

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

Saturday 21st December 1996 at 7.30pm
CAROLS FOR CHOIR AND AUDIENCE

Saturday 10th May 1997 at 7.30pm
BACH - MASS IN B MINOR

Nantwich Choral Society is supported by
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HANDEL MESSIAH



SATURDAY 7th DECEMBER 1996

**The Parish Church of St. Mary, Nantwich
at 7.00pm.**

Nantwich Choral Society

NANTWICH SINFONIA
(Leader: Elizabeth McClaren)

Fiona Vaughan, *soprano*

Marjorie Seddon, *contralto*

Paul Phoenix, *tenor*

David Campbell, *bass*

Joy Roberts, *harpsichord*

Conducted by
Stephen Buckman

NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF MUSIC SOCIETIES



~ PROGRAMME ~

MESSIAH- George Frideric Handel (1685 - 1759)

PART THE FIRST

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| | Sinfonia | |
| I | Comfort ye my people
Every valley shall be exalted
And the glory of the Lord | (tenor)
(tenor)
(chorus) |
| II | Thus saith the Lord
But who may abide
And he shall purify | (bass)
(contralto)
(chorus) |
| III | Behold, a virgin shall conceive
O thou that tellest
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth
The people that walked in darkness
For unto us a child is born | (contralto)
(contralto)
(bass)
(bass)
(chorus) |
| IV | Pifa
There were shepherds abiding in the field
And lo, the angel of the Lord
And the angel said unto them
And suddenly there was with the angel
Glory to God | (soprano)
(soprano)
(soprano)
(soprano)
(chorus) |
| V | Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion
Then shall the eyes of the blind
He shall feed his flock
His yolk is easy | (soprano)
(contralto)
(contralto & soprano)
(chorus) |

~ INTERVAL ~

PART THE SECOND

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| I | Behold the Lamb of God
He was despised
Surely he hath borne our griefs
And with his stripes we are healed
All we like sheep have gone astray
All they that see him laugh him to scorn
He trusted in God
Thy rebuke hath broken his heart
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow | (chorus)
(contralto)
(chorus)
(chorus)
(chorus)
(tenor)
(chorus)
(tenor)
(tenor) |
| II | He was cut off out of the land of the living
But thou didst not leave his soul in hell | (soprano)
(soprano) |
| III | Lift up your heads, O ye gates | (chorus) |
| IV | Unto which of the angels said he at any time
Let all the angels of God worship him | (tenor)
(chorus) |
| V | Thou art gone up on high
The Lord gave the word
How beautiful are the feet
Their sound is gone out | (bass)
(chorus)
(soprano)
(chorus) |
| VI | Why do the nations so furiously rage together?
Let us break their bonds asunder | (bass)
(chorus) |
| VII | He that dwelleth in heaven
Thou shalt break them
Hallelujah | (tenor)
(tenor)
(chorus) |

PART THE THIRD

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| I | I know that my redeemer liveth
Since by man came death | (soprano)
(chorus) |
| II | Behold, I tell you a mystery
The trumpet shall sound | (bass)
(bass) |
| III | Then shall be brought to pass
O death, where is thy sting?
But thanks be to God
If God be for us | (contralto)
(contralto & tenor)
(chorus)
(soprano) |
| IV | Worthy is the Lamb that was slain | (chorus) |

Handel was principally interested in opera, but during the 1730s his attention moved between Italian opera and English oratorio. The latter genre was essentially Handel's own creation, being a complex amalgamation of elements from the English masque and anthem, French classical drama, Italian 'opera seria' and 'oratorio volgare', and the German Protestant oratorio.

To Handel an 'oratorio' was usually a three-act dramatic composition on a biblical subject, to be performed as a concert in a theatre and not as a sacred work within a liturgical context. The forms and styles of oratorios tended to approximate to those of opera of the period, but without scenery, costumes or action. This form of oratorio originated almost by accident when, in 1732, a ban imposed by the Bishop of London stopped Handel presenting a revised stage version of his opera 'Esther'. The success of this performance led Handel towards composing his 26 English oratorios.

MESSIAH is not representative of Handelian oratorio. It does not tell a story, but is a series of meditations on the Christian idea of redemption. It begins with Old Testament prophecy and goes through the life of Christ to His final triumph.

Handel's librettist, Charles Jennens, made it easier for audiences to understand the structure of **MESSIAH** by dividing the three parts which make up the work into smaller 'scenes':

PART THE FIRST

- | | |
|-----|--|
| I | Isaiah's prophecy of salvation: the Gospel or "good news". |
| II | The judgement that will accompany the appearance of the Saviour. |
| III | The specific prophecy of Christ's birth. |
| IV | The incarnation, announced to the shepherds near Bethlehem. |
| V | The redemption and healing brought by the Saviour. |

PART THE SECOND

- | | |
|-----|--|
| I | Christ's passion, scourging and crucifixion. |
| II | Christ's death and resurrection. |
| III | Christ's ascension. |
| IV | Christ's reception in Heaven. |
| V | Whitsun, and the subsequent preaching of the Gospel. |
| VI | The world's hostile reception to the Gospel. |
| VII | God's ultimate victory. |

PART THE THIRD

- | | |
|-----|--|
| I | The promise of eternal life and the triumph over Original Sin, through Christ's victory. |
| II | The general resurrection that will accompany the Day of Judgement. |
| III | The final conquest over sin. |
| IV | Acclamation of the Messiah. |

MESSIAH was first performed in Dublin in 1742. Despite its success in Ireland, **MESSIAH** was not well received in London. However, along with basic changes in the moral and social climate came a significant rise in the popularity of Handel's masterpiece.

Handel was a dramatist and a master of grandiose effects. These qualities, coupled with his musical genius, created in **MESSIAH** the most successful choral work ever written. Its incorruptible message is perfectly summarized in the words selected by Jennens to form a preface to the word-book of the first performance:

"And without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness:
God was manifested in the Flesh, justified by the Spirit, seen of
Angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world,
received up in glory.

In whom hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge"

FIONA VAUGHAN (Soprano) was born in Staffordshire and was educated at Chetham's School of Music before receiving a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music. There she sang in masterclasses with Paul Hamburger, Robert Tear and Sir Geraint Evans; before completing her studies in 1994 she was awarded a Diploma of the R.A.M.

Fiona has sung in concerts and recitals throughout Britain and in France and Germany, and her operatic work includes roles in 'Magic Flute', 'Dido and Aeneas', 'Werther' and 'Queen of Spades'. In 1993 she sang the role of Laodice in the first British production of Handel's 'Siroe' with the London Handel Society, and the following year she undertook the role of Denise in Sir Michael Tippett's 'The Knot Garden', performed in the presence of the composer. Since August 1995 Fiona has been a member of English National Opera, her appearances including 'La Traviata', 'Carmen' and 'Turandot'.

Fiona's oratorio performances include 'Messiah', 'Elijah', 'St John Passion', Rossini's 'Petite Messe Solennelle' and 'Les Illuminations' by Benjamin Britten with choirs such as Tring and Congleton Choral Societies and Rugby Philharmonic Choir. In 1996 she sang in Haydn's 'Creation' with the London Soloists' Chamber Orchestra at the Barbican Hall, London