

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY

50th Anniversary Celebration Concert



Joseph Haydn

The Creation

Sarah Helsby Hughes – Soprano

Joseph Buckmaster – Tenor

Daniel Vening – Bass

Nantwich Sinfonia

John Naylor – Conductor

The Civic Hall, Nantwich

Sunday 19 March 2023, 3.30 pm

Chairman's Welcome

Good afternoon, and on behalf of Nantwich Choral Society may I give you a very warm welcome to our Spring concert. This is a very special year for us because it marks the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the choir, and so we have chosen to mark the occasion by putting on this performance of Haydn's magnificent oratorio, The Creation.

We are very pleased to be joined by the Nantwich Sinfonia and by our 3 distinguished soloists, and would like to thank them for their support in staging this performance today.

We are also delighted to have with us today the Mayor of Nantwich Town Council, councillor Peter Groves, and the Lady Mayoress. As always, we are very grateful to the Town Council for their continued financial support which helps us to stage events such as these. Thanks must also go to the Harding Trust who also provide ongoing financial support, and to Cheshire East Library service, who are unfailingly helpful in supporting us to source and borrow musical scores for our concerts.

Finally, thanks must go to you, our audience, for your loyal support, and we hope you enjoy listening to this concert as much as we enjoy singing it.

Graham Harbage
Chairman, NCS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Creation - Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Haydn witnessed many radical changes in music during the course of his long life. He was eighteen when Bach died in 1750, not long before the close of the Baroque era, and seventy-two when Beethoven's 'Eroica' Symphony was first performed in 1804, ushering in the Romantic period. Old forms of music were superseded by the symphony, sonata and string quartet, patronage moved from the church to the royal court, and public concerts were rapidly becoming immensely popular. Throughout all these changes, Haydn remained a pioneering figure. Other composers had written symphonies, sonatas and string quartets before him, but it was Haydn who first exploited the untapped potential of these forms, expanding and developing them to a hitherto unimagined degree.

The almost childlike cheerfulness of Haydn's music, its inexhaustible inventiveness and its perfection of design conceal a considerable inner strength. This fusion of exuberance, originality, classical elegance and intellectual power explains to a large extent the compelling appeal of his music. These are the qualities that placed Haydn far and away above the level of all except Mozart amongst his contemporaries, and kept him at the forefront of music during most of the eighteenth century. No wonder he was hailed as a genius throughout Europe, admired and revered by the public and by his peers. Mozart said, '*Haydn alone has the secret both of making me smile and of touching my innermost soul*'.

It is easy to overlook the fact that Haydn was composing the Creation when the Age of Enlightenment had drawn to a close. The French Revolution (1789 -99) horrified much of the rest of Europe and Darwin's theories of evolution were not even a distant dream. But even Napoleon, on capturing Vienna, in 1809 immediately ordered a guard of honour to be placed round Haydn's house.

For much of his life Haydn's energies were devoted primarily to composing orchestral and instrumental music. The supreme choral masterpieces of his old age – *The Creation*, *The Seasons* and the six last great masses, including the well-known *Nelson Mass* – were all composed after 1795, the year in which he completed the last of his 104 symphonies. The oratorio as a musical form appeared briefly in seventeenth century Italy, but was soon eclipsed by the much more popular operas. It was Handel who resurrected the oratorio from obscurity, transforming it from little more than an extended cantata into a powerful choral music-drama that was soon to dominate public music-making in eighteenth and nineteenth century England.

The succession of masterpieces that Handel wrote inspired many later composers, notably Haydn and Mendelssohn. During his first visit to London, Haydn attended one of the great Handel festivals held in Westminster Abbey and was completely overwhelmed by the experience, as a result of which he resolved to write an oratorio himself that

would be worthy of Handel's supreme examples. In 1796, inspired by what he had heard whilst in London, Haydn set to work on the score, which was not completed until 1798, by which time he was sixty-six. 'I was never so devout as during that time when I was working on *The Creation*,' he observed. The work received its first public performance in 1799 and was immediately recognised as a supreme masterpiece, receiving many performances all over Europe.

The text of *The Creation* has a long history. The three sources are Genesis, the Biblical book of Psalms, and John Milton's Genesis epic *Paradise Lost*. In 1795, when Haydn was leaving England, the impresario Johann Peter Salomon (1745–1815) who had arranged his concerts there handed him a new poem entitled *The Creation of the World* whose author remains anonymous. This original had been offered to Handel, but the old master had not worked on it, as its wordiness meant that it would have been 4 hours in length when set to music. The libretto was probably passed on to Salomon by Thomas Linley Sr. (1733–1795), a Drury Lane oratorio concert director.

