

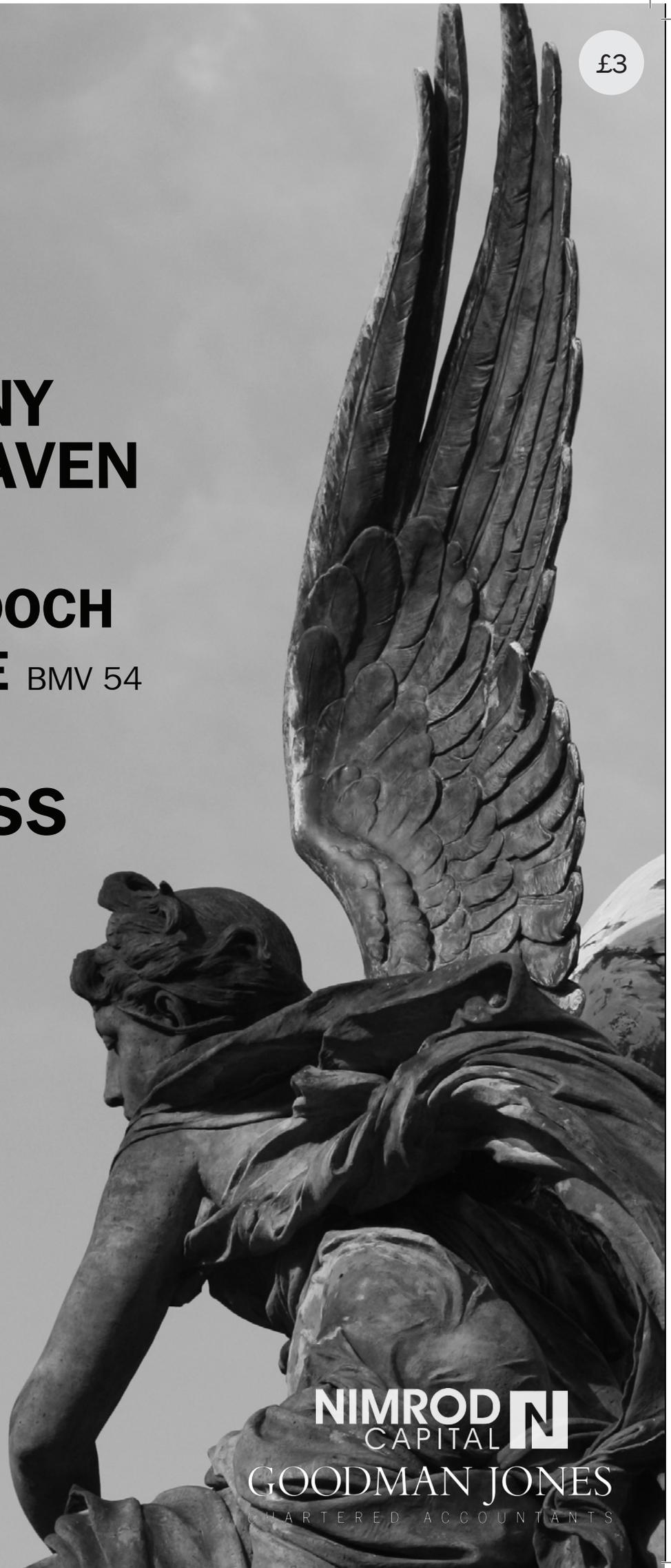
Britten
**THE COMPANY
OF HEAVEN**

J S Bach
**WIDERSTEHE DOCH
DER SÜNDE** BMV 54

Haydn
NELSON MASS

Saturday 17th November 2018
7:30pm
St James Church, Muswell Hill

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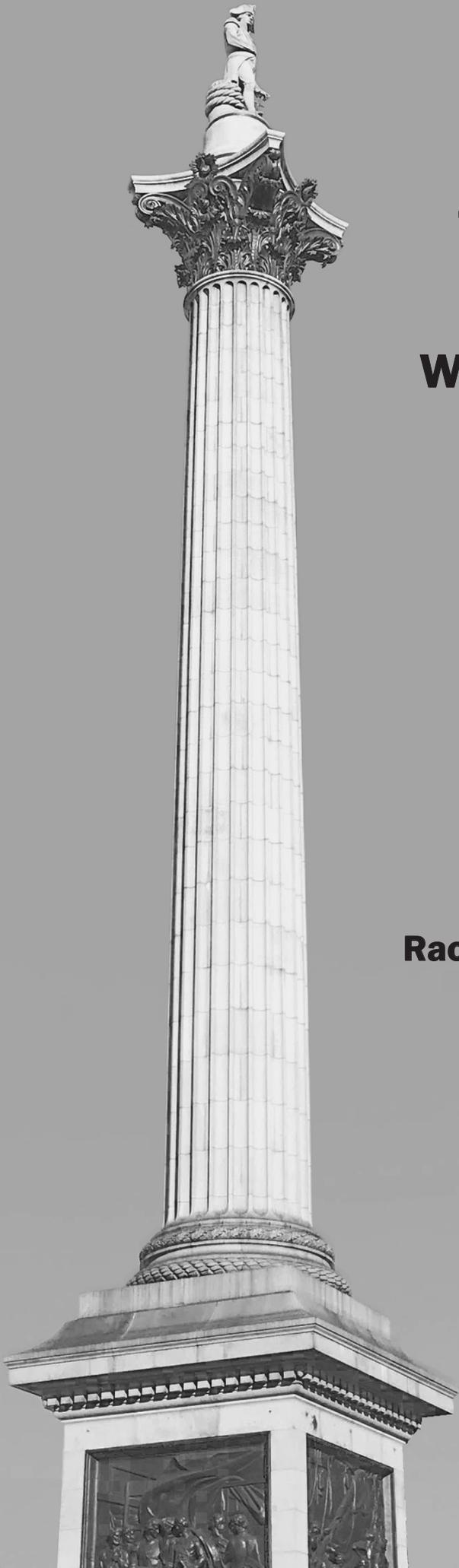
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BRITTEN
The Company of Heaven

J S BACH
Widerstehe doch der Sünde

HAYDN
Nelson Mass

Saturday 17th November 2018
St James Church, Muswell Hill

Soraya Mafi *soprano*
Katie Stevenson *mezzo-soprano*
William Morgan *tenor*
William Thomas *bass*
Rachel Bell and Jeremy Finch *speakers*

North London Chorus

Meridian Sinfonia
Eleanor Gilchrist *leader*

Murray Hipkin *conductor*

Please remember to switch off all pagers, mobile phones and digital watch alarms. The use of video cameras or other unauthorised recording devices is prohibited.

Thank you for your cooperation.

THE COMPANY OF HEAVEN

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976): *The Company of Heaven* (1937): Cantata for speaker(s), soprano solo, tenor solo, four part chorus, timpani, organ and strings.

...one composer has written all the music especially...and he has, by his music, given to it precisely that unity of thought and feeling that is so desirable. (R. Ellis Roberts in Radio Times, 1937)

...bearing up the mawkish tales of angelic rescue and hymning of watchers and holy ones, is a robust cyclic plan, some healthy string writing...and...a direct, unselfconscious engagement with the word. (Hilary Finch in The Times, 1989)

The BBC commissioned this early work of Britten for broadcast performance as the last in a series of text and music settings to mark major Christian festivals during 1936-37: All Saints Day, Christmas, Holy Week and Michaelmas. The series was produced by Robert Whitworth, with texts selected by the literary critic Richard Ellis Roberts and accompanying music selected from a range of oratorios and religious music by Trevor Harvey, assistant BBC chorus master and a close friend of Britten. For this final broadcast of the series, scheduled for Michaelmas 1937, they decided to commission new music instead of Harvey's skilful selections for earlier programmes from various oratorios and other religious music. Britten was the obvious choice of composer: Harvey had already conducted the BBC chorus earlier that year in a performance of Britten's *Two Part-Songs* (*I lov'd a Lass* and *Lift Boy*).

Britten first mentions the commission in his diary in late June, 1937, noting that "the poetry side of it is pretty long", though some consolation would surely have been the fee of 50 guineas. This was a substantial contribution to his total income for that year of £364 (more than £20,000 at today's values) and an



indication of how successful he was in beginning, while still only in his early twenties, to realise his intention to make a living from composing. He began sketching the work early in August, completing the score in full by September 22nd. It was broadcast a week later, appropriately on the feast day of St Michael and All Angels, conducted by Harvey, with Sophie Wyss and Peter Pears as soloists. Wyss had been the soloist at the premiere a year earlier of Britten's collaboration with Auden, *Our Hunting Fathers* and he later set for her the selection of Artur Rimbaud's poems entitled *Les Illuminations*. This was the occasion of his first composition

for Pears, with whom he had only recently become acquainted, a delightfully simple setting of verses from Emily Bronte's lyric poem, *A Day Dream*, noting in his diary that "he makes it sound charming. He is a good singer & a first-rate musician".

The initial overall idea of the series was for primarily spoken radio features with Harvey's selection of incidental music. Britten's engagement for the final programme inevitably changed that: Donald Mitchell describes the result of the collaboration as "in effect...a full-scale cantata, with the interpolation of spoken texts". Britten was able to

choose, possibly at his own insistence, which of Roberts' selection of texts to set and what additional 'incidental' music to provide. Roberts claimed that they 'discussed together' the plan of the programme, but Britten's decision on what to set is testimony to his characteristic 'unselfconscious engagement with the word' noted by Finch. Roberts was a prolific, intellectually confident and influential figure: as well as a broadcaster he was an author – mainly of ghost and horror stories; a literary and cultural critic - he published books on Ibsen, the 18th century English poet Samuel Rogers and a biography of the pacifist priest H R L Sheppard, whose broadcast sermons had been popular in the mid-1920's. He had already collaborated with Britten on the libretti for his *King Arthur Suite* and *The World of the Spirit*. In general, Britten's response to Roberts' eclectic assembly of texts is transformative. Through the structuring role of passages of purely instrumental incidental music and the choice of which texts to set, it amounts already to a convincing display of his musical genius.

