

**NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY**

**J S Bach**  
**St John Passion**

**Philip O'Connor – Evangelist**

**Peter Edge – Christus**

**James Hall – Pilate**

**Sarah Helsby Hughes – soprano**

**Jessica Conway – mezzo soprano**

**Joseph Buckmaster – tenor**

**The 18<sup>th</sup> Century Sinfonia**

**John Naylor – conductor**

**St Mary's Church, Nantwich**

**Saturday 26 March 2022**

## Chairman's Welcome

Good evening, and on behalf of Nantwich Choral Society may I give you a very warm welcome to our Spring concert. Tonight's performance is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Elizabeth Lea, who sadly passed away in December 2020. Because of all the Covid restrictions in place at the time the society was unable to honour Elizabeth as we wanted to, so tonight's performance is an ideal opportunity to remember Elizabeth. She was a popular and very willing member of the society who served in a number of roles, including chairman, vice chairman and publicity officer.

Bach's setting of the St. John Passion is perhaps not as well known as his St. Matthew Passion, but it is none the less a glorious and moving telling of the Easter story. We are particularly pleased to be able to hear Bach's work performed by period instruments as we welcome the 18th Century Sinfonia, together with our 6 distinguished soloists.

We would like to once again thank the Nantwich Town Council for their continued financial support, which helps us to stage events such as these, and of course to you our audience for your continued support and attendance. So please sit back and enjoy tonight's performance, and may I encourage you to join us again for our next concert on Saturday July 2nd.

Graham Harbage  
Chairman, NCS

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **Dr Elizabeth Lea**

*John Naylor writes*

Over the years I have had the pleasure of working with six Chairmen of NCS. Each has very successfully approached their task in a different way. Elizabeth took quite a lot of persuading to take on the position, and we all soon realised that the reason for that was that she was only prepared to take something on if she could wholeheartedly commit to carrying it out to the best of her ability.

She was outstanding in the roles of both Chairman and Vice-Chairman. With a mixture of quiet skill, determination and charm she chaired committee meetings and led the choir through a remarkable period of activity, not least with visits to Macon and Lüdenscheidt during her period of office. She understood the importance of publicity and PR and was actively involved in promoting the choir's performances. She was a much-valued member of the choir's alto section. She was a great support to me, offering wise advice when it was needed.

Above all, Elizabeth loved singing in choirs: she was a much appreciated and loved member of those in which she sang. Very sadly the small choir we had assembled from NCS to sing at her funeral at Bunbury church had to be stood down the day before because a national lockdown had suddenly been imposed.

However, Simon and I were privileged to provide music on behalf of NCS on a cold morning when bright winter sunshine streamed through the windows of that lovely church. A sad, but memorable occasion.

Within NCS we remember Elizabeth with grateful thanks and warm affection for all that she was, and for all that she did with us and for us.

We are proud to dedicate our performance this evening to her memory.

## 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 one 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 sixtythree 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

President: John Lea

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Music Director: John Naylor

Accompanist: Simon Russell

## Soprano

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Christine Hall  
Margaret Harvey  
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Jane Whiteman  
Claire Woosnam-  
Savage

Nicola Bowen  
Sue Bridge  
Sue Briscoe  
Cynthia Gorton  
Janet Halligan  
Grace Johnston  
Jenny Naylor  
Steph Percy  
Tracey Powdrill  
Robertson  
Eileen Robertson  
Barbara Shone  
Wendy Wren

## Alto

Susan Cooke  
Alison Davies  
Frances Durkin  
Penny Evans  
Anne Harwood  
Lena Hogben  
Karen Kilcourse  
Jane Leech  
Geraldine Leighton  
Lizzie Mitchell  
Diane Wheatley  
Sarah Worth

Judy Bryant  
Janice Campbell  
Judith Dooley  
Jean French  
Mary Goodman  
Ester Harries  
Val Kennett  
Brenda Midgley  
Gwyneth Rollins  
Elizabeth Tilston  
Fanny Weiss  
Margaret Whitehurst

## Tenor

Martyn Colley  
Gordon Fielding  
Graham Harbage  
Patrick Hay  
Wal Kaye  
Richard Percival  
Bill Vallance