When Haydn returned to Vienna, he turned this libretto over to Baron van Swieten. The Baron led a multifaceted career as a diplomat, librarian in charge of the imperial library, amateur musician, and generous patron of music and the arts. He is largely responsible for recasting the English libretto of *The Creation* in a German translation (*Die Schöpfung*) that Haydn could use to compose. He also made suggestions to Haydn regarding the setting of individual numbers. The work was published bilingually (1800) and is still performed in both languages today. Haydn himself preferred for the English translation to be used when the work was performed for English-speaking audiences. Van Swieten was evidently not a fully fluent speaker of English, and the metrically-matched English version of the libretto has given rise to criticism and various attempts at improvement. Indeed, the English version is sufficiently awkward that the work is sometimes performed in German even in English-speaking countries. One passage describing the freshly minted Adam's forehead ended up, "The large and arched front sublime/of wisdom deep declares the seat". Hmm..! (NCS members and their audience will recall Van Swieten's hand in the original libretto of *The Seasons* which we performed in 2009 in a much more acceptable translation.) The amended translation we use today has removed many of the linguistic infelicities.

The first performances of *The Creation* in 1798 were sponsored by a group of noble citizens, who paid the composer handsomely for the right to stage the premiere (Salomon briefly threatened to sue, on grounds that the English libretto had been translated illegally). The performance was delayed until late April—the parts were not finished until Good Friday—but the completed work was rehearsed before a full audience on April 29.

The first public performance the next day was a private affair, but hundreds of people crowded into the street around the Schwarzenberg Palace to hear this eagerly anticipated work. Admission was by invitation only. Those invited included wealthy

patrons of the arts, high government officials, prominent composers and musicians, and a sprinkling of the nobility of several countries; the common folk, who would have to wait for later occasions to hear the new work, so crowded the streets near the palace that some 30 special police were needed to keep order. Many of those lucky enough to be inside wrote glowing accounts of the piece. In a letter to the *Neue teutsche Merkur*, one audience member wrote: "Already three days have passed since that happy evening, and it still sounds in my ears and heart, and my breast is constricted by many emotions even thinking of it."

The first public performance at Vienna's Burgtheater on 19 March 1799 was sold out far in advance, and *Die Schöpfung* was performed nearly forty more times in the city during Haydn's lifetime. It had its London premiere the next year, in an English translation, at the Covent Garden Theatre. The last performance Haydn attended was on March 27 1808, just a year before he died: the aged and ill Haydn was carried in with great honour on an armchair. According to one account, the audience broke into spontaneous applause at the coming of "light" and "Papa" Haydn, in a typical gesture weakly pointed upwards and said: "Not from me—everything comes from up there!"

In common with opera, and like most oratorios – though not *Messiah - The Creation* has named characters and is divided into acts and scenes. The oratorio depicts and celebrates the creation of the world as described in the biblical Book of Genesis and in *Paradise Lost*. It is scored for soprano, tenor and bass soloists, chorus and a symphonic orchestra and is structured in three parts. These consist of sequences of choruses, recitatives and arias. The work begins with an extended orchestral introduction, 'Representation of Chaos.' Parts One and Two then describe the six days of Creation, each of which follows a threefold pattern comprising biblical narrative, descriptive central section and hymn of praise. The three soloists represent the archangels Gabriel (soprano), Uriel (tenor) and Raphael (bass), with the chorus fulfilling an important role portraying angels glorifying their maker. Part Three is devoted entirely to the appearance of Adam and Eve (bass and soprano) who sing of the wonder and perfection of God's newly created world and of their happiness together. Soloists and choir combine for the final uplifting chorus of praise.

Part I celebrates the creation of the primal light, the Earth, the heavenly bodies, bodies of water, weather, and plant life.

No 1. *The Representation of Chaos*: One of the most famous numbers in the work, an overture in C minor in slow tempo, written in sonata form. Haydn depicts Chaos by withholding musical cadences from the ends of phrases.