The work as a whole is organised in three parts: Before the Creation, Angels in Scripture, and Angels in Common Life and at our Death. As well as containing spoken passages, these include numbered sections consisting of two pieces of instrumental music, eleven texts set to be sung or spoken to musical accompaniment and one to be sung a capella.

Part One: Before the Creation is in two sections, the first an incidental passage of gathering drama: timpani and strings slowly develop in hushed anticipation before moving at marching tempo, joined by the organ, into an awed sense

of the chain of divine tribulations that precede Creation. A speaker announces angels as spirits of the Lord, accompanied quietly before characterising the Archangel Michael in the words of Theodosius, the 4th-century Roman emperor responsible for codifying the orthodoxies of Nicenian Trinitarian Christianity. Spoken passages follow, from Hopkins – announcing the chaos produced in Heaven by Lucifer's dissonant apostasy – and Milton, on how divine order was restored. In the second section, the chorus celebrates the process of Creation itself, 'when the new earth first was hung, dizzy, in space, and all the planets and stars were young'. The text is by St Joseph, the hymnographer, a 9th-century Greek monk known as the 'sweet nightingale' of the Eastern Orthodox church described by Patriarch Photius the Great as 'an Angel in the flesh'. Joseph gives a trinity of Angels key agencies in God's act of Creation: Michael, their captain, who asserts the uniqueness of God; Raphael, God's cure, who comforts in distress; and Gabriel, light of God and the agent of annunciation, who brings peace. The hymn ends with Creation completed, when 'the sons of God for joy shouted His praise'. Already evident here is what will become the distinctive vocal and instrumental drama of Britten's operas: the chorus ranges across dynamics at rapidly varying tempi, conveying with infectious excitement the accomplishment of this extraordinary becoming and its celebration, in the differentiated voices of the combined divine, angelic and human agencies responsible.

Part Two: Angels in Scripture opens with a short, spoken excerpt from Thomas Heywood's lengthy didactic

17th-century poem, 'The Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels', summarising the several responsibilities of guidance and protection with which God charges the Angels, his first creatures, ordained with His light. Section III, has three short subsections: in the first two, the chorus quietly call and echo the names of Jacob and Elisha, punctuated by spoken scriptural passages, from Genesis and Kings, recounting their visions, of a ladder to heaven and chariots of fire, before the spoken recitation of earthly intercession from the pastoral Albion of Spenser's *Faerie Queen*. Two short aphorisms by Roberts follow, repeating the oppositional tension between Lucifer and Gabriel as angelic embodiments of darkness and light. The apparent redundancy of these spoken intercessions gives credence to Britten's biographer, Paul Kildea's wry observation that Roberts' texts were assembled "with one eye on the after-life", as well as justifying Britten's verdict on "the poetry side" as "pretty long". The final section is a brief, soft 'Hail Mary' for chorus and organ over which the soprano asserts a floating descant. The account of Mary's Annunciation from Luke's Gospel follows.

Section IV sets Athelstan Riley's translation of the Michaelmas hymn 'Christ the fair glory...' for chorus, soloists and orchestra. It is one of the many Latin hymns composed by the 9th-century Frankish Benedictine monk, Rabanus Maurus, whose most famous hymn, 'Veni Creator Spiritus' (the basis also for the well-known Protestant hymn 'Come holy ghost, our souls inspire...') was used by Mahler for the first chorale of his 8th symphony. In the same *andante comodo* tempo of the opening instrumental section of the work, the chorus offer a quiet,

lilting plea to Christ for his mercy and for access to heaven. In what will become characteristic instrumental sound-painting, Britten uses an exquisite rising cadence on solo violin to introduce tenor, then soprano soloists above them in elaboration of their further plea that Gabriel and the celestial companies of angels, together with Mary and the assembly of Saints – in effect, the entire exultant Company of Heaven – should ‘spurn the old serpent’ and watch over Christ’s servants. The smug piety of Rosetti’s rhyme and another redundant homily from Roberts which follow should not detract from the lovely delicate music, which Britten later revised into a separate piece for voice, cello and piano.

For section V, Britten makes a dramatic shift. Verses from the Book of Revelation are set as a battle hymn about war in heaven for speaking choir and orchestra. The arrangement is of a kind developed with Auden in their collaborative work during the early 1930’s on Crown Film Unit documentaries: the choral voices alternate, shouting in tense metric rhythm against the dissonant accompanying *marcato* of organ and strings. The changing dynamics and tempi lead to a fittingly fierce climax to conclude Part Two, recounting again how Michael and his angels descend to cast the devilish, satanic serpentine dragon into hell’s lake of fire, lighting earth with their glory.

Part Three: Angels in Common Life And At Our Death opens with section VI, a setting for solo soprano, chorus and orchestra of Roberts’ unattributed verse, ‘Heaven is here’, celebrating the unheard, unseen yet ubiquitous omnipresence of angels who safeguard and direct mundane human life. The soprano soloist soars above the soft plainchant of the

chorus, embroidering the theme by elaborating the mystery of angelic activities ‘for all the children of God’. Britten rescues this mediocre, iterative account of angelic deeds with transcendent musical imagination, developing overlapping cascades of soft choral voices which support the solo soprano to offer a sense of the magic of heaven on earth. His strikingly innovative scoring here suggests the disturbing attenuated harmonies of a glass harmonica, anticipating Britten’s recourse in later work to the etiolated, echoing sounds of the gamelan. The section closes with three spoken passages: an excerpt from Ruskin’s *Stones of Venice*, where a loss of routine decorative representations of angels serves as a cautionary metaphor for the cultural consequences of secularisation; a passage from *The Kingdom of God*, a poem by the 19th-century English Catholic visionary and opium eater, Francis Thompson; and a pantheistic homily by Roberts.

Pizzicato strings in *marcato* rhythm introduce section VII, a setting for solo tenor of verses excerpted from Emily Bronte’s longer visionary lyric poem: *A Day Dream* (1844), beginning “A thousand thousand gleaming fires...”. The underlying urgency of the opening lines and their accompaniment returns to the musical style of Britten’s recent collaborations with Auden as well as anticipating his later use of folk song in *A Spring Symphony*. The ineffability of the vision of spirits grows with the delicate softening of the voice, only to be qualified by the morbid portent that “Thou wouldst rejoice for those that live/Because they live to die” before song and vision fade into the wakening realisation that the spirits only ‘seem’d to sing...’. Roberts reinvokes the sense of vision, however, by following the song with a spoken account of witness

to the mystical ambiguity of angelic intervention at the accidental death of a child.

Britten uses this as the occasion for his second piece of incidental orchestral music which constitutes section VIII: ‘Funeral March for a Boy’. This is one of seven funeral marches that he composed between 1936 and 1941, the underlying stimulus for which seems to have been his preoccupation with Mahler’s music, writing to his friend Henry Boyd in 1937 that he found in it “the beauty of loneliness & of pain: of strength & freedom...of disappointment & never-satisfied love. The cruel beauty of nature, and everlasting beauty of monotony”. This funeral march resonates with Mahler’s 4th symphony, Bruno Walters’s new recording of which Britten had been listening to and discussing intensely with Lennox Berkeley; and it anticipates the specifically Mahlerian programme with which Britten structured his 1940 *Sinfonia da Requiem*, a lament both for the death of his parents and the dark bellicosity of the times. An altogether gentler piece, this opens in a dignified martial *allegretto*, progressing with graceful energy in a gentle, almost dance-like rhythm to a solemn crescendo before subsiding expressively to a moving *rallentando* at its close.

The second verse of William Blake’s pastoral poem ‘Night’, from the 1789 collection *Songs of Innocence*, opens section IX, preceding a setting for unaccompanied chorus of Psalm 91. Britten states the divine promise of angelic guardianship initially in four-part unison plainchant, before alternating responsibility for elaborating its particulars between each part in separate succession, supported by an accompanying soft drone from the others. This gives

impressive musical emphasis to both the powerful import of the detailed promise and the sweet pathos of those on whose behalf the angels are given charge by the Almighty, to keep them 'under (His) shadow and in all (His) ways'. The fourth verse of Blake's poem follows.

Section X sets to string and timpani accompaniment Bunyan's account in *A Pilgrim's Progress* of Christian's welcome into the kingdom of God by the King's trumpeters whose 'melodious noises and loud, made even the heavens to echo with their sound'. Britten matches Bunyan's literary evocation of the sound of trumpets with a musical conceit, marking his score 'Lento maestoso-quasi trombe' and offering dramatic sound pictures for strings and

timpani which prefigure the later Sea Interludes of *Peter Grimes*. Here they offer a convincing impression of 'the shout and sound of trumpet' as one of heaven's accompanying sounds. An excerpt from Dante Gabriel Rosetti's long, introspective poem, *A Last Confession*, completes the section by offering dreamt visions of women as further detail of the company of heaven – and the sound of their laughter, already hinted by Rosetti to his confessor as 'another thing, sometimes...'.