## Bass

Roger Boulton  
Glyn Griffiths  
Tony Hughes  
Stephen Hutchinson  
Uel Jamison  
David Johnston  
David Jones  
Martin Jones  
Adrian Percy  
Derek Poppleton  
Bob Pugh  
Ian Wells

## **COMMITTEE**

### **OFFICERS:**

Chairman: Graham Harbage  
Vice Chairman: Adrian Percy  
Secretary: Anne Harwood  
Treasurer: Frances Durkin

### **ELECTED COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Assistant Treasurer: Diane Wheatley  
Concert Manager: Eileen Robertson  
Assistant Concert Manager: Tony Powell  
Librarian: Bob Pugh  
Membership Secretary / Ticket Administration: Ester Harries  
Minute Secretary: Rachel Pentecost  
Grants and Sponsorships: Martin Jones  
Singing Days: Carol Seed

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Assistant Librarian: Frances Durkin  
Social Events: Frances Durkin, Lena Hogben  
Publicity: Anne Harwood  
Webmaster: David Jones  
200 Club: David and Grace Johnston



## THE 18<sup>th</sup> CENTURY SINFONIA

**The 18<sup>th</sup> Century Sinfonia** is a versatile ensemble of specialist period instrumentalists who, since their foundation, have accompanied numerous choral societies throughout the UK.

As a result of choral societies across the country discovering the clarity and joy of singing accompanied by period instruments, so the skills of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Sinfonia are very much in demand.

Over the last two decades Baroque masterpieces such as Bach's B minor mass, Passions, and Magnificat: Handel's 'Messiah', Chandos and Coronation anthems have become standard repertoire for the ensemble.

Whilst these works form the core of the Sinfonia's accompanying repertoire, the group also looks forward in music history to classical works such as Haydn (Creation) and Mozart (Requiem) as well as backward, to high renaissance works such as Monteverdi (Vespers of 1610).

The principal players of the 18th Century Sinfonia also comprise the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Concert Orchestra, whose performances combine period instruments, readings, candlelight, and sumptuous 18<sup>th</sup> century costume, in uniquely atmospheric recreations of 18<sup>th</sup> century musical life. [www.18thcentury.co.uk](http://www.18thcentury.co.uk)

David Lewis	Violin 1
Judith Van Ingen	
Claire Holden	
James Ellis	Violin 2
Maria Becker	
David Milsom	
Nichola Blakey	Viola
Jordon Bowron	
David Hatcher	Cello
Rachel Gray	
Mike Escreet	Bass
Edwina Smith	Flute
Sarah McNulty	
Cait Walker	Oboe
Sarah Saunders	
Robert Percival	Bassoon
David Francis	Continuo

## BIOGRAPHIES

### PHILIP O'CONNOR – Evangelist

Philip is a young, Derbyshire Tenor who began his musical training at Wells Cathedral School under Isobel Buchanan. Subsequently, Philip went on to read Music at the University of Manchester, while studying under Andrew Heggie. He then commenced his formal vocal training at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM), studying with Nick Powell. Philip was awarded a Distinction in his Masters of Music and has recently started the Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Studies (PGDip) with Sarah Rhodes winning the John Halsall Scholarship. During his time at the RNCM, Philip has been generously supported by The Mario Lanza Foundation and The Garner Howard Award. His PGDip course is being funded by South Square Trust and Sophie's Silver Lining Fund.

During his time at the RNCM, Philip has been fortunate to work and take part in Masterclasses with Iain Burnside, James Baillieu, Christopher Purves, David Owen Norris, Patricia McMahon, Paul Wynne Griffiths, Eiddwen Harrhy, Nicholas Kok, Andrew Greenwood and Julius Drake. He has also performed the roles of L'Aumônier in Poulenc's *Dialogue des Carmelites*, Mr Rushworth in Dove's *Mansfield Park*, Tancredi in Monteverdi's *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, and most recently the role of The Schoolmaster and Mosquito in Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

Outside of the RNCM, Philip has sung the roles of Borsa in Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Mathan in Handel's *Athalia*, and John of Nepomuk in Barry Webb's *Nepomuk*. Due to Covid-19, Philip was unable to perform the role of Ferrando in Mozart's *Così fan Tutti* and be a YAP with Buxton International Festival in 2020. Philip has also sung chorus in Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and Schubert's *Alfonso & Estrella*, as well as Gounod's *Faust* and Rossini's *Le Comte Ory*.