No. 2. *In the beginning God created Heaven and Earth*: This movement relates the words of Genesis 1:1–4. It begins with a recitative for bass solo in C minor, followed by choral presentation of the creation of light. The latter is depicted first with a soft pizzicato note from the accompaniment, followed by a sudden surprise fortissimo C major chord on the

word 'Light'. This moment created a sensation at the public premiere of the work in Vienna. According to a friend of the composer:

'at that moment when light broke out for the first time, one would have said that rays darted from the composer's burning eyes. The enchantment of the electrified Viennese was so general that the orchestra could not proceed for some minutes.'

Audiences today generally let the moment speak for itself! Following the appearance of light is a brief tenor recitative on the words "*and God saw the light, that it was good*", leading into:

No. 3. *Now vanish before the holy beams*, an aria for tenor with chorus in A major portraying the defeat of Satan's host, from *Paradise Lost*.

(End of the first day).

No. 4. *And God made the firmament* - an extended recitative for bass in C major. The bass part first gives the words of Genesis 1:6-7, then follows tone painting in the accompaniment describing the division of the waters from the land and the first storms.

No. 5. *The marv'llous work behold amazed*: Soprano solo with chorus, in C major. The heavenly hosts praise God and the work of the second day.

(End of the second day).

No. 6. *And God said, let the waters* - A brief recitative for bass (Genesis 1:9–10), leading into:

No. 7. *Rolling in foaming billows* - Aria in D minor for bass, narrating the creation of seas, mountains, rivers, and (a coda in D major) brooks. It has been pointed out that the stylistic inspiration here appears to be the "revenge aria" of 18th century opera buffa, as for instance in "La vendetta", from Mozart's *Le nozze de Figaro*.

No. 8. *And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass* - a brief recitative for soprano (Genesis 1:11), leading into:

No. 9. *With verdure clad the fields appear* - Solo aria in B flat major for soprano, in Siciliana rhythm, celebrating the creation of plants.

No. 10. *And the Heavenly host proclaimed the third day* - a brief recitative for tenor, leading into:

No. 11. *Awake the harp* - Chorus celebrating the third day, with a four-part fugue on the words "For he both heaven and earth has clothed in stately dress".

(End of the third day)

No. 12. *And God said: Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven* - Recitative for tenor, with portions of Genesis 1:14–16.

No. 13. *In splendour bright is rising now the sun* - tenor narration, the accompaniment portraying a brilliant sunrise, then a languid moonrise. The tune of the sunrise is simply ten notes of the D major scale, variously harmonized; the moon rises in the subdominant key of G, also with a rising scale passage. The end of recitative briefly alludes to the new-created stars, then introduces:

No. 14. *The heavens are telling the glory of God*

This is perhaps the most famous chorus from *The Creation*. The text is based on Psalm 19:1–3, which had been set by Bach as the opening chorus of his cantata *Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes*, BWV 76. Haydn's century, following on the discoveries of Newton, had the view that an orderly universe - particularly the mathematically-governed motion of the heavenly bodies - attests to divine wisdom. Haydn, a naturally curious man, took the trouble to visit William Herschel, ex-composer and discoverer of Uranus, in his observatory in Slough.

The heavens are telling is not in the Part 1's home key of C minor, but is instead in C major, showing the triumph of light over dark. It begins with alternation between celebratory choral passages and more meditative sequences from the three vocal soloists, followed by a choral fugue then a final homophonic section. (*The wonder of his works displays the firmament* is the English text here, with a word-order drawn from the German, which is somewhat awkward compared to the Authorized Version's "And the firmament sheweth the handywork of God".) Haydn piles coda upon coda, each occurring at a point where the music seems about to end, building to a final intense conclusion.

(End of the fourth day)

Part II celebrates the creation of sea creatures, birds, animals, and lastly, man.

No. 15. *And God said: Let the waters bring forth in plenty* - Recitative for soprano (Genesis 1:20), leading into:

No. 16. *On mighty pens uplifted soars the eagle aloft* - aria for soprano in F major, celebrating the creation of birds. The species mentioned are the eagle, the lark, the dove and the nightingale. The lyrics include the conceit that, at the time just after the Creation, the nightingale's song was not yet melancholy.

No. 17. *And God created great whales* for bass solo, in D minor. A recitative (from Genesis 1:21–22) followed by a very brief aria, the latter a verse paraphrase on the biblical words (Gen. 1:22) "Be fruitful and multiply." The bass sings in the voice of the Almighty, as quoted by the Archangel Raphael.