Above the chorus's gathering cry of 'O...', a spoken injunction to the 'Angels of the Lord (to) bless... praise Him and magnify Him for ever' introduces the cantata's final section XI, a quite magnificent amplification of Athelstan Riley's triumphant hymn

invoking the full heavenly host of angels and their choirs. Kildea reports that the re-harmonising of hymn tunes was 'something both Auden and Britten enjoyed doing at the piano when in their cups' and this setting may well have originated on such an occasion, but goes well beyond such cabaret. Soloists lead the chorus through ascending registers in a majestic song of praise of the Holy Trinity, to a concluding succession of Alleluias and Amens, punctuated finally with the soprano's confident solo re-invocation of the opening assertion of Part Three, that finally, and after all, 'Heaven is here'.

Paul Filmer

October 2018

Libretto

The Company of Heaven
Benjamin Britten
Words selected by R. Ellis Roberts

Part One: Before the Creation

I Chaos

Introduction for orchestra

He maketh his angels spirits:
and his ministers a flame of fire.
O ye Angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord:
praise him and magnify him for ever.

Who is this who commands the angels...
and leads the armies of heaven?
Who is this whose feast
all the powers of heaven celebrate?

It is Michael, the exalted!
Michael, the Archangel!
Who is this who ruleth the heavenly hosts,
to whose orders they pay obedience?

It is Michael, who obeyed the law of God:
Michael who conquered and cast out the rebel, the
slandrous one!

*(Theodosius: An Encomium
on St Michael the Archangel)*

When all the sons of God shouted for joy, Lucifer would not take part, but sang his own song. This song of Lucifer's was a dwelling on his own beauty, an instressing of his own inscape, and like a performance on the organ and instrument of his own being; it was a sounding, as they say, of his own trumpet and a hymn in his own praise. Moreover it became an incantation: others were drawn in; it became a concert of voices, a concerting of selfpraise, an enchantment, a magic, by which they were dizzied, dazzled and bewitched. They would not listen to the note which summoned each to his own place and distributed them here and there in the liturgy of the sacrifice; they gathered rather closer and closer home under Lucifer's lead and drowned it, raising a countermusic and countertemple and altar, a counterpoint of dissonance and not of harmony.

(Gerard Manley Hopkins, 1844-1889)

Hell heard th'unsufferable noise, Hell saw
 Heav'n ruining from Heav'n, and would have fled
 Affrighted; but strict Fate had cast too deep
 Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound.
 Nine dayes they fell; confounded Chaos roard,
 And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
 Through his wilde Anarchie, so huge a rout
 Incumbered him with ruin: Hell at last
 Yawning receavd them whole, and on them clos'd,
 Hell their fit habitation fraught with fire
 Unquenchable, the house of woe and paine.
 Disburd'nd Heav'n rejoic'd, and soon repaired
 Her mural breach, returning whence it rowld.
 (John Milton, 1608-1674)

II The morning stars

Hymn for chorus and orchestra

The morning stars who, ere light was, were light,
 Heav'n's light, heav'n's radiance, in adoration,
 There when the day shines, still unstain'd by night,
 Cry Holy, Holy, Holy, in exultation!

Guards, sentries, Captains of the celestial places,
 Thrones, princedom, virtues, powers,
 They praise him,
 Whom the four living ones,
 Whom angels with veil'd faces adore
 And the Cherubim and Seraphim.

"Who is like God?"

Michael the captain saith;
 Raphael, God's cure, sends comfort in distress,
 And Gabriel, who wing'd once to Nazareth,
 Gabriel, the light of God, brings peace!

They sing as when the new earth first was hung
 Dizzy in space,
 And all the planets and stars were young;
 Creation was over...
 Six nights and six days.
 The sons of God for joy
 Shouted God's praise!

*(Adapted from St. Joseph
 the Hymnographer, 810-886)*

Part Two: Angels in Scripture

Angels were the first creatures God made, created
 pure as the light, ordained with the light to serve God,
 who is the Lord of Light. They have charge to conduct
 us, wisdom to instruct us and grace to preserve us.
 They are the Saints' tutors, Heaven's heralds, and the
 Bodies' and Souls' guardians. [Furthermore as Origen
 saith, Every one's Angel that hath guided him in this
 life, shall at the last day produce and bring his charge
 forth whom he hath governed.]

(Thomas Heywood, 1574-1641)

IIIa Jacob

Chorus and organ

Jacob! Jacob!

And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went
 toward Haran.

And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there
 all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the
 stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and
 lay down in that place to sleep.

And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the
 earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold
 the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said,
 Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.

And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this
 place! this is none other but the house of God, and
 this is the gate of heaven.

(Genesis XXVIII 10-12, 16-17)

And when the servant of Elisha was risen early, and
 gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both
 with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him,
 Alas, my master! How shall we do?

And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us
 are more than they that be with them.

And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open
 his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the
 eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the
 mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round
 about Elisha.

(2 Kings VI 15-17)

IIIb Elisha*Chorus and organ*

Elisha! Elisha!

And is there care in heaven? And is there love
 In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
 That may compassion of their evils move?
 There is: else much more wretched were the case
 Of men than beasts. But O th' exceeding grace
 Of highest God, that loves his creatures so,
 And all his works with mercy doth embrace,
 That blessed Angels he sends to and fro,
 To serve to wicked men, to serve his wicked foe.

How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
 To come to succour us, that succour want?
 How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
 The flitting skies, like flying Pursuivant,
 Against foul fiends to aid us militant?
 They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
 And their bright Squadrons round us plant,
 And all for love, and nothing for reward:
 O why should heavenly God to men have such
 regard?

(Edmund Spenser, 1552-1599)

It was the rebel angel, Lucifer who fell from heaven,
 that tempted Eve in the garden, and brought
 darkness and death into our world.

It was Gabriel, the light of God, who brought the
 promise to Mary, and so restored life and light to
 mankind.

*(R. Ellis Roberts, 1879-1953)***IIIc Hail, Mary!***Soprano solo, chorus and organ*

Hail, Mary! Hail, Mary!

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent
 from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To
 a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph,
 of the house of David; and the virgin's name was
 Mary.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail,
 thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee:
 blessed art thou among women.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and
 bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.
 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord;
 be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel
 departed from her.

*(Luke 1 26-28, 31, 38)***IV Christ, the fair glory***Hymn for soloists, chorus and orchestra*

Christ, the fair glory of the holy Angels,
 Thou who hast made us, thou who o'er us rulest,
 Grant of thy mercy unto us servants
 Steps up to heaven.

Send thy Archangel, Gabriel, the mighty;
 Herald of heaven, may he from us mortals
 May he Spurn the old serpent,
 Watching o'er the temples,
 Where thou art worshipped.
 May the blest Mother of our God and Saviour,
 May the assembly of the Saints in glory,
 May the celestial companies of Angels
 Ever assist us.

(Rabamus Maurus, translated by Athelstan Riley)

I go from earth to heaven
 A dim uncertain road,
 A houseless pilgrim through the world
 Unto a sure abode:
 While evermore an Angel
 Goes with me day and night,
 A ministering spirit
 From the land of light,
 My holy fellow-servant sent
 To guard my steps aright.

(Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894)

And as it was in the beginning, so shall it be in the
 end. Once more darkness shall rise to overcome light,
 and the light shall triumph.

*(R. Ellis Roberts)***V War in heaven***Chorus and orchestra*

And there was war in heaven:
 Michael and his angels
 fought against the dragon;
 and the dragon fought, and his angels.

And prevailed not;
neither was their place found anymore in heaven.

And the great dragon was cast out,
that old serpent, called the Devil,
and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world:
he was cast out into the earth,
and his angels were cast out with him.

And after these things I saw another angel
come down from heaven,
having great power,
and the earth was lightened with his glory.
And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.
(Revelation XII 7-9, XVIII 1-2)

Part Three: Angels in Common Life and at Our Death

VI Heaven is here

Soprano solo, chorus and orchestra

Heaven is here, and the angels of Heav'n,
It is given to them to guard, guide,
Warn, and conduct us on earth;
Many winged, many eyed, mighty in love,
They stand watch at our birth,
Stand watch at our death,
Bringing us along the road,
Bringing us peace,
Bringing us brotherhood.

Ear may not hear,
Eye may not see,
But about us, around us,
In town and in temple,
At our work, at our play, as a cloud, as a light,
In the night, in the day
The angels assemble,
Praying, fighting, singing, rejoicing,
For you, for me, for all of the children of God.
(Anonymous)

...suppose that over Ludgate Hill the sky had indeed suddenly become blue instead of black; and that a flight of twelve angels, 'covered with silver wings, and their feathers with gold,' had alighted on the cornice of the railroad bridge, as the doves alight on the cornices of St. Mark's at Venice; and had invited the eager men of business below, in the centre of a city

confessedly the most prosperous in the world, to join them for five minutes in singing the first five verses of such a psalm as the 103rd - 'Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me,' (the opportunity now being given for the expression of their most hidden feelings) 'all that is within me, bless his holy name, and forget not all His benefits.' Do you not even thus, in mere suggestion, feel shocked at the thought, and as if my now reading the words were profane? And cannot you fancy that the sensation of the crowd at so violent and strange an interruption of traffic, might be somewhat akin to... the feeling attributed by Goethe to Mephistopheles at the song of the angels: 'Discord I hear, and intolerable jingling?'
(John Ruskin, 1819-1900)

Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars!-
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places;-
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,
That miss the many-splendoured thing.

Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,
Cry, - clinging Heaven by the hems;
And lo, Christ walking on the water,
Not of Gennesareth, but Thames!
(Francis Thompson, 1859-1907)

There are those, not only Christians, but men of many different faiths, who believe that the world we see is but a cloak of the invisible; that flowers and rivers and mountains, and the very stars themselves, all have their guardian spirits.
(R. Ellis Roberts)

VII A thousand thousand gleaming fires

Tenor solo and orchestra

A thousand thousand gleaming fires
Seem'd kindling in the air;
A thousand thousand silvery lyres
Resounded far and near.