Philip is an experienced oratorio singer and has sung across the UK as a soloist. His repertoire includes Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Bach's *St John Passion*, Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, Gounod's *Messe Solennelle* and Vaughn William's *Serenade for Music*.

As a recitalist, Philip has performed around Greater Manchester including the Bridgewater Hall as part of the Manchester Mid-Day Concert Series. Philip is also a keen consort singer. After singing with the Wells Cathedral Choir in his last two years of school, he was awarded the tenor Choral Scholarship at Hereford Cathedral. Since arriving in Manchester, Philip has been a Lay Clerk at Manchester Cathedral as well as a member of the BBC Daily Service Singers. During his second year at the University of Manchester, Philip was part of Genesis Sixteen.

## **PETER EDGE – Christus and Bass Arias**

Shropshire baritone Peter Edge graduated with Distinction from the Royal College of Music, London, as a Master of Music in Vocal Performance, where he was supported by the Walker Trust and tutored by Peter Savidge. Recent competition successes include winning the Chris Treglown Memorial Award and John Kerr Award for English Song, as well as being runner-up in the Lesley Garrett Opera Prize and David Clover Singer's Platform Recital Competition.

Notable performances include singing on live TV and radio for the Salzburger Festspiele with **the** Monteverdi Choir, in August 2021, singing live on BBC Breakfast for the Italy vs England Euro 2020 Final, and Peter's solo debut at **the** Royal Albert Hall, in December 2019.

Peter is currently covering the roles of Schaunard in Puccini's *La Boheme* and Afron in Rimsky Korsakov's *The Golden Cockerel* with English Touring Opera. He is looking forward to singing covering the role of Le Dancaire in Bizet's *Carmen* with Longborough Festival Opera in Summer; and touring Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Monteverdi Choir and singing Betto in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* with the Athenaeum Club, Pall Mall, both in Autumn.

Peter has sung with Nantwich Choral Society on several previous occasions and we are delighted to welcome him back once more.

## **JAMES HALL – Pilate**

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 Vox Vocavit, a chamber choir dedicated to conducting choral evensong in churches around South Cheshire and North Wales, and assists Simon Davies with the Border Singers.

He has been a Baritone soloist with the Malpas Festival Choir, the Cradely Singers, the Vale Royal Singers and Rivendell Singers and with the Nantwich Choral Society.

### **SARAH HELSBY-HUGHES –Soprano**

Sarah studied with Pamela Cook MBE at the Birmingham Conservatoire of Music. Since graduation, Sarah's career has taken her all over the world, including performances in Europe, the USA and Japan.

She has appeared for many opera companies, including Mid-Wales Opera, Carl Rosa Opera, Lyric Opera Dublin, D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, Opera North, Opera Ireland, Pavilion Opera, Focus Opera and City of Birmingham Touring Opera.

Concert work includes all the major oratorio soprano solos, with appearances in Italy, The Netherlands, Ireland, and all over the UK. Since 2011, Sarah has been the Artistic Director of Heritage Opera, responsible for producing, translating, and directing most of the company's output.

Sarah most recently sang with NCS in the Autumn 2021 concert. We are delighted to welcome her back once again.

### **JESSICA CONWAY – Mezzo-soprano**

Jessica performs regularly as a concert and opera soloist across the UK, having recently graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music under Hilary Summers with a Masters with Distinction.

She has appeared as a soloist with groups including Dunedin Consort, Leeds Philharmonic and Eboracum Baroque, with whom she sang on Estonian National Radio. Most recently, Jessica has performed Vivaldi's *Gloria* with Stafford Choral Society and Handel's *Messiah* for Manchester Baroque and The Guild Singers. She was delighted to be an artist on Dunedin Consort's Bridging the Gap scheme in 2019. Upcoming performances include performances at the Korkyra Baroque Festival and Mozart's *Solemn Vespers* with Birkenhead Choral Society.

