saturday 24 September 2016

St Boniface Church, Bunbury

Singing Day

‘Ave Maria’ - Settings throughout the ages

Saturday 12 November 2016

St Mary's, Nantwich

Requiem – Andrew Lloyd Webber

Saturday 17 December 2016

St Mary's, Nantwich

Family Carol Concert

with Nantwich Young Voices