

Nantwich Choral Society

John Rutter

**Magnificat
and
The Sprig of Thyme**

Harriet Goodwin - mezzo-soprano
L'Ensemble vocal Arpège de Mâcon
The Nantwich Sinfonia

John Naylor - Conductor

St Mary's Church, Nantwich

Saturday 15 July 2017, 7:30 pm





L'Ensemble vocal Arpège de Mâcon

Acknowledgements

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

Supported by



Chairman's Welcome

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

This evening's concert marks the 60th anniversary of the twinning arrangement between Crewe and Nantwich and the Burgundian town of Mâcon. We are delighted to welcome once again our twinned choir, L'Ensemble vocal Arpège de Mâcon, for a programme that demonstrates the cultural and historical ties that bind European countries together, whatever the current political situation may be. It was in fact the French choir's suggestion that we should perform tonight a setting of the Magnificat by the English composer, John Rutter. Our programme also includes English and French songs which feature tonight's soloist for the Magnificat, Harriet Goodwin, who has sung for us on many occasions and is always most welcome. This evening's orchestra, the Nantwich Sinfonia, are also old friends. Our programme opens and concludes with the national anthems of both countries; we hope you will join in with these when our conductor invites you to do so.

After weeks of hard work learning the chorus parts, it is always very gratifying to be able to perform works as the composer intended (we hope!) with the other musicians who make up the whole of the experience. The resources required for this are considerable. We wish to acknowledge our gratitude for the legacies, sponsorships, gifts, grants and donations which help us maintain and develop our musical standards. Recently we have received grants from Cheshire East and Nantwich Town Council, and we are very grateful for ongoing support from the Harding Trust. Without the generosity of these bodies and others it would not be possible for our choral society to put on concerts of a high standard, using professional soloists and orchestral players as required. I hope you, the audience, will enjoy today's concert as much as we will enjoy performing it for you here in St Mary's.

Kay Foster

Programme

The National Anthems

arr. John S Benson (please stand)

L'Ensemble vocal Arpège de Mâcon

Le pouvoir des fleurs – A Souchon, L Voulzy

Ave Verum – Camille Saint-Saëns

Tiebie Polem – Dimitri Bortniansky

Two songs by Gabriel Fauré

arranged for mezzo soprano and orchestra by John S Benson

Après un rêve

Prière

The Sprig of Thyme – John Rutter

The bold grenadier

The keel row

The willow tree

The sprig of thyme

Down by the sally gardens

The cuckoo

I know where I'm going

Willow song

The miller of Dee

Afton water

Interval of 15 minutes

Magnificat – John Rutter

Magnificat anima mea

Of a Rose, a lovely Rose

Quia fecit mihi magna

Et misericordia

Fecit potentiam

Esurientes

Gloria Patri

National Anthems

(reprise –please remain seated)

The National Anthem of The United Kingdom

God save our gracious Queen,
Long live our noble Queen,
God save the Queen!
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the Queen!

Thy choicest gifts in store,
On her be pleased to pour,
Long may she reign!
May she defend our laws,
And ever give us cause,
To sing with heart and voice,
God save the Queen!

The National Anthem of France

Allons enfants de la Patrie
Le jour de gloire est arrivé.
Contre nous, de la tyrannie,
L'étandard sanglant est levé,
L'étandard sanglant est levé,
Entendez-vous, dans la campagne
Mugir ces farouches soldats
Ils viennent jusque dans nos bras
Egorger vos fils,
vos compagnes.

*Aux armes citoyens!
Formez vos bataillons,
Marchons, marchons!
Qu'un sang impur
Abreuve nos sillons.*

Amour sacré de la Patrie,
Conduis, soutiens nos bras vengeurs,
Liberté, liberté chérie,
Combats avec tes défenseurs;
Combats avec tes défenseurs.
Sous drapeaux, que la victoire
Accoure à tes mâles accents;
Que tes ennemis expirants
Voient ton triomphe et notre gloire!

Aux armes citoyens!

Let us go, children of the fatherland
Our day of glory has arrived.
Against us stands tyranny,
The bloody flag is raised,
The bloody flag is raised.
Do you hear in the countryside
The roar of these savage soldiers
They come right into our arms
To cut the throats of your sons,
your companions.

To arms, citizens!
Form up your battalions
Let us march, let us march!
That their impure blood
Should water our fields.