Upcoming roles include the Messenger in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (RNCM Historical Performance department) and Dorabella in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* (Snapshot Opera).

Whilst at the RNCM, Jessica worked closely with early music specialists Roger Hamilton and Paula Chateauneuf and has had masterclasses with Dame Ann Murray, Della Jones, Amanda Roocroft, James Baillieu and Julius Drake. Jessica has an academic Music degree from the University of York and has previously studied singing with Patricia MacMahon and Lynne Dawson. She attended St Mary's Music School in Edinburgh where she was the recipient of the Elizabeth Ehrlich Prize.

## JOSEPH BUCKMASTER – Tenor

Joseph Buckmaster is a Lyric Spinto Tenor, he completed his MA at the Royal Academy of Music under the tutelage of Richard Berkeley-Steele and his vocal coach Iain Ledingham.

Joseph began singing in the Chester Cathedral choir at the age of six and continued to sing there in various roles until the age of twenty-four. He began his formal training at the Royal Northern College of Music where he developed a deep passion for the Operatic repertoire. He performed in the chorus for their operas, including *La Belle Helene*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, *Carmen* and *Vanessa*. He also covered the role of Giove in their production of *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* in Patria. Whilst at the Royal Academy of Music he performed the roles of Apollo in *Semele* and Alméric in *Iolanta* for Royal Academy Opera.

For Heritage Opera Joseph has performed the roles of Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, Ferrando in *Così fan Tutte* and covered the role of Don Jose in *Carmen*.

For Flat Pack Music he has performed the roles of Ferrando in *Così fan Tutte*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Basilio and Don Curzio in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and Tamino in *The Magic Flute*. He also directed their production of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

For Hampstead Garden Opera he has performed the role of Rodolfo in *La Bohème*.

Joseph most recently worked with Grange Park Opera in their chorus for the season's operas; *Falstaff*, *La Bohème* and *Ivan the Terrible* (The Maid of Pskov). He also sang the role of Male 1 in the world premiere of *The Life and Death of Alexander Litvinenko*.

Joseph is also an extra chorister for both the Royal Opera House and the English National Opera. Joseph most recently sang with NCS in February's Come and Sing *Messiah* and makes a welcome return this evening.

## 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, choir development and church administration. 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 (1957-61), 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, and The Aldeburgh Festival and in numerous broadcasts and recordings.

He has sung in the cathedral choirs of Carlisle, Christ Church Oxford and Chester.

John was appointed Music Director of Nantwich Choral Society in September 2005 for whom he has now conducted highly acclaimed performances of many of the works in the mainstream choral repertoire including *Elijah*, the *Dream of Gerontius*, *Verdi Requiem*, Monteverdi *Vespers*, the *Armed Man*, *The Peacemakers*, *Mozart Requiem*, *The Creation*, *The Seasons*, *Mass in Blue*, *Chichester Psalms*, *St Paul*, *Israel in Egypt*, *Petite Messe Solonelle*, *B minor Mass* and *St Matthew* and *St John Passions*.

John founded the Lydian Singers in 1980 (disbanded in 2021) who became one of the leading chamber choirs in the NW, and over 40 years sang in almost all the cathedrals in the UK. He also directs the Open University Chapel Choir whose next visits are to St Mary's Edinburgh and Ripon Cathedrals.

In addition to his musical activities, John was a member of the General Synod (2015 – 2021) and has been Chairman of the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance since 2012. He is also Chairman of the Members of Three Spires Multi-Academy Trust and a Trustee of Shallowford House.

## **Forthcoming events:**

Saturday 7 May 2022

St Mary's Church, Nantwich

**Come and Sing for Ukraine**

**Karl Jenkins – *The Armed Man***

with members of Nantwich Sinfonia

Please see [www.nantwichchoral.org.uk](http://www.nantwichchoral.org.uk) for details available shortly

All proceeds to DEC

Saturday 2 July 2022, 7.30 pm

St Mary's Church Nantwich

**Rossini – *Petite Messe Solonelle***



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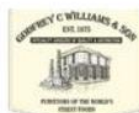


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