Me-thought the very breath I breath'd
Was full of sparks divine,
And all my heather couch was wreath'd
By that celestial shine.

And while the whole earth echoing rung
To their strain minstrelsy,
The little glittering Spirits sung,
Or seem'd to sing, to me:

“O mortal, mortal! Let them die,
Let time and tears destroy,
That we may overflow the sky
With universal joy!

“To thee the world is like a tomb,
A desert's naked shore;
To us, in unimagined bloom
It brightens more and more.

“And could we lift the veil and give
One brief glimpse to thine eye,
Thou wouldst rejoice for those that live,
Because they live to die!”

The little glittering Spirits sung,
Or seem'd to sing to me.

(Emily Brontë, 1818-1848)

In the reign of Queen Victoria lived a priest, who was occasionally granted a vision of the unseen witnesses who surround us. [One of this man's sons told me of a remarkable experience his father had.]

One summer day he was walking along a country road which led, over a bridge, to a small town. As he approached the curve of the road that led to the bridge, he heard a confused shouting, and the noise of a horse's hoofs. He turned the corner and saw that a butcher's cart, driverless, was hurtling down the hill toward the bridge, drawn by its terrified and stampeding horse. Just as the horse and cart approached the bridge, a young boy, whose parents lived in the toll-cottage, ran out of the gate directly in the way of the runaway. The old priest looked in horror, still hurrying towards the bridge, and shouting a warning to the child. Then as he gazed he saw, clear in the sunlight, a figure clad in light, and with an incredible atmosphere of brightness. The figure stooped, gathered the child in his arms, looking down on to the delighted and laughing face. Then, swiftly as it had come, the vision passed; there was the wreck of the cart against the buttress of the bridge, the stayed and panting horse, and, in the road, a silent motionless figure, with dirty and bloodstained clothes and the mark of the horse's hoof on his forehead.

VIII. Funeral march for a boy

Orchestra

Whether the vision was that of the child's guardian angel, or of the Angel of Death, the old priest did not know. All he knew with unspeakable certainty, was, that it was well with the child.

(R. Ellis Roberts)

Farewell, green fields and happy groves,
Where flocks have took delight,
Where lambs have nibbled, silent moves
The feet of Angels bright:
Unseen they pour blessing
And joy without ceasing
On each bud and blossom,
And each sleeping bosom.

(William Blake, 1757-1827)

IX Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the most High

Psalm for unaccompanied chorus

Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the most High:
shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
For thou, Lord, art my hope:
thou hast set thine house of defence very high.

There shall no evil happen unto thee:
neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
For he shall give his angels charge over thee:
to keep thee in all thy ways.

They shall bear thee in their hands:
that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone.
Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder,
The young lion and the dragon
shalt thou tread under thy feet.

(Psalm 91 vv 1, 9-13, translated by Myles Coverdale)

When wolves and tygers howl for prey,
They pitying stand and weep;
Seeking to drive their thirst away,
And keep them from the sheep;
But if they rush dreadful,
The angels most heedful,
Receive each mild spirit,
New worlds to inherit.

(William Blake, 1757-1827)

WIDERSTEHTE DOCH DER SÜNDE

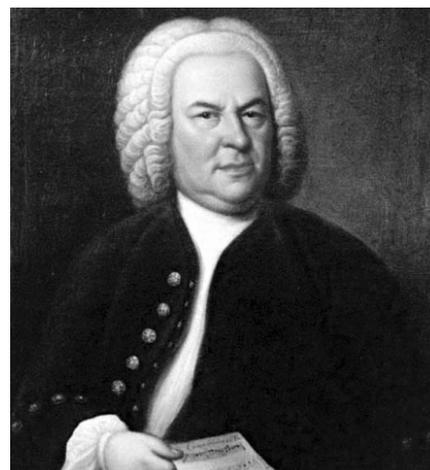
J S BACH

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750): *Widerstehe doch der Sünde*, Cantata 54 (for solo alto and strings)

Bach moved with his young wife, Maria Barbara, to Weimar in 1708, where he had been appointed organist and chamber musician at the court of the co-reigning Dukes Wilhelm Ernst and Ernst August of Saxe-Weimar. He was promoted in 1714 to the more important post of Concertmaster as well as organist of the court chapel, which carried the additional responsibility to compose a new cantata each month for liturgical performance in the Himmelsburg (Heaven's Castle), as the Wilhelmsburg palace chapel was known. It was the increased opportunities for composition that made the new post particularly attractive to Bach. The resources of the Weimar court were impressive for their time, consisting of a core ensemble of 12 instrumentalists and singers in addition to Bach, the Capellmeister and Vice-capellmeister. It could also draw on the further resources of six trumpeters and a timpanist, who were part of the court's military establishment, as well as instrumentalists and singers employed in other offices of the court, various musicians from the town and a number of designated choristers from its Gymnasium. The Red Palace of Wilhelmsburg and its chapel were known in the early 18th century, according to a contemporary account, as 'a world-famous masterpiece of architecture (where) one hears the most delicate and most agreeable music made by virtuoso and adroit vocal and instrumental musicians', producing the illusionary effect of music made in and coming from heaven. By the time Bach became Concertmaster, major renovations had been made to the rehearsal and performance space and accommodation for musicians and singers, enabling it to be adapted as necessary for a wide range of liturgical occasions.

Bach used the contractual requirement to perform a new work each month to begin realising his goal of producing a programme of 'well-regulated church music to the Glory of God and in conformance with parishioners' wishes'. To this end he had already 'acquired from far and wide, not without cost, a good store of the choicest church compositions' amongst which were his own early settings of biblical texts in what he termed modern-style concerted vocal music – that is, cantatas – for performance in the linked churches of St Mary's in Arnstadt and St Blasius in Muhlhausen, where he was organist from 1703-1708. Cantata 54 is constructed in an early form of sacred vocal music in which texts articulating general theological themes are freely combined, set as aria and recitative in the manner of a vocal concerto. The texts for Cantata 54 can be dated to Bach's time in Weimar, possibly before becoming Concertmaster, since they are from a collection assembled by Georg Christian Lehms, *Gottfalliges Kirchen-Opffer*, published in Darmstadt in 1711.

Cantatas were as important to Lutheran pietist liturgy as the sermon and were sometimes written in two parts to frame it. They explored the theological implications of texts chosen for their specific relevance to the occasions in the church calendar on which they were designated to be performed. The text Bach selected for Cantata 54, 'Widerstehe doch der Sünde...', an injunction to Christians to be steadfast in resisting the pleasures and temptations of sinfulness, is drawn from the Epistle of James on practical religion which Lehms had dedicated appropriately for performance on Oculi, the third Sunday in Lent. It offers a synthesis of the dialectical relationship between Law and Gospel at the core



of Lutheran theology. The Law is a divine doctrine, teaching what is right and pleasing to God, condemning all that is contrary to His will emanating from Adam's original sin, to which all human beings have since been prone. The doctrine of Gospel, by contrast, teaches the faith that human beings who have not kept to, and are therefore condemned by, the Law should believe: that the redemptive sacrifice of Christ, as God-become-human, has earned for humankind divine forgiveness of their sins and the gift of everlasting life. The central pietist belief then follows, that the standing of a person before God rests on the scriptural authority of Gospel, and their salvation is by the grace of God-in-Christ rather than by any agency of their own.

Cantata 54 is organised as a reflection of this dialectic. It was Bach's first for church performance by solo voice – for alto, accompanied by strings and continuo - and is structured in the simplest of tripartite cantata forms: opening and closing da capo arias, linked by a recitative. The repetitively dissonant strings that introduce the opening aria set an urgent mood for the soloist's trenchant statement of Law, insisting on resistance to the potentially

overwhelming poison of sin: surrender to Satan dishonours God and will attract His fatal curse. Bach uses this aria again in his *St Mark Passion*.

The recitative is accompanied by the continuo only and serves a didactic purpose in setting out, with an insistent, gentle rhythm, the vile ways in which sin works ('Die Art verruchter Sünden'). It concludes with a threatening arioso metaphor over rapid continuo passages, likening sin

to a sharp sword that pierces body and soul ('Sie ist als wie ein scharfes Schwert, das uns durch Leib und Seele fährt'). The opening statement of the final aria, 'Wer Sünde tut, der ist vom Teufel' (Whoever commits sin belongs to the devil), is from the first gospel of St John and returns to the focus of the first movement. But the accompaniment then moves chromatically behind the soloist's resolution of the cantata's admonitory dialectic with a statement

of Gospel doctrine: the temptations of sin can be overcome and banished through steadfast devotion. Just as in the opening aria, according to Glen Gould, Bach displays here the artfully intense use of musical cross-relations and suspensions that he reserved for those topics about which he felt most deeply.

Paul Filmer

October, 2018

Libretto

1 Arie

Widerstehe doch der Sünde,
Sonst ergreift dich ihr Gift.
Laß dich nicht den Satan blenden;
Denn die Gottes Ehre schänden,
Trifft ein Fluch, der tödlich ist.

2 Rezitativ

Die Art verruchter Sünden
Ist zwar von außen wunderschön;
Allein man muss
Hernach mit Kummer und Verdruss
Viel Ungemach empfinden.
Von außen ist sie Gold;
Doch, will man weiter gehn,
So zeigt sich nur ein leerer Schatten
Und übertünchtes Grab.
Sie ist den Sodomsäpfeln gleich,
Und die sich mit derselben gatten,
Gelingen nicht in Gottes Reich.
Sie ist als wie ein scharfes Schwert,
Das uns durch Leib und Seele fährt.