Sacred love of the fatherland
Guide and support our vengeful arms.
Liberty, beloved liberty,
Fight with your defenders;
Fight with your defenders.
Under our flags, so that victory
Will rush to your manly strains;
That your dying enemies
Should see your triumph and glory!

To arms, citizens!

Magnificat

Magnificat anima mea

Magnificat anima mea Dominum: et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo. Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae: ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.

My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He hath regarded the lowliness of his hand-maiden: for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

Of a Rose, a lovely Rose

*Of a Rose, a lovely Rose,
Of a Rose is all my song.*

Hearken to me, both old and young,
How this Rose began to spring;
A fairer rose to mine liking
In all this world ne know I none.

The third branch did spring and spread;
Three kinges then the branch gan led
Unto Our Lady in her child-bed;
Into Bethlem that branch sprang right.

Five branches of that rose there been,
The which be both fair and sheen;
The rose is called Mary, heaven's queen.
Out of her bosom a blossom sprang.

The fourth branch it sprang to hell,
The devil's power for to fell:
That no soul therein should dwell,
The branch so blessedfully sprang.

The first branch was of great honour:
That blest Marie should bear the flow'r;
There came an angel from heaven's tower
To break the devil's bond.

The fifth branch it was so sweet,
It sprang to heav'n, both crop and root,
Therein to dwell and be our *bote:
So blessedly it sprang.

The second branch was great of might,
That sprang upon Christmas night;
The star shone over Bethlem bright,
That man should see it both day and night.

Pray we to her with great honour,
She that bare the blessed flow' r,
To be our help and our succour,
And shield us from the fiendes bond.

* Bote = salvation 15th-century English

Quia fecit mihi magna

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est: et sanctum nomen eius.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name.

*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord Gad of hosts. Heaven and earth are filled with thy glory. Hosanna in the highest.

* from the Ordinary of the Mass

Et misericordia

Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies
timentibus eum.

*And his mercy is on them that fear him
throughout all generations.*

Fecit potentiam

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: dispersit
superbos mente cordis sui. Deposuit potentes
de sede, et exaltavit humiles.

*He hath shewed strength with his arm: he hath
scattered the proud in the imagination of their
hearts. He hath put down the mighty from
their seat, and hath exalted the humble and
meek.*

Esurientes

Esurientes implevit bonis: et divites dimisit
inanes. Suscepit Israel puerum suum,
recordatus misericordiae suae. Sicut locutus
est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini eius
in saecula.

*He hath filled the hungry with good things: and
the rich he hath sent empty away. He
remembering his mercy hath holpen his
servant Israel, as he promised to our
forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.*

Gloria Patri

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to
the Holy Ghost.*

* Sancta Maria, succurre miseris, iuva
pusillanimes, refove flebiles: ora pro populo,
interveni pro clero, intercede pro devoto
femineo sexu: sentiant omnes tuum iuvamen,
quicumque tuum sanctum implorant auxilium.
Alleluia.

*Holy Mary, succour those in need, help the
faint-hearted, console the tearful: pray for the
laity, assist the clergy, intercede for all devout
women: may all feel the power of your help,
whoever prays for your holy aid. Alleluia.*

* Antiphon at Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in
saecula saeculorum. Amen.

*As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever
shall be, world without end, Amen.*

English translation of the Magnificat from the
1662 Book of Common Prayer

Commentary

Gabriel Urbain Fauré (12 May 1845 – 4 November 1924) was a French Romantic composer, organist, pianist and teacher. He was one of the foremost French composers of his generation, and his musical style influenced many 20th-century composers. Among his best-known works are his *Pavane*, *Requiem*, nocturnes for piano and the songs *Après un rêve* and *Clair de lune*.

His best-known and most accessible compositions are generally his earlier ones, but Fauré composed many of his most highly regarded works in his later years in a more harmonically and melodically complex style. Fauré is regarded as one of the masters of the French art song, or *mélodie*. Ravel wrote in 1922 that Fauré had saved French music from the dominance of the German Lied. Two years later the critic Samuel Langford wrote of Fauré, "More surely almost than any writer in the world he commanded the faculty to create a song all of a piece, and with a sustained intensity of mood which made it like a single thought".

Fauré's songs are now core repertoire for students and professionals, sung in conservatories and recital halls throughout the world. Two of his best known songs have been specially arranged to suit the orchestral forces available in tonight's concert by John Benson.