No. 18. *And the angels struck their immortal harps* - brief recitative for bass, with notable harp imitations in the accompaniment, leading into:

No. 19. *Most beautiful appear* - Haydn breaks the regularity of the pattern "Recitative—Elaboration for solo—Celebratory chorus" with a meditative work in A major for the trio of vocalists, contemplating the beauty and immensity of the newly created world. This leads without a break to:

No. 20. *The Lord is great* for the chorus with all three soloists, in A major, celebrating the fifth day.

End of the fifth day

INTERVAL

No. 21. *And God said: Let earth bring forth the living creature* - Recitative for bass (Genesis 1:24), leading into:

No. 22. *Straight opening her fertile womb* - A movement of tone painting with bass narration. Haydn's gentle sense of humor is indulged here as the newly created creatures appear, each with musical illustration: lion, tiger, stag, horse, cattle, sheep, insects, and worms. As always in Haydn's oratorio tone painting, the sung verbal explanation comes after the orchestral portrayal. The transition from glamorous animals (the first four) to prosaic ones (the last four) is marked with an unprepared modulation from D flat to A major. The farm animals are portrayed (as in No. 8) with Siciliana rhythm, which plainly had bucolic associations for Haydn.

No. 23. *Now heaven in fullest glory shone* - Aria for bass in D major, in 3/4 time.

"But all the work was not complete; there wanted yet that wondrous being that, grateful, should God's pow'r admire, with heart and voice his goodness praise."

No. 24. *And God created Man* - Tenor recitative (Genesis 1:27, 2:7), leading to:

No. 25. *In native worth and honour clad* - A favourite aria for tenor, in C major, celebrating the creation of man, then woman. Often sung outside the context of *The Creation*. Although the aria relates a Biblical story, the virtues attributed to Adam (and not Eve) clearly reflect the values of the Enlightenment. This was almost certainly the last music from *The Creation* that Haydn ever heard: it was sung for him several days before his death in 1809 as a gesture of respect by a French military officer, a member of Napoleon's invading army.

No. 26. *And God saw everything* - a brief recitative for bass (text amplifying Genesis 1:31).

No. 27. *Achieved is the glorious work:* A celebration for chorus alone, in B flat, of the sixth day.

No. 27a *On thee each living soul awaits* - Another meditation for the three angels (in E flat major), on God's omnipotence and mercy, quoting Psalm 145:15–16. The end of the trio is followed without pause by...

No. 27b. *Achieved is the glorious work:* This chorus begins with the same music and words as No. 26, and is in the same key of B flat but it quickly moves into a large double fugue on the words "Glory to his name for ever". As appropriate to the finale of Part II, this repeat chorus is longer and ends more intensely than the first.

Part III takes place in the Garden of Eden, narrating the happy first hours of Adam and Eve.

No. 28. *In rosy mantle appears:* An instrumental prelude in slow tempo depicting dawn in the Garden of Eden, followed by a recitative for tenor representing Uriel. Adam and Eve are seen walking hand in hand. The key is E major, very remote from the flat keys that have dominated the work so far. Various commentators suggest that this was meant by Haydn to convey the remoteness of Earth from Heaven, or to contrast the sinfulness of people with the perfection of angels.

No. 29. *By thee with bliss, O bounteous Lord* - Adam and Eve offer a prayer of thanks in C major, accompanied by a chorus of angels. This movement, the longest in *The Creation*, has three parts. In the first, marked adagio, Adam and Eve sing their prayer, with the chorus singing underneath them. In the second section, the tempo picks up, and Adam, Eve, and the angels praise the newly created world. The final section is for chorus alone, a celebration on the words ("We praise thee now and evermore").

No. 30a. *Our duty we have now performed* - Recitative for Adam.

No. 32. *O happy pair, and ever happy henceforth*

Uriel briefly explains to the pair that they will be happy always if they will refrain from wanting to have, or wishing to know, more than they should. This is the only reference to the fall of humanity.

No. 33. Sing the Lord, ye voices all

Final chorus in B flat major. There is a slow introduction, followed by a double fugue on the words "The praise of the Lord will endure forever", with passages for the vocal soloists and a final homophonic section.

The Creation – Texts

Part 1

INTRODUCTION – Representation to chaos

RECITATIVE – *Raphael*

In the beginning God created the heav'n and the earth; and the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

CHORUS

And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; And God said: Let there be Light, and there was Light.