3 Arie

Wer Sünde tut, der ist vom Teufel,
Denn dieser hat sie aufgebracht.
Doch wenn man ihren schnöden Banden
Mit rechter Andacht widerstanden,
Hat sie sich gleich davongemacht.

Georg Christian Lehms, 1711

1 Aria

*Stand firm against sin,
otherwise its poison seizes hold of you.
Do not let Satan blind you
for to desecrate the honour of God
meets with a curse, which leads to death.*

2 Recitative

*The nature of loathsome sins
is indeed from outside very beautiful;
but you must
afterwards with sorrow and frustration
experience much hardship.
From outside it is gold
but if you want to look more closely
it is shown to be only an empty shadow
and whitewashed tomb.
It is like the apples of Sodom
and those who join with it
do not reach God's kingdom.
It is like a sharp sword
that goes through our body and soul.*

3 Aria

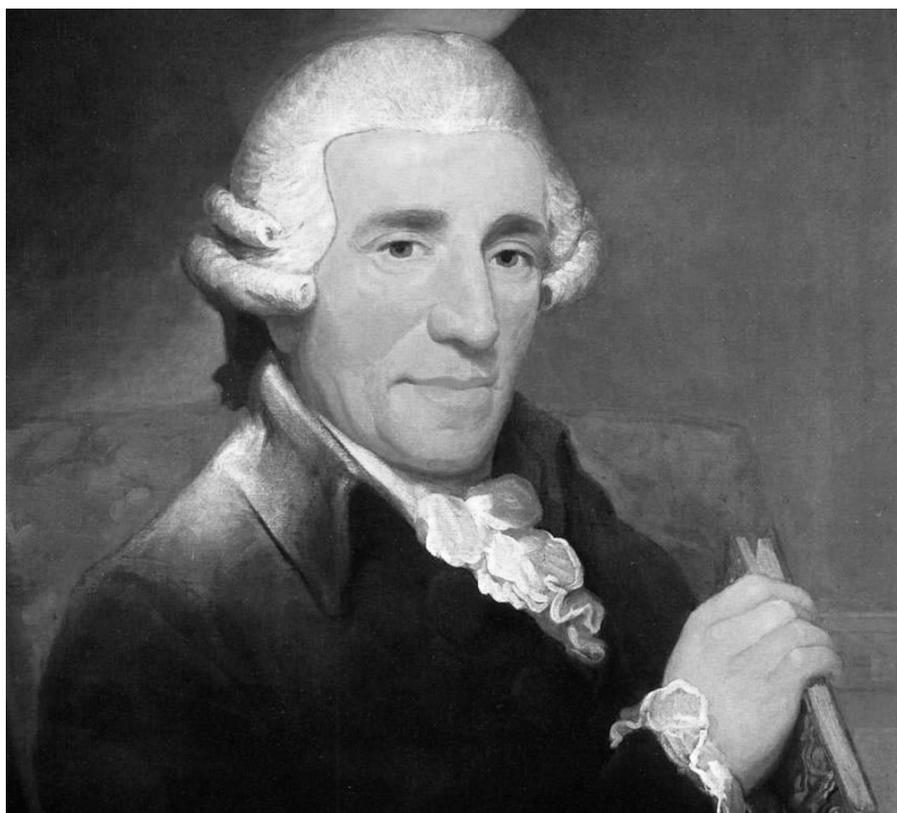
*Who commits sins is of the devil,
for it is he who has produced them.
but if against its despicable mobs
with true devotion you stand firm,
sin has at once fled away.*

English Translation by Francis Browne (April 2002)

NELSON MASS

HAYDN

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809): *Missa in Angustiis* 'Nelson Mass' (1798)



The provenance of the name 'Nelson Mass' for what Haydn himself termed 'Mass in straitened times' can only refer to the occasion of its performance on the name day of Empress Maria Theresa, wife of Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, Lord of Eisenstadt, on September 8th, 1800, allegedly in the presence of the legendary English naval war hero. Haydn had initially composed the work rapidly during July and August 1798, when it had been intended for performance at the feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary, which fell in that year on Sunday, September 9th. On this date Austrians celebrated having defeated the Ottoman army in 1683 and it thus provided an appropriate occasion for a joint celebration of both Marys, saint and empress. Insufficient rehearsal time, however, meant that the new Mass was not premiered until September 23rd at an ordinary service in St Martin's Church, Vienna.

For the service to celebrate her name day two years later, the Empress requested a new setting of the *Te Deum*, for which Haydn had first composed an orchestral score almost four decades earlier, in the early 1760s. The occasion coincided with the visit to the Esterházy of Admiral Nelson and Lady Hamilton, to whom Haydn was introduced as the international celebrity he had become after his acclaimed visits to London in 1791 and 1794. Nelson presented Haydn with a gold watch he had won at Abu Qir during the Battle of the Nile; the composer reciprocated with a gift of the pen he had used to compose a cantata in honour of Lady Hamilton – *Lines from the Battle of the Nile*. Whether or not Nelson and Lady Hamilton actually attended the service at which the new setting of *Te Deum* requested by the Empress was performed, the importance of the occasion required

that it should be complemented by a longer, more substantial work, for which a setting of the Mass would have been a characteristic choice – over the years Haydn composed no less than six settings for performance on this occasion. The *Missa in Angustiis* is the third of these and is particularly distinctive for the archaic instrumentation which the musicologist Richard Wigmore has suggested gives it 'a uniquely lean, acidic sonority, stark and minatory in the D minor Kyrie and Benedictus, fiercely exultant in the D major sections'. This resulted in part from the straitened times imposed on Haydn's instrumental resources in the court orchestra by Prince Nikolaus's ineffective gesture to economic thrift in dismissing the wind players just before the Empress requested the new setting. Haydn's imaginative and uncompromising response was to incorporate a major organ part for himself to play, as well as importing timpani and three trumpets.

A dramatically austere fanfare from the trumpets, reminiscent of the beginning of Mozart's *Requiem* written only seven years earlier, opens the Kyrie with an ominousness lent by its D-minor key. Whereas Haydn typically organised the Kyrie in two parts – an introductory Adagio followed by an Allegro – here, as he had in the *Harmoniemesse*, he set it instead in a single sonata-like form comparable to the opening movements of his late symphonies. The severity of the opening passage softens before being interrupted with the renewed severity of the chorus's initial, almost threatening, plea for mercy. This enables development of a sustained dialogue with the soprano soloist, who soars into an exquisite, calming repetition of the supplicatory cries of 'Kyrie' and 'Christe eleison'. Anxious fugal interruptions by the

chorus continue this dialogue, the soprano continuing to respond calmly. But the anxious mood of both key and chorus prevails, embellished further by a series of dramatic coloratura runs by all soloists before the movement draws to an urgent close. The titular sense of *Angustiis* has been set here: in anxious times of war, unrest and upheaval, the prospect of redemption inevitably seems both distant and uncertain.

The dominant role established for the soprano soloist is reinforced at the opening of the *Gloria* which follows, set in an uplifting D major. She leads the chorus, whose entry is supported by an ascending cello line, into a hymn of glorification and thanks whose introductory rhythms establish a mood in distinct contrast to that of the *Kyrie*. Haydn organises this part of the Mass on a considerable scale, dividing it into three distinct sections. The brisk ecstatic *allegro* of the opening *Gloria* reaches an almost complacent conclusion which is then undermined by the solemn B-flat *adagio* of the bass soloist's entreaty of *Qui Tollis*, reminiscent perhaps of the *Tuba Mirum* of Mozart's *Requiem*. Beneath his pitiful supplication the chorus softly chant '*Miserere nobis*'. The soprano soloist joins for the incantation of '*Suscipe*' before resuming the lively opening *allegro* rhythm to introduce the *Quoniam*, her coloratura again soaring above the chorus as the section progresses, leading them, assisted briefly by the other soloists, into a succession of joyous concluding *Amens*.

The *Credo* is organised similarly into three distinct sections, beginning with the more measured *allegro con spirito* of '*Credo in unum Deum*'. The chorus develops this opening, plainchant-like assertion of faith with growing confidence into a canon, suggesting musically the formal order

of heaven itself, before moving through a reiterative fugue to a resounding conclusion. The rhythm then slows to a devout *largo* as the soprano dominates once again to introduce the narrative of '*Et Incarnatus*'. Haydn here reinforces a profound engagement with Christian faith by supporting musically the textual emphasis on the significance of the roles of both the Virgin Mary and Pilate, and setting the Crucifixus itself to a chromatic note sequence which echoes knowingly the opening bars of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*. The chorus and other soloists softly follow the soprano's lead into the quiet closing on '*passus et sepultus est*'. Fittingly, *Et Resurrexit* follows, *vivace*, the chorus in dialogue with the orchestra's busy strings. Deliberate, emphatic iterations of '*Et, et...*' in the narrative of *Et Resurrexit*, further reinforced by directly illustrative emphases of high and low minims respectively on '*vivos*' and '*mortuos*', offer doxological incantations as assertive displays of faith. Repetitions of '*Non, non...*' in the sequence of '*non erit finis*' suggest a direct reference to Handel's early, Italianate setting of *Dixit Dominus*, while a final drawn-out '*Et...*' precedes the soprano soloist's brilliant coloratura on '*Et vitam venturi saeculi*', promising the post-resurrectional life to come. Tenors lead a joyous repetition of her cry as the chorus move into a celebratory concluding sequence of incontrovertible *Amens*.