Après un rêve

In *Après un rêve* (originally published in 1878), a dream of romantic flight with a lover, away from the earth, and "towards the light" is described. However, on waking to the truth the dreamer longs to return to the "mysterious night" and the ecstatic falsehood of his dream. The text of the poem is an anonymous Italian poem freely adapted into French by Romain Bussine.

Dans un sommeil que charmaient ton image Je rêvais le bonheur, ardent mirage, Tes yeux étaient plus doux, ta voix pure et sonore, Tu rayonnais comme un ciel éclairé par l'aurore;	<i>In sleep, delighted by your face, A glowing mirage, I dreamed of joy, Your eyes so gentle, your voice pure and firm, You shone as sky lit up by the dawn.</i>
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Tu m'appelais et je quittais la terre Pour m'enfuir avec toi vers la lumière, Les cieux pour nous entr'ouvraient leurs nues, Splendeurs inconnues, lueurs divines entrevues,	<i>You called me and, as I left this earth To flee with you towards the light, For us the skies half-opened their clouds For glimpses of splendours unknown and glows divine.</i>
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Hélas! Hélas! triste réveil des songes Je t'appelle, ô nuit, rends-moi tes mensonges, Reviens, reviens radieuse, Reviens ô nuit mystérieuse!	<i>Alas! Alas! sad awakening from dreams I call you, oh night, give me back your lies Come back, come back oh radiant night Come back oh night mysterious!</i>
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En Prière

Bordese's prayer of the 12-year-old Jesus is one of heartbreaking simplicity and Fauré sets it accordingly with tripleted arpeggios (depicting the Trinity), always ascending in supplication to Heaven. The *chanson* is not without its passionate moments as the music crescendos and the boy declares: 'auguste Roi des rois, Ô Lumière!' (Great King of kings, oh light!)

Si la voix d'un enfant peut monter jusqu'à Vous, Ô mon Père, Écoutez de Jésus, devant Vous à genoux, La prière!	<i>If a child's voice may rise up to You O my Father, Hear the prayer of Jesus who kneels In prayer!</i>
Si Vous m'avez choisi pour enseigner vos lois Sur la terre, Je saurai Vous servir, auguste Roi des rois, Ô Lumière!	<i>If You have chosen me to teach Your laws On earth, I shall serve You, august King of kings, O light!</i>
Sur mes lèvres, Seigneur, mettez la vérité Salutaire, Pour que celui qui doute, avec humilité Vous révère!	<i>On my lips, O Lord, place truth that is Beneficent, So that he who doubts may with humility Revere You.</i>
Ne m'abandonnez pas, donnez moi la douceur Nécessaire, Pour apaiser les maux, soulager la douleur, La misère!	<i>Do not abandon me, give me the kindness Required, To ease pain, console sorrow and Misery!</i>
Révèlez Vous à moi, Seigneur en qui je crois Et j'espère: Pour Vous je veux souffrir et mourir sur la croix, Au calvaire!	<i>Reveal Yourself to me, Lord, in whom I believe and hope: For you I would suffer and die on the Cross, On Calvary!</i>

The Sprig of Thyme

John Rutter has written as follows: For children growing up in post-war England as I did, traditional songs still formed a common musical currency. The first songs we sang were nursery rhymes like *Oranges and lemons* and *Pop goes the weasel*; at school, we warbled *Early one morning* and *Drink to me only* in singing class, and *O God, our help in ages past* and *Holy, Holy, Holy* in morning assembly; at scout camp, we endured *Ten green bottles* and *One man went to mow*.

Those of us that sang in choirs were thoroughly familiar with the choral folk song arrangements of Vaughan Williams and Holst; and absolutely everyone could recognize *Rule, Britannia*, *Greensleeves* and the *National Anthem*. Probably none of us stopped to think that this heritage of 'traditional' song had been fairly deliberately created: the approved repertoire of nursery rhymes stemmed largely from a BBC radio programme called *Listen with Mother*, the school class singing repertoire from *The National Song Book*, and the hymns we knew from *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (middle-of-the-road late Victorian), *The English Hymnal* (edited by Vaughan Williams, rather more high church) and *Songs of Praise* (Vaughan Williams again, mildly radical and strong on social service).