RECITATIVE – *Uriel*

And God saw the Light, that it was good: and God divided the Light from the darkness.

ARIA – *Uriel*

Now vanish before the holy beams the gloomy dismal shades of dark, the first of days appears.
Disorder yields to order, to order fair the place.
Afrighted fled hell's spirits black in throngs;
down they sink in the deep of abyss to endless night.

CHORUS

Despairing cursing rage attends their rapid fall.
A new-created world springs up at God's command.

RECITATIVE – *Raphael*

And God made the firmament, and divided the waters, which were under

the firmament, from the waters which were above the firmament, and it was so. Outrageous storms now dreadful arose, as chaff by the winds are impelled the clouds.

By heavens fire the sky is enflamed, and awful rolled the thunders on high.
Now from the floods in steam ascends reviving showers of rain, the dreary wasteful hail, the light and flaky snow'.

ARIA – *Gabriel*

The marv'lous work beholds amaz'd the glorious hierarchy of heaven;
and to th'ethereal vaults resound the praise of God, and of the second day.

CHORUS

And to th'ethereal vaults resound the praise of God, and of the second day.

BECITATIVE – *Raphael*

And God said: Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering of waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

ARIA

Rolling in foaming billows, uplifted roars the boisterous sea.
Mountains and rocks now emerge, their tops into the clouds ascend.
Thro' th'open plains, outstretching wide, in serpent error rivers flow.
Softly purling, glides on through silent vales the limpid brook.

RECITATIVE – *Gabriel*

And God said: Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth; and it was so.

ARIA – *Gabriel*

With verdure clad the fields appear
delightful to the ravish'd sense; by
flowers sweet and gay enhanced is the
charming sight.
Here vent their fumes the fragrant herbs,
here shoots the healing plant.
By load of fruits th'expanded boughs are
press'd; to shady vaults are bent the
tufty groves; the mountain's brow is
crowned with closed wood.

RECITATIVE – *Uriel*

And the heavenly host proclaimed the
third day, praising God and saying:

CHORUS

Awake the harp, the lyre awake!
In shout and joy your voices raise!
In triumph sing the mighty Lord!
For he the heavens and earth has clothed
in stately dress.

RECITATIVE – *Uriel*

And God said: Let there be lights in the
firmament of heaven to divide the day
from night, and to give light upon the
earth, and let them be for signs and for
seasons, and for days and for years. He
made the stars also.

RECITATIVE – *Uriel*

In splendour bright is rising now the sun
and darts his rays; a joyful happy spouse.
A giant proud and glad to run his
measur'd course. With softer beams,

and milder light steps on the silver moon
through silent night. The space immense
of th'azure sky in num'rous host of
radiant orbs adorns, and the sons of God
announced the fourth day in song divine,
proclaiming thus the his power:

CHORUS with TRIO

The heavens are telling the glory of God.
The wonder of his works displays the
firmament.

To day that is coming speaks it the day;
the night that is gone, to following night.
The heavens are telling the glory of God.
The wonder of his works displays the
firmament.

In all the lands resounds the word, never
unperceived, ever understood.

The heavens are telling the glory of God.
The wonder of his works displays the
firmament.

Part 2

RECITATIVE – *Gabriel*

And God said: Let the waters bring forth
abundantly the moving creature that
hath life, and fowl that may fly above the
earth in the open firmament of heaven.

ARIA – *Gabriel*

On mighty pens uplifted soars the eagle
aloft, and cleaves the sky in swiftest flight
to the blazing sun.

His welcome bids the merry lark to morn,
and cooing calls the tender dove his
mate. From ev'ry bush and grove
resound the nightingale's delightful
notes. No grief affected yet her breast,
nor to a mournful tale were tun'd her
soft enchanting lays.

RECITATIVE – *Raphael*

And God created great whales, and ev'ry living creature that moveth, and God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful all, and multiply, ye winged tribes, be multiply'd and sing on every tree. Multiply, ye finny tribes, and fill each watr'y deep. Be fruitful, grow and multiply! And in your God and Lord rejoice.

And the angels struck their immortal harps, and the wonder of the fifth day sung.

TRIO

Gabriel

Most beautiful appear, with verdure young adorn'd the gently sloping hills. Their narrow sinuous veins distil, in crystal drops, the fountain fresh and bright.

Uriel

In lofty circles play, and hovers thro' the sky, the cheerful host of birds. And in the flying whirl the glitt'ring plumes are dy'd as rainbows by the sun.