The *Sanctus* is appropriately short for liturgical reasons, opening in a calm *adagio* before moving into an ecstatic *allegro* ('*Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Osanna in excelsis*') to celebrate the sacred reciprocity that inheres at the heart of the Mass with the offer and acceptance of the host. It is followed by the much longer *Benedictus*, in whose substantial *allegretto* orchestral introduction trumpets and strings complement and contrast one another to produce

a tense atmosphere which is calmed by the soprano's lyrical solo. The chorus supports her with a regular, straight song line as her fellow soloists join in confident displays against the interventions of military trumpet calls above timpani, strings and cries of '*Benedictus*' from the chorus. The section concludes with a structurally important return to the *Osanna* of the *Sanctus*, providing the sort of political moment, extraordinary perhaps in a sacred work but found often enough in the symphonies of later composers – Beethoven and Mahler, for example – for which it was surely an inspiration. Here it can be seen to support the secular attribution of the Mass as a tribute to Nelson.

The *Agnus Dei* is given entirely to the soloists, over a gently sober *adagio* accompaniment. It is reminiscent of the *Et Incarnatus*, though its chromatic harmonies give it a distinctly different tone. Its respectful closing plea of '*dona nobis pacem*' provides continuity to the concluding movement itself, which gives the chorus the final word. This opens in complete contrast, with a *vivace* musical accompaniment evoking delicately the skipping of lambs and giving a playful impression reinforced by cheerful, polysyllabic choral incantations of '*agnus dei*' and '*dona nobis pacem*' in different dynamics and tempi within a structure of ebullient fugal harmonic interrelations. This confident demand for the gift of peace, as emphatic as it is respectful, lifts the work to its joyful conclusion, reasserting Haydn's senses of faith and devotion which overcame whatever troubled secular contexts of *Angustiis* he had at times to work within.

Paul Filmer,

October 2018

Kyrie

Kyrie eleison; Christe eleison; Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te,
benedicimus te,
adoramus te,
glorificamus te,
gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam,
Domine Deus, Rex cælestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili Unigenite, Iesu Christe,
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Fílius Patris,
qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis;
qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem
nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu
solus Altissimus,
Iesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu: in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

*Glory be to God on high.
And on earth peace, goodwill towards men.
We praise thee.
We bless thee.
We worship thee.
We glorify thee.
We give thanks to thee for thy great glory.
O Lord God, heavenly King
God the Father almighty.
O Lord, the only-begotten Son Jesu Christ.
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have
mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive
our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right of the Father, have
mercy upon us.
For thou only art Holy. Thou only art the Lord. Thou
only art the Most High.
Thou only, O Jesu Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art
Most High in the glory of God the Father. Amen.*

Credo

Credo in unum Deum,
Patrem omnipotentem,
Factorem cæli et terræ,
Visibílium omnium et invisibílium.
Et in unum Dominum Iesum Christum,
Fílium Dei Unigenitum,
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia sæcula.
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero,
Genitum, non factum,
consubstantialem Patri:
Per quem omnia facta sunt.
Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem
Descendit de cælis.
Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
Ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est.
Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato;
Passus, et sepultus est,
Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas,
Et ascendit in cælum, sedet ad dexteram Patris.
Et íterum venturus est cum gloria,
Iudicare vivos et mortuos,
Cuius regni non erit finis.
Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem:

*I believe in one God
the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
And of all things visible and invisible:
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
Begotten of his Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God,
Begotten, not made,
Being of one substance with the Father,
By whom all things were made;
Who for us men, and for our salvation
came down from heaven,
And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost
of the Virgin Mary, And was made man,
And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried,
And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures,
And ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right
hand of the Father.
And he shall come again with glory to judge both the
quick and the dead:
Whose kingdom shall have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord and giver
of life,*

Qui ex Patre Filioque procedit.
 Qui cum Patre et Fílio simul adoratur et conglorificatur:
 Qui locutus est per prophetas.
 Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam.
 Confíteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum.
 Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum,
 Et vitam venturi sæculi. Amen

Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
 Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
 Pleni sunt cæli et terra gloria tua.
 Hosanna in excelsis.
 Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
 Hosanna in excelsis

Benedictus

Benedictus qui venit
 in nomine Domini.
 Hosanna in excelsis.

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
 Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
 Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

*Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son,
 Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified,
 Who spake by the Prophets.
 And I believe one Catholick and Apostolick Church.
 I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.
 And I look for the Resurrection of the dead,
 And the life of the world to come. Amen*

*Holy, holy, holy Lord,
 God of power and might,
 Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
 Hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest.*

*Blessed is he who comes
 in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest.*

*Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
 Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
 Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace.*

BIOGRAPHIES



SORAYA MAFI SOPRANO

Soraya Mafi is a graduate of the Royal College of Music and The Royal Northern College of Music. She is the winner of the 2016 Susan Chilcott Award – an award from the Susan Chilcott Scholarship to support a ‘major young artist with the potential to make an international impact’. A Harewood

Artist at the English National Opera, her roles for the company have so far included Tytania *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Mabel *The Pirates of Penzance*, Karolka *Jenůfa* and Papagena *The Magic Flute*.

Elsewhere she has sung Nannetta *Falstaff* for Garsington Opera, Cleopatra *Giulio Cesare* for English Touring Opera, Aminta *Il re pastore* at the Châtelet Theatre in Paris, Johanna *Sweeney Todd* for Welsh National Opera, Flora *The Turn of The Screw* for Seattle Opera, Suor Genoveva *Suor Angelica* for Opera North and Constance *Dialogues des Carmélites* and First Niece *Peter Grimes* for Grange Park Opera.

Highlights in the 2018/19 season include Cintia in Giovanni Legrenzi’s *La Divisione del Mondo* for the Opéra national du Rhin and the Opéra national de Lorraine and Gretel *Hänsel und Gretel* for Grange Park

Opera. She appears in concert with the Academy of Ancient Music, the Aurora Orchestra at Middle Temple Hall singing Mahler’s 4th Symphony, at the Wigmore Hall with Ian Tindale, the Ludlow English Song Weekend with Iain Burnside and the Cheltenham Festival with Malcolm Martineau. Future highlights include major role debuts with Seattle Opera, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera and Garsington Opera.

Soraya made her first appearance with the Southbank Sinfonia in 2015 after winning the Peter Hulsen Orchestral Song Award and has since performed with the orchestra at Middle Temple Hall and at the Anghiari Festival on numerous occasions. She is the winner of the 2014 Magge Teyte Award, the Sybill Tutton Award from Help Musicians UK and is supported by a Bruce Tollis Award at English National Opera.



WILLIAM THOMAS BASS

23-year-old British bass William Thomas was brought up in Harpenden and is currently on

the Opera Course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where he studies with John Evans. He is the winner of the 2018 Kathleen Ferrier Award and the 2018 John Christie Award from Glyndebourne. A Jerwood Young Artist in the 2018 Glyndebourne Chorus, he sang the role of Nicholas in Barber’s *Vanessa*.

In June 2018 he sang the bass role in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony in Lyon. He made his debut performance in 2017 as the Shepherd in *Pelléas et Mélisande* at Garsington Opera. In 2016 he was one of the soloists in Vaughan Williams’ *Serenade to Music* at the Birmingham Symphony Hall with the CBS and with British Youth Opera was the Quartet Bass in Malcom

Williamson’s *English Eccentrics*.

Future engagements include a Songmakers’ Almanac Concert with Graham Johnson at the Wigmore Hall in January 2019 and the role of Peter Quince in Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Guildhall in March 2019.

William is a Help Musicians UK Maidment Award holder, won the Joanhina Trust Award in March 2018 and also became a Drake Calleja Scholar 2018-19.

BIOGRAPHIES



KATIE STEVENSON MEZZO SOPRANO

British mezzo soprano Katie Stevenson graduated from The Royal Academy of Music in 2017, having studied with Yvonne Howard and Audrey Hyland. Following this Katie has become a member of the distinguished Harewood Artists Programme at English National Opera. This season

she sings Nefertiti in Phelim McDermott's celebrated production of *Akhnaten* conducted by Karen Kamensek, as well as Third Lady in Simon McBurney's production of *The Magic Flute*. Elsewhere Katie makes her company debut with Longborough Festival Opera in a new *Ring Cycle* under Anthony Negus, opening this summer as Flosshilde in *Das Rheingold*.

Recent highlights have included the world premiere of Nico Muhly's *Marnie*, conducted by Martyn Brabbins for ENO, Third Lady in Netia Jones' new production of *Die Zauberflöte* for Garsington Opera under Christian Curnyn, and the title role in Porpora's rarely performed *L'Agrippina* for Barber Opera. On the concert platform Katie recently made her BBC Proms debut in Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sakari Oramo and *Kindertotenlieder* with

the Orquesta Sinfónica Del Principado De Asturias. In recent months Katie has also added Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* and Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* to her ever-expanding repertoire.

Katie has been the recipient of all three prizes at the Wagner Society Singing Competition, culminating in an invitation to attend the Bayreuth Young Scholars Programme, as well as winning the 2016 Marjorie Thomas Art of Song prize. Whilst at the Royal Academy, Katie performed a variety of roles including Unulfo *Rodelinda*, Virtù and Venere *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Third Lady *Die Zauberflöte*, Mère Marie *Dialogues de Carmélites*, Pierotto *Linda di Chamounix*, Auntie *Peter Grimes*, the Baroness *Vanessa*, Carmen *Carmen*, Marcellina *Le nozze di Figaro* and La Badessa and Maestra delle Novizie *Suor Angelica*.



RACHEL BELL SPEAKER

Rachel grew up in York and studied Drama at Hull University after which she became a founder member of Hull Truck Theatre Company.

She has appeared in many stage plays, most recently *After Electra* at the Tricycle Theatre. She has played the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* for Stafford Shakespeare Festival and appeared in two versions of *Under Milk Wood*, at the National Theatre and Greenwich Theatre. She has also played Hyacinth Bouquet in two touring productions of *Keeping Up Appearances*.