Vaughan Williams, who collected folk songs and saw them as crucial to a revival of our national musical consciousness, was also one of the moving forces behind the prevalence of folk songs, which, along with italic handwriting, pottery and the weaving of rush mats, were considered

good for the young. It is easy to poke fun at the worthiness, gentility and cultural nationalism of this vanished age, soon to give place to the more frantic, colourful and cosmopolitan '60s.

Yet the songs it promoted formed a more solid bedrock for a shared musical culture than today's television jingles, pop songs and football chants. Among the numerous 'As I went out one morning's that fill folk song collections, you can find love songs of exquisite and fragile beauty such as *O waly, waly* and *The sprig of thyme*, drinking songs of picaresque humour such as *The miller of Dee*, lullabies of heart-easing tenderness such as *O can ye sew cushions*.

These songs brought me delight and pleasure then, and they still do now, though pleasure has become tinged with nostalgia because, for the most part, they are forgotten and gone from our lives, perhaps forever. This collection is an affectionate tribute to their composers and poets; a few were renowned, most were obscure or unknown, but the songs they created were famous, and I remember them fondly.

The Bold Grenadier warns that young girls should beware of falling for dashing soldiers, who will surely love them and leave them.

The Keel Row is a Geordie lassie's love song. She praises her handsome Johnny and hopes that the boat he sails in will be seaworthy.

The Willow Tree is a young man's lament – for lost wealth, a false friend, lost love and lost hope.

The Sprig of Thyme warns young girls of the dangers of falling in love. In folk lore, thyme is a symbol of innocence; once stolen, it is lost for ever. In this song, first documented in 1689, a false young man steals a maiden's love, then deserts her. She waits for time to pass and for the thyme in her garden to grow again, but cannot forget her love.

Down By The Sally Gardens is a mature man's lament for lost love and lost youth. He regrets that he could not be carefree and light-hearted in his youth, as his sweetheart advised him; now it's too late.

The Cuckoo tells of the joy of falling in love and the pain of betrayal. A girl wishes she could tell all men of the pain and grief their lies cause.

I Know Where I'm Going is about another 'handsome, winsome Johnny', this time sung by a rich girl whose family don't approve of her choice. She is prepared to give up all her wealth for Johnny, but knows that her future is uncertain.

Willow Song is a sorrowful lament in which the willow tree and willow garland symbolise lost love.

The Miller of Dee is an energetic masculine celebration of life, work, youth and making merry, ending in a toast to the king!

Afton Water tells of happy mutual love; a faithful couple live an idyllic rural life, accompanied by the sound of the sweetly-flowing river.

***Magnificat* - John Rutter (b. 1945)**

Though he is perhaps best known for his carols and other short pieces, John Rutter also has a number of large-scale works for chorus and orchestra to his name. Most of these received their first performances in the United States, where Rutter is a frequent visitor, writing regularly for American choirs and conducting performances of his own music. The *Magnificat* was first performed in 1990 in Carnegie Hall, New York, conducted by the composer, and the UK première followed a year later in Coventry Cathedral.

The *Magnificat* - the canticle of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Luke I: 46-55) - traditionally formed part of the ancient service of Vespers in the medieval Roman rite. After the Reformation it was incorporated into the evening services of the Lutheran and Anglican churches, where it was linked with the *Nunc Dimittis*. The *Magnificat* has been set to music more often than any liturgical text other than the Mass itself, in settings that vary enormously in style and scale, from the purity of Palestrina's exquisite four-part unaccompanied compositions to Monteverdi's grand, dramatic settings written for St Mark's, Venice, and later the almost symphonic conception of Mozart's *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore*, of which the *Magnificat* forms the final movement, written in 1780 for use in Salzburg Cathedral.

John Rutter's initial inspiration for his *Magnificat* was another great masterpiece – that of J.S.Bach, though he has also revealed that he found the task of following in Bach's footsteps a somewhat daunting prospect, as indeed any composer might. Despite the fact that the two works are about as different in style as they could possibly be, they nevertheless do share some basic similarities. For instance, both pieces conclude with a reiteration of the music of their opening movements, both make use of traditional Gregorian plainsong melodies, and in both works the focus is on the soloist for the more reflective verses, while the chorus is called upon to provide some appropriate vocal muscle in robust sections of the text such as 'Fecit potentiam in brachio suo' (He hath showed strength with his arm). And just as Bach included several additional Christmas movements in the original E-flat version of his *Magnificat*, so too Rutter incorporates three extra elements into the standard Latin text. Particularly memorable is his haunting setting of the beautiful 15th century poem, *Of a Rose, a lovely Rose*, which uses the image of a rose as an allegory for the Blessed Virgin Mary and her powers to intercede for mankind. The other two supplementary texts are the Sanctus from the Ordinary of the Mass, and a Marian antiphon, 'Sancta Maria' (Holy Mary)