Raphael

See flashing thro' the wet in thronged swarms the fry on thousand ways around. Upheaved from the deep th'immense Leviathan sports on the foaming wave.

Gabriel, Uriel and Raphael

How many are thy works, O God! Who may their numbers tell?

TRIO AND CHORUS

The Lord is great, and great his might, his glory lasts for ever and ever, and forever more.

RECITATIVE – *Raphael*

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle,

and creeping thing, and beasts of the earth after their kind.

Straight opening her fertile womb the earth obey'd the word and teem'd creatures numberless, in perfect forms and fully grown.

Cheerful roaring stands the tawny lion. In sudden leaps the flexible tiger appears. The nimble stag bears up his branching head. With flying mane and fiery look, impatient neighs the sprightly steed. The cattle in herds already seeks his food on fields and meadows green. And o'er the ground, as plants, are spread the fleecy meek and bleating flock. Unnumber'd as the sands in whirl arose the host of insects. In long dimensions creeps with sinuous trace the worm.

ARIA – *Raphael*

Now heav'n in fullest glory shone; earth smiles in all her rich attire. The room of air with fowl is fill'd, the water swell'd by shoals of fish; by heavy beasts the ground is trod. But all the work was not complete. There wanted yet that wond'rous being, that grateful should God's pow'r admire, with heart and voice his goodness praise.

RECITATIVE – *Uriel*

And God created man in his own image. In the image of God created he him. Male and female created he them. He breathed in to his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

ARIA – *Uriel*

In native worth and honour clad, with beauty, courage, strength adorne'd to heav'n erect and tall he stands a man, the Lord and King of nature all.

The large and arched front sublime of wisdom deep declares the seat, and in his eyes with brightness shines the soul, the breath and image of his God. With fondness leans upon his breast the partner for him form'd, a woman fair and graceful spouse. Her softly smiling virgin looks, of flow'ry spring the mirror, bespeak him love, love and joy and bliss.

RECITATIVE – *Raphael*

And God saw ev'rything that he had made; and behold, it was very good; and the heavenly choir in song divine thus closed the sixth day.

CHOIR

Achieved is the glorious work, the Lord beholds it and is pleased. In lofty strains let us rejoice! Our song let be the praise of God!

TRIO

Gabriel and Uriel

On thee each living soul awaits; from thee, O Lord, they beg their meat. Thou openest thy hand, and sated all they are.

Raphael

But as to them thy face is hid with sudden terror they are struck. Thou tak'st their breath away; they vanish into dust.

Gabriel, Uriel and Raphael

Thou sendest forth thy breath again, and life with vigour fresh return. Revived earth unfolds new force and new delights.

CHORUS

Achieved is the glorious work. Our song let be the praise of God! Glory to his name forever. He sole on high exalted reigns. Hallelujah!

Part 3

RECITATIVE – *Uriel*

In rosy mantle appears, by tunes sweet awak'd, the morning young and fair. From the celestial vaults pure harmony descends on ravish'd earth. Behold the blissful pair, where hand in hand they go! Their flaming looks express what feels the grateful heart. A louder praise of God their lips shall utter soon. Then let our voices ring, united with their song!

DUET

Adam and Eve

By thee with bliss, O bounteous Lord, the heav'n and earth are stor'd. This world, so great, so wonderful, thy mighty hand has framed.

CHORUS

For ever blessed be his power. His name be ever magnify'd!

Adam

Of stars the fairest, O how sweet thy smile at dawning morn! How brighten'st thou, O sun, the day, thou eye and soul of all!

CHORUS

Proclaim in your extended course the glorious pow'r and might of God.

Eve

And thou that rul'st the silent night, and all ye starry host, spread wide and ev'rywhere, spread wide his praise in choral songs about!

Adam

Ye strong and cumbrous, strong elements who ceaseless changes make, ye, dusky

mists and dewy strains who raise and fall
throu' th'air,

CHORUS

Resound the praise of God our Lord!
Great his name and great his might.

Eve

Ye purling fountains tune his praise and
wave your tops, ye pines! Ye plants
exhale, ye flowers breathe at him your
balmy scent!

Adam

Ye that on mountains stately tread and
ye that lowly creep, Ye birds that sing at
heavens gate, and ye that swim the
stream, ye living souls extol the Lord.