Television includes *The Silkworm*, *The Worst Witch*, *Birds of a Feather*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Murder in Mind*, *Grange Hill* (five years as Mrs Holmes), *One Foot in the Grave*, *Poirot*, *Dr Who*, *Miss Marple* and *Chucklevision*. Rachel is probably best known for Louise in *Dear John* and Miss Pilchester in *The Darling Buds of May*. She is currently

playing a semi-regular character in *Doctors*.

She has been in several films, including *From Time to Time* and *The Edge of Love* and in 2002 she met Murray Hipkin while working on Penny Woolcock's extraordinary film of *The Death of Klinghoffer*.

Rachel last appeared with NLC at our Opera Gala Concert of 2004.



WILLIAM MORGAN TENOR

William Morgan graduated from the Royal College of Music and is an ENO Harewood Artist. His engagements with English National Opera this season include Peter Quint *The Turn of the Screw*, Writer *Jack the Ripper* (world première) and Hot Biscuit Slim *Paul Bunyan*. Next season's debuts include Tom Rakewell *The Rake's Progress* with

Barbara Hannigan conducting the Gothenburg Symphony, Tamino *Die Zauberflöte* and Misael in Britten's *The Burning Fiery Furnace* Scottish Opera, whilst recent engagements have included roles in *Falstaff* Royal Liverpool Philharmonic (with Bryn Terfel), Johann Strauss Gala tour Raymond Gubbay and covering the role of Young King in *Lessons in Love and Violence* Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

William made his solo debut for English National Opera in 2015 in the principal role of Younger Man in Tansy Davies' *Between Worlds* at the Barbican, and he recently returned as Phaeton Jonathan Dove's *The Day After* and Florizel (cover) in Ryan Wigglesworth's *The Winter's Tale*. Other recent opera work includes Pastore/Spirito and cover Apollo Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* Bayerische Staatsoper, Anthony Sweeney *Todd* Longborough Festival, Cervantes in Johann Strauss' *The Queen's Lace Handkerchief* Opera della Luna,

Wilton's Music Hall, Liam Paterson's *The 8th Door* Scottish Opera, *Hippolyte et Aricie* conducted by William Christie, Glyndebourne.

An avid chamber musician, William has performed many Lieder and song recitals, including at the Oxford Lieder Festival, Royal Albert Hall's Elgar Room, and the Royal Overseas League, with repertoire including the major song cycles of Schubert, Schumann and Britten. He has recently performed concerts at the Royal Festival Hall, The Barbican, St John's Smith Square, Canterbury Cathedral and Snape Maltings, and has been broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

William was a National Opera Studio young artist (2015-16) sponsored by English National Opera. He continues to study with Tim Evans-Jones.

William last appeared with NLC in March this year in Haydn *The Creation*.



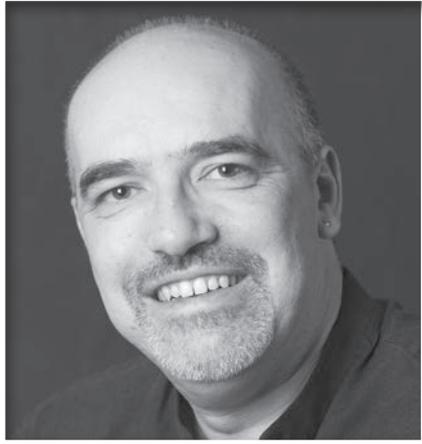
JEREMY FINCH SPEAKER

Born in Newcastle, Jeremy studied English Literature at Cambridge University before training as an

actor at RADA. He has sung the title role in *Candide* at ENO, a part he reprised in Tokyo and Kobe, Japan. He sang in *Sunday in the Park with George* at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris and Frederick in Opera Della Luna's *Parson's Pirates* and in *My Fair Lady* also at Le Châtelet. Other engagements include Frederick *Pirates of Penzance* (Buxton Opera House); Joe Gillis *Sunset Boulevard* (Really Useful Group); Ralph *HMS Pinafore* (Carl Rosa); Frid in Trevor Nunn's *A Little Night Music* (The Chocolate Factory); Seymour *Little Shop of Horrors* (West Yorkshire Playhouse); Baron Laur *Silbersee* directed by Keith Warner (Wexford Opera Festival); Ben *Lady in the Dark* (Royal National Theatre), and *Paul Company* (Sheffield Crucible).

He has sung the Tenor solo in Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* for Bath Philharmonia. Television appearances include the HBO production of *Band of Brothers* directed by Tom Hanks; an errant priest in S4C's *Pirates* and the comedy improvisation show *Dreamdate* for ITV1. He studies singing with Jane Streecon. Jeremy is a voice coach teaching Singing, Voice and Text at LAMDA and Birmingham Conservatoire.

Jeremy last appeared with NLC in 2013 in 'Summertime', our programme of songs from American musicals.



MURRAY HIPKIN CONDUCTOR

Murray Hipkin studied at York University, the Guildhall and the National Opera Studio before joining the Music Staff of English National Opera (1983–1988) and then working for Opéra de Lyon, La Monnaie, Opera Factory, Scottish Opera and, as Musical Director, Opera Brava. Since returning to ENO in 1995, he has appeared in *Mahagonny*, *The Silver Tassie*,

Leoncavallo's *La bohème*, *The Rake's Progress* and *Trial by Jury*; as Senior Répétiteur his productions over 24 seasons have included Phyllida Lloyd's *Ring Cycle* and Terry Gilliam's *The Damnation of Faust*; as Assistant Conductor he worked on, most recently, *Sweeney Todd* (with Emma Thompson and Bryn Terfel), *The Barber of Seville*, *Akhnaten*, *Sunset Boulevard* (starring Glenn Close), *The Pearlfishers*, *Carousel*, and *Chess*. In 2013 he played the solo piano in a revival of Deborah Warner's production of Britten's *Death in Venice* (available on DVD). He has conducted *La bohème* (Surrey Opera, Opera Box); Salieri *Falstaff*, Haydn *La vera costanza*, Mozart *Apollo and Hyacinth*, Gluck *Le cinesi* (Bampton Classical Opera), and, for ENO, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *The Gondoliers*, *Kismet*, *Carousel* (with Katherine Jenkins and Alfie Boe) and *Chess* (with Michael Ball and Alexandra Burke). In July 2010 he was Associate Conductor of *The Duchess of Malfi* by Torsten Rasch (ENO/Punchdrunk). Other highlights

include assisting the composer John Adams and conducting on location for the Channel 4 film *The Death of Klinghoffer*, and *Pierrot Lunaire* with Björk at the Verbier Festival. In September 2012 he assisted John Adams once again on *Nixon in China* at the BBC Proms and the Berlin Philharmonie. In February 2009 Murray completed an eight-month sabbatical from ENO as Musical Director of *The Sound of Music* at the London Palladium, conducting over 170 performances. He has been Musical Director of NLC since January 2003 and of the Pink Singers, Europe's longest running LGBT choir, since November 2010. He also leads ENO's Community Choir. Other recent and upcoming projects include three Britten productions for ENO: *The Turn of the Screw* at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, *Paul Bunyan* at Wilton's Music Hall and *War Requiem* at the London Coliseum.

Murray Hipkin is a member of English National Opera and appears by permission.

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NORTH LONDON CHORUS



We are a talented and versatile amateur choir and have established a reputation for performances of a high standard since our first concert in 1977 under the direction of the late Alan Hazeldine. Our Musical Director since 2003 has been Murray Hipkin, Senior Répétiteur at English National Opera and also Musical Director of London's longest running LGBT+ choir, the Pink Singers. Murray's considerable experience of both choral music and opera, together with his enthusiasm and skills as teacher and conductor have enabled NLC to flourish through the development of an exciting and ambitious programme of performances drawn from the choral repertoire of the 16th to 21st centuries, as well as specially commissioned work from contemporary composers. The choir benefits greatly from working with our vocal consultants Mark Oldfield and Yvette Bonner, and is privileged to have as its patrons the renowned operatic soprano, and Professor at the Royal College of Music, Janis Kelly, and the baroque musicologist and Handel scholar and performer Laurence Cummings. Both work with us when their schedules allow: in 2015 we were delighted to have Janis perform with us in Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* at St Edmundsbury Cathedral and Laurence conduct us in a workshop and concert performance of Handel's *Acis and Galatea* in London.

We rehearse weekly on Thursday evenings from 7.45pm to 10pm at Martin School in East Finchley and on additional Wednesdays as concert dates approach. We give public concerts three times a year, usually to a full house at St James Church in Muswell Hill, though we are continuing to explore performing at larger venues in Central London after a successful performance of Brahms' *German Requiem* with the Berlin choir Cantus Domus at Milton Court in the Barbican Centre in 2014. This reciprocal visit by Cantus Domus was the follow-up to our visit to Berlin in November 2013 to perform the *War Requiem* with them at the Berliner Konzerthaus. As a

result of that very positive experience we are maintaining a triennial reciprocal touring programme with choirs in other countries. Last November (2017) we performed in concert with the Swiss choir Contrapunto at the City Church of St Jakob, Staffauer in Zurich, in celebration of their 30th anniversary. They, in turn, came to London later that month for a joint concert with us in Shoreditch Town Hall. The programme for both concerts included works by Mendelssohn and Vaughan Williams and a new composition by their artistic director, Beat Dahler.

To mark our 40th Anniversary Friends of North London Chorus was launched in the summer of 2017, with a performance by Friends of NLC patron and renowned soprano Sally Silver. Donations to Friends of NLC support and fund special projects, workshops, new commissions and similar activities within our charitable goals, and will also enable us to provide additional support to members in need who would otherwise find it difficult to sing with the choir.