John Rutter has stated that his intention was to write a Magnificat redolent of Mediterranean sunshine and celebration, evoking the spirit of the many exuberant festivals held throughout Europe in honour of the Virgin Mary. To this end, the work is full of energetic, syncopated rhythms and strong melodies, with more than a hint of the musical theatre from time to time. Rutter's music is always beautifully written for the voice and superbly orchestrated, and although his unashamedly popular style has won him few friends amongst the upper reaches of the musical establishment, choral societies and audiences throughout the world have responded with wholehearted enthusiasm to its uninhibited tunefulness.

John Bawden

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY

Honorary Members: Joy Roberts, Andrew Mildinhall, Jean Atkin

Music Director: John Naylor

Accompanist: Simon Russell

Soprano

Anne Barnard	Helen Bevan
Jan Brown	Sue Bridge
Jenny Brown	Sue Briscoe
Tracey Coleman	Christine English
Glenda Colemere	Helen Farrington
Gail Corfield	Joyce Foster
Rita Davies	Janet Geeson
Ann Ferguson	Cynthia Gorton
Marlene Flannery	Janet Halligan
Kay Foster	Grace Johnston
Mary Harris	Elizabeth McCrone
Margaret Harvey	Jenny Naylor
Rachel Johnson	Steph Percy
Rosemary Jones	Eileen Robertson
Tina Jones	Barbara Shone
Bronwyn Kelly	Wendy Wren
Helen Kerr	Jan Wynn
Sheila Luke	

Maire Pedder	Alto
Rachel Pentecost	Susan Cooke
Rachael Reeves	Alison Davies
Jenny Seabridge	Frances Durkin
Carol Seed	Linda Evans
Doreen Sillitoe	Penny Evans
Sheila Swindale	Trude Gorton
Barbara Waters	Gillian Handford
Margaret Wheeler	Susie Heap
Jane Whiteman	Lena Hogben

Elizabeth Lea
Geraldine Leighton
Anne Nicol
Barbara Schultz
Sarah Steer
Gillian Tucker
Ros Wells
Diane Wheatley
Sarah Worth

Alice Blackburn
Judy Bryant
Mary Goodman
Ester Harries
Mary Hands
Marian Hay
Brenda Midgley
Janet Miller
Gwyneth Rollins
Joan Shaddick
Elizabeth Tilston
Margaret Whitehurst
Linda Wyatt

Tenor

Susanne Brierley
Martyn Colley
Graham Harbage

Patrick Hay
Wal Kaye
Richard Percival
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
Bob Pugh
Laird Ryan
Kevin Simmons
Simon Stubington
Ian Wells

L'Ensemble vocal Arpège de Mâcon

Soprano

Dalila Chaize
Catherine Dupre
Monique Labadie
Monique Ly Van Manh
Céline Piazzolla
M Claude Noel-Sodoyer
Nadine Nury
Christine Joblot

Alto

Christiane Christophe
Jacqueline Donguy
Solange Lacorne
Annie Oudot

Tenor

François Hincker
Michel Lamboley
M-Hélène Michel
Serge Michel

Bass

Jean Paul Christophe
Nicolas Gouillard
Jean Luc Proriol

Conductor

Corine Montanème

L'Ensemble vocal Arpège de Mâcon

The choir has some 50 members and since September 2016 has been under the direction of Corine Montanème, professor of music and choir and orchestral conductor. They have previously sung John Rutter's *Magnificat* in concerts in St Vincent's Cathedral in Mâcon and Tournus Abbey, both in December 2015 and more recently with Nantwich Choral Society in a joint concert in Mâcon in May of this year.

The choir is affiliated to Mouvement A Coeur Joie Choralies which includes 500 choirs and 14000 singers in France and more than 1500 choirs worldwide.

For the last three years singers from Arpège have taken part in Choralies de Vaison la Romaine, an international choral festival which is an initiative of the A Coeur Joie Choralies movement.

In March this year, 30 members of the choir took part in two concerts of Musicomédies at the Agora of Genlis, organised by the Burgundy branch of A Coeur Joie Choralies at which some 1500 audience members applauded the 300 performers.