CHORUS

Ye living souls extol the Lord! Him
celebrate, him magnify!

Eve and Adam

Ye valleys, hills and shady woods, our
raptur'd notes ye heard; from morn to
eve you shall repeat our grateful hymns
of praise.

CHORUS

Hail bounteous Lord! Almighty, hail! Thy
word called forth this wondrous frame.
The heaven and earth thy pow'r adore,
we praise thee now and evermore!

RECITATIVE

Adam

Our duty we performed now, in off'ring
up to God our thanks. Now follow me,
dear partner of my life! Thy guide I'll be;
and every step pours new delights into
our breasts, shews wonders ev'rywhere.
Then may'st thou feel and know the high
degree of bliss the Lord allotted us, and
with devoted heart his bounty celebrate.
Come, follow me, thy guide I'll be.

Eve

O thou, for whom I am! My help, my
shields, my all! Thy will is law to me. So
God, our Lord, ordains, and from
obedience grows my pride and
happiness.

DUET – *Adam and Eve*

Adam

Graceful consort! At thy side softly fly the
golden hours. Ev'ry moment brings new
rapture, ev'ry care is put to rest.

Eve

Spouse adored! At thy side purest joys
o'erflow the heart. Life and all I am is
thine, my reward thy love shall be.

Both

The dew-dropping morn, O how she
quickens all! The coolness of ev'n O how
she all restores! How grateful is of fruits
the savour sweet! How pleasing is of
fragrant bloom the smell! But without
thee, what is to me the morning dew, the
breath of ev'n, the sav'ry fruits, the
fragrant bloom? With thee is e'vry joy
enhanced, with thee delight is ever new;
with thee is life incessant bliss; thine,
thine it whole shall be.

RECITATIVE – *Uriel*

O happy pair, and always happy yet, if
not, misled by false conceit, ye strive at
more as granted is, and more to know as
know ye should!

FINAL CHORUS WITH SOLOISTS

Sing the Lord ye voices all! Utter thanks
all ye his works. Celebrate his pow'r and
glory. Let his name resound on high!
The Lord is great, his praise shall last for
aye. Amen. Sing the Lord, utter thanks!
The Lord is great, his praise shall last for
aye. Amen.

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY

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BIOGRAPHIES

Sarah Helsby Hughes – Soprano

Sarah hails from Liverpool, England, and studied at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

Since graduation, Sarah's career has taken her all over the world, appearing for Mid-Wales Opera, Carl Rosa Opera, Lyric Opera Dublin, D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, Opera North, Opera Ireland, Birmingham Opera Company, Heritage Opera, and Focus Opera. She has performed professionally over 20 leading soprano roles in opera and operetta, including Violetta, Tosca, Madame Butterfly, Fiordiligi, Rosalinde, Queen of the Night, Hannah Glawari, Mimi, Santuzza, Donnas Elvira and Anna, Countess Almaviva, Gilda, Norma and Senta. She created the role of Mary Crawford in Jonathan Dove's ***Mansfield Park***, and the role of Gloria in Alan E. Williams and Ian MacMillan's ***The Arsonists***, an opera written to be sung in South Yorkshire dialect, which streamed live on the BBC.

Her concert work includes appearances in Italy, The Netherlands, Ireland and all over the UK.

Sarah is Artistic Director of Heritage Opera and has directed and designed over 30 opera productions for various professional and amateur companies in the UK.

This spring sees Sarah singing the soprano solos in *The Creation*, a concert performance of *Madame Butterfly* in Liverpool, and the reciter part of Walton's *Façade* at Sheffield Cathedral.

Joseph Buckmaster – Tenor

Joseph Buckmaster is a Lyric Spinto Tenor, who studied at both the Royal Northern College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music. At the age of six he began singing in the Chester Cathedral choir and continued to sing there in various roles until the age of twenty-four.

During his time at the Royal Northern College of Music he performed in the chorus for many of 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 on the master's course at the Royal Academy of Music he performed the roles of Apollo (*Semele*) and Alméric (*Iolanta*) for Royal Academy Opera.

For Heritage Opera Joseph has performed the roles of Tamino (*The Magic Flute*), Ferrando (*Così fan Tutte*), Basilio and Don Curzio (*The Marriage of Figaro*) and covered the role of Don Jose (*Carmen*).

Joseph co-founded Flat Pack Music and with them has performed the roles of Ferrando (*Così fan Tutte*), Rodolfo (*La Bohème*), Basilio and Don Curzio (*The Marriage of Figaro*), and Tamino (*The Magic Flute*).

In 2021 Joseph sang the role of Male 1 in the world premiere of *The Life and Death of Alexander Litvinenko* for Grange Park Opera. He also sang in the chorus for their season's other operas; *Falstaff*, *La Bohème* and *Ivan the Terrible/The Maid of Pskov*.

Last year Joseph worked with Opera Holland Park, performing the role of Monsieur Triquet (*Eugene Onegin*), and If Opera where he performed as Ruggero (*La Rondine*). This year Joseph

will return to OHP to perform the role of Rodolfo in *La Boheme* on the 27th July and IO as a guest artist in *Alice's adventures in Wonderland*.

Joseph is an extra chorister for both the Royal Opera House and the English National Opera.

Concert performances include, Handel's *Messiah*, *Judas Maccabaeus* and *The Foundling Hospital Anthem*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and *St John Passion*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Ramirez's *Misa Criolla* and Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*.

Daniel Vening – Bass

Daniel Vening is a British Bass from Newcastle Upon Tyne currently studying at postgraduate level with scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music under the tutelage of Mark Wildman and Iain Ledingham having previously graduated from the BMus course with First Class Honours. In September Daniel will join the prestigious Royal Academy Opera.

During his time at the Royal Academy, Daniel has been privileged to take part in masterclasses with Brindley Sherratt, Nicholas Mulroy, Christopher Maltmann and Florian Boesch. Highlights of his engagements at RAM include singing the role of Snug in Royal Academy Opera's production of Britten's *'Midsummer Night's Dream'* and Betto in Royal Academy Opera's production of Puccini's *'Gianni Schicchi'* as well as being a bass soloist in Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, conducted by Trevor Pinnock.

Daniel performed in the chorus of Mozart's *'Così fan tutte'* and Dvořák's *'Rusalka'* as an Alvarez Young Artist at Garsington Opera for their 2022 season.

Competition successes include the 2023 David Clover Festival of Singing, where Daniel was the winner of the Recital Prize, the Opera Prize, the Lieder Prize and joint winner of the Oratorio Award. He was runner up in the Blyth-Buesst Operatic Prize and was a Richard Lewis/Jean Shanks award finalist.

Recent work on the concert platform includes the bass solos in Haydn's *Creation*, Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Bach's *St John Passion*, Bach Cantata 40, Bach Cantata 70, Schubert Mass in G, Mozart *Solemn Vespers*, Vivaldi's *Dixit Dominus* and Schubert's *Winterreise*.

This coming summer Daniel returns to Garsington Opera to sing the role of Lackey in Strauss's *'Ariadne auf Naxos'* as well as covering the role of Mícha in Smetana's *'The Bartered Bride'*.

Daniel is extremely grateful for the support of The Munster Trust.

Nantwich Sinfonia

The Nantwich Sinfonia (led by Alison Loram) consists of local professional and semi-professional players and is one of Nantwich Choral Society's associated orchestras. The orchestra was founded specifically to accompany NCS performances and has given memorable concerts of works by Bach, Dvorak, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Poulenc, Rutter and Vaughan Williams.

Violin 1	Alison Loram	Clarinet	Hollie Whittles
	Mark Lansom		Katherine Blumer
	Don Turnbull		Jane Williams
	Levin Jones		Andrew Bassey
Violin 2	Caroline Nowotarski	Contra	Chris Long
	Jac McKeigue		Paul Sellers
	Kate Spiers		Jen Ward
	Julian Robinson		Trevor Jones
Viola	Della Hickey	Trumpet	Cecil Hayward
	Nick Smith		Paul Davis
	Beth Carlyle		Tim Lenehan
	Becca Nelson		Alex Forsey
Cello	Jonathan Thackeray	Bass Trombone	Eric Culbert
Double bass	Emma Lindsay		
Flute	Ruth Hayward		
	Richard Weigall		
Oboe	Marcia Ferran	Timpani	
		Continuo	Simon Russell

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.

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 visits in 2022 included St Mary's Edinburgh and Ripon Cathedrals and Blackburn in February 2023. The choir will visit Bristol Cathedrals and Hexham Abbey in 2023.

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. He has recently been appointed Lay Canon at Lichfield Cathedral.

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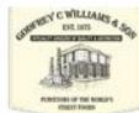


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