We are a friendly choir and hold social events each year which include a fundraising quiz evening and a residential weekend workshop. As well as enabling us to work intensively on vocal technique and choral repertoire under expert specialist tuition, the workshop has as one of its highlights an enjoyable and relaxed Saturday evening concert of cabaret-style performances of music, song and humour displaying the considerable variety of our members' talents.

As a registered charity, one of whose aims is the promotion, maintenance and improvement of the public's appreciation of choral music, we have been successful in raising funds to help subsidise our work. Through our own concerts and participation in local events we also support a number of other charities. We welcome new members and invite singers interested in joining us to attend rehearsals prior to auditioning for membership. There are currently vacancies in all sections.



NLC is a registered charity (no 277544) and is a member of Making Music, The National Federation of Music Societies

NORTH LONDON CHORUS

SOPRANO

Jean Airey	Jenny Cohen	Katheryn Ferin	Amanda Lebus	Sazia Samad
Gloria Arthur	Heather Daniel	Bernadette Gillespie	Alison Liney	Susan Segal Horn
Helena Beddoe	Sheila Denby-Wood	Debbie Goldman	Alice MacKay	Jennifer Somerville
Amy Beswick	Katherine Dixey	Amanda Horton	Ros Massey	Patricia Whitehead
Jenny Bourne Taylor	Suzie Edwards	Enid Hunt	Ainsley McArthur	Andrea Whittaker
Michaela Carlowe	Penny Elder	Marta Jansa	Verity Preest	

ALTO

Anna Armbruster	Lucy Ellis	Sue Heaney	Judith Moser	Pauline Treen
Nicola Bartlett	Sarah Falk	Katharine Hodgkin	Kitty Nabarro	Catherine Whitehead
Eloise Beckles	Eleanor Flaxen	Jo Hulme	Joan Reardon	
Jenny Blake	Vicky Faure Walker	Helen Jones	Alison Salisbury	
Fiona Brown	Eleanor Flaxen	Susan Le Quesne	Judith Schott	
Marian Bunzl	Hélène Gordon	Lynne Mark	Jane Spender	
Vivienne Canter	Viv Gross	Kathryn Metzenthin	Julia Tash	

TENOR

Gary Bilkus	Pasco Fearon	Bill Mastandrea	Jeremy Platt	Alan Wills
Alan Chandler	Keith Maiden	James Murphy	Wilhelm Skogstad	

BASS

Marcus Bartlett	Shaun Davies	Paul Filmer	David Loxley-Blount	Gershon Silins
Euan Brodie	Michael Derrick	Simon Gibeon	Dan Newman	David Stone
Norman Cohen	Andrew Elder	David Hastings	Andrea Sabbadini	
John Crouch	Mark Evans	Yoav Landau-Pope	Tony Shelton	

Many thanks to Alex Sutton for assistance with casting.

MERIDIAN SINFONIA

Leader

Eleanor Gilchrist

Violin 1

Steve Dinwoodie
Gavin Rhind
Charlotte Amherst
Oliver Cave
Helen Brown

Violin 2

Emma Penfold
Patrycja Mynarska
Rosie Kenally
Philip Granell
Catherine Martin

Viola

Stefanie Heichelheim
Charlie Cross
Francesca Gilbert
Lisa Bucknell

Cello

Susie Winkworth
Hannah Lewis
Jo Warren

Double Bass

Elena Marigomez
Adam Precious

Trumpet

Richard Thomas
Alex Cromwell

Timpani

Donal O'Neil

Organ

Nicholas Chalmers

Orchestral Management

Richard Thomas

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ST JOHN PASSION
J S Bach

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St James, London N10 3DB
www.northlondonchorus.org



Friends of NLC

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Photo Alex May

To mark our 40th Anniversary **Friends of North London Chorus** was launched in the summer of 2017, with a performance by **Friends of NLC** patron and renowned soprano Sally Silver.

We would be delighted to welcome more friends to the scheme. Donations to **Friends of NLC** support and fund special projects, workshops, new commissions and similar activities within our charitable goals, and will also enable us to provide additional support to members in need who would otherwise find it difficult to sing with the choir.

Membership of **Friends of NLC** will entitle you to the following benefits:

- Acknowledgement of your generous support in our concert programme (optional).
- Complimentary programmes for our concert season.
- A complimentary glass of wine or soft drink at each concert.
- Being amongst the first to hear about our concerts and events via our mailing list.

Membership costs £40 per year but supplementary donations are always welcome.

Sign up at www.northlondonchorus.org/friends

North London Chorus would like to acknowledge with thanks all those who support our activities through their generous donations.

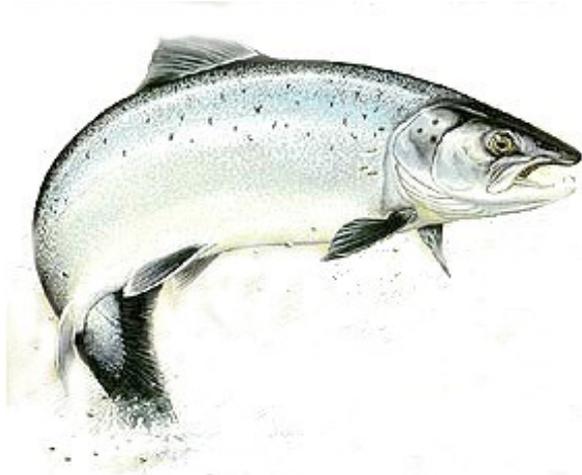
Ann Beaton
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Robert Brown
John Davies
Julia Fabricius
Vivienne Gross

Nicholas Hawkins
Jo Hulme
Paul Long
Vivienne Mitchell
Ruth Pitman
Richard Stein

Isabelle Valentin
Phyllis White
Jack Whitehead
and those who wish
to remain anonymous.

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PAST CONCERTS - THE LAST TEN YEARS

15 Mar 2008	Haydn <i>The Seven Last Words</i> Rossini <i>Stabat Mater</i>	25 Jun 2011	Rossini <i>Petite Messe Solennelle</i> Lauridsen <i>O Magnum Mysterium</i> Barber <i>Agnus Dei</i>	21 Mar 2015	Fauré <i>Requiem Mass</i> Kodály <i>Missa Brevis</i> Liszt <i>Die Seligkeiten</i>
28 Jun 2008	Britten <i>Cantata Misericordium</i> Jenkins <i>The Armed Man</i> Tippett <i>Five Negro Spirituals</i>	19 Nov 2011	Britten <i>Rejoice in the Lamb</i> Tavener <i>Svyati</i> Durufié <i>Requiem</i>	16 May 2015	Britten <i>War Requiem</i> 4 July 2015 Handel <i>Acis and Galatea</i>
22 Nov 2008	Brahms <i>Ein Deutsches Requiem</i> Schubert <i>Mass in G</i>	24 Mar 2012	Handel <i>Israel in Egypt</i>	28 Nov 2015	Bach <i>Magnificat</i> , <i>Christmas Oratorio Parts 1,2,3</i>
21 Mar 2009	Beethoven <i>Missa Solemnis</i>	30 Jun 2012	Dvorak <i>Mass in D</i> Howells <i>An English Mass</i>	12 Mar 2016	Mendelssohn <i>Elijah</i>
27 Jun 2009	Purcell <i>O Sng Unto the Lord</i> Haydn <i>Nelson Mass</i> Handel <i>Four Coronation Anthems</i>	15 Dec 2012	King <i>Out of the Depths</i> <i>(First performance)</i> Mozart <i>Mass in C Minor</i>	11 Jun 2016	Bernstein <i>Mass (Choral Suite)</i> Whitacre <i>Five Hebrew Love songs</i> Copland <i>Old American Songs</i>
28 Nov 2009	Mendelssohn <i>Elijah</i>	20 Apr 2013	J S Bach <i>Mass in B Minor</i>	20 Nov 2016	Verdi <i>Requiem</i>
20 Mar 2010	Buxtehude <i>Membra Jesu Nostr</i> Bach <i>Mass in F</i> Handel <i>Dixit Dominus</i>	29 Jun 2013	Various <i>Summertime</i>	25 Mar 2017	Dove <i>The Passing of the Year</i> Brahms <i>Liebeslieder, Neue Liebeslieder</i>
3 Jul 2010	Mozart <i>Solemn Vespers</i> Bliss <i>Pastoral 'Lie Strown the White Flocks'</i>	21 Nov 2013	Britten <i>War Requiem</i>	1 Jun 2017	Mozart <i>Requiem</i> King <i>Out of the Depths</i>
27 Nov 2010	Orff <i>Carmina Burana</i> Elgar <i>From the Bavarian Highlands</i>	15 Mar 2014	Schubert <i>Mirjams Siegesgesang</i> Korngold <i>Passover Psalm</i> Mendelssohn <i>Hear My Prayer</i> Bernstein <i>Chichester Psalms</i>	25 Nov 2017	Mendelssohn <i>Die erst Walpurgisnacht</i> Vaughan Williams <i>In Windsor Forest</i> Dähler <i>Byzantium</i>
26 Mar 2011	Mozart <i>Davidde Penitente</i> Beethoven <i>Christus am Ölberge</i>	14 Jul 2014	Mendelssohn <i>Verleih' und Frieden</i> Brahms <i>Nänie</i> Brahms <i>Ein Deutsches Requiem</i>	17 Mar 2018	Haydn <i>The Creation</i> <i>Insanae et vanae curae</i>
		22 Nov 2014	Beethoven <i>Mass in C</i> Haydn <i>Te Deum</i>	14 Jul 2018	Salieri <i>Requiem</i> Puccini <i>Messa di Gloria</i>

Please visit www.northlondonchorus.org for the full list dating back to the first concert in 1977

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