Corine Montanème

Corine has been the conductor of Orchestre Résonances for four years. She is a native of the Beaujolais region and began her musical career at a very young age by directing local orchestras. She studied composition, musical analysis and flute at L'École Nationale de Musique de Villeurbanne and subsequently at the Conservatoires of Mâcon and Dijon.

In a parallel course of study she obtained her 'Licence de Musique et Musicologie' from the Université Lumière Lyon 2. She obtained her Higher Diploma in orchestral conducting from L'École Normale de Musique in Paris.

The Nantwich Sinfonia

Violins	Alison Loram Jayne Robinson Caroline Nowotarski Jac McKeigue	Clarinet	John Priest
		Bassoon	Jane Williams
		French Horn	Paul Sellers
Violas	Julian Robinson Katharina von Colson	Harp	Bethan Griffiths
Cellos	Diane Tice Ruth Henley	Timpani	David Lewis
		Percussion	Ed Cervenka
Bass	Jonathon Arch	Organ	Simon Russell
Flute	Emma Lindsay		
Oboe	Marcia Ferran		

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.

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, The Monteverdi Choir and Ex Cathedra.

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, performing Mozart's *Litaniae Lauretanae* and Haydn's *St Nicholas Mass* and has sung Handel's *Messiah* and Mozart's *Credo Mass* 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.

Recital work has taken Harriet to St George's Church, Bloomsbury, the Adrian Boult Hall, Birmingham, Oxford's Holywell Music Room, the Jubilee Hall, Aldeburgh and St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh. She is equally at home singing with piano and with orchestra and works with two experienced accompanists, Susie Allan and Jonathan French.

Recent engagements include performances of Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Paukenmesse*, Mozart's *Litaniae Lauretanae*, Haydn's *Stabat Mater*, Bach's *Mass in B Minor* and Elgar's *The Music Makers*. Harriet is a regular performer with Nantwich Choral Society, including Haydn Masses in 2015, *Messiah*, Bach *B minor Mass* and (with 24 hours' notice) Bach *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. Her first novel, *The Boy Who Fell Down Exit 43*, (a fantasy-adventure for 8-12 year olds) was published in September 2009 and shortlisted for the Blue Peter Book Award 2010. Her second book, a spooky ghost story *Gravenhunger*, hit the shelves in April 2011.

John S Benson - composer and arranger

John was born in Wigan, Lancashire. Educated at Rossall School, Fleetwood, he gained his ARCO in the sixth form and went to Pembroke College, Cambridge as Organ Scholar. After graduation, John went into television as a recording assistant in music and drama at ATV Studios, Elstree, working in music, light entertainment, drama and comedy with Spike Milligan, Stephane Grapelli, Tom Jones, Elton John and Des O'Connor. He later returned to Wigan to embark on a music teaching career, holding posts at Bolton School and Rossall School before becoming self-employed.

John was awarded the highest marks at FRCO, gaining several prizes and the Silver Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. He returned to Cambridge for an external MusB degree and recently completed a PhD course in music composition and research at Salford University. John has branched into the field of brass band music and is currently associated with Skelmersdale Prize Band and West Lancs Youth Brass Band.

John was accompanist to The Lydian Singers for over 20 years. He composed and played for them in churches and cathedrals, both here and abroad. His choral and brass band music has been published by Novello and Kirklees Music. He has given organ recitals in the UK and Spain, including Las Palmas Cathedral, Gran Canaria on the occasion of a royal visit.

John currently teaches privately in his music studio as well as co-directing the family business. Extra-musical interests have included astronomy, photography and flying. John held a

commission in the Royal Air Force VR(T) for 18 years, training cadets. He passed his instructor's rating on his Private Pilot's License and flew light aircraft regularly from Blackpool, Liverpool and Manchester.

John Benson and John Naylor have been friends and musical colleagues for more than 55 years.

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, 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 L'Ensemble vocal Arpège de Mâcon, Mozart's *Requiem* and Bach's *B minor Mass* with the period instruments of 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 and 2106 included Handel's *Judas Maccabeus*, Haydn's *Harmoniemesse*, Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Requiem* and Duruflé's *Requiem* with NCS, Tewkesbury Abbey, Brecon Cathedral and Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and Schubert *Mass in G* at The Lymm Festival with The Lydian Singers, and Ely, Ripon and St Albans cathedrals with OUCC. He conducted an especially memorable performance of Bach's *St John Passion* at Easter 2016 with his former colleague Rogers Covey-Crump as the Evangelist.

Plans in 2017 include Verdi *Requiem* with NCS, Peterborough cathedral with The Lydian Singers and Oxford cathedral with OUCC.

In addition to his musical activities, John has been Chairman of the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance since 2012. He is also a member of the General Synod of the Church of England.

The Nantwich Carol Composition Competition 2017

The competition is open to composers of any nationality and any age.

Three prizes are offered:

First prize - £300, Second Prize - £200 and Third Prize - £100

Nantwich Choral Society and Nantwich Young Voices will give the first performance of the three winning entries at their annual Family Carol Concert in St Mary's Church, Nantwich, Cheshire on 16th December 2017.

Entrants are invited to submit a setting of a text for SATB choir and children's choir with organ and / or piano accompaniment.

Closing date September 30th.

Full details are available on the NCS website:
<http://www.nantwichchoral.org.uk/carol-competition/>

Or email: enquiries@nantwichchoral.org.uk

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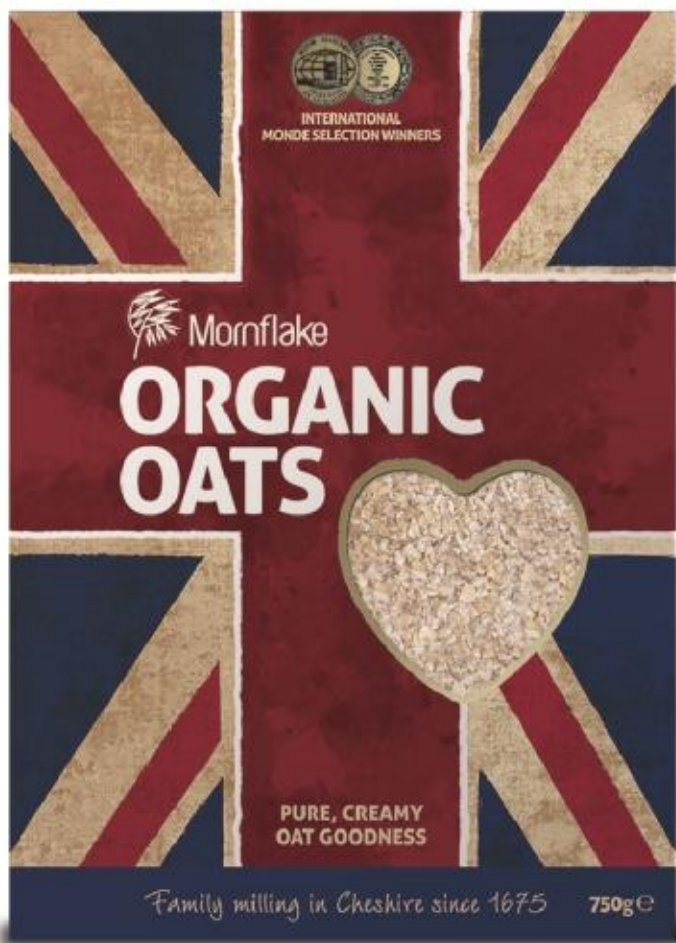
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Programme of events 2017/2018

Saturday 16 September 2017

St Mary's Church Acton

Singing Day

'Great Oratorio Choruses'

Sunday 22 October 2017, 3.30 pm

Victoria Hall Hanley

Requiem - Giuseppe Verdi

Emma Short - soprano, Susan Marrs - mezzo soprano

David Butt Philip - tenor, Dingle Yandell - bass

with

Ceramic City Choir

The Northern Concordia Orchestra

Saturday 16 December 2017, 6.30 pm

St Mary's Church Nantwich

Family Carol Concert

with Nantwich Young Voices

First performance of the winning entries in the

NCS 2017 Carol composition competition

Saturday 3 February 2018

St Mary's Church Nantwich

Come and Sing

Hiawatha's Wedding Feast - Coleridge Taylor

Saturday 24th March, 7.30 pm

St Mary's Church Nantwich

Dvorak - Stabat Mater

Vaughan Williams - Benedicite

Poulenc - Organ Concerto

with

The Nantwich Sinfonia

Saturday 23 June 2018, 7.30 pm

St Mary's Church Nantwich

Gala Concert

Gilbert and Sullivan

with Richard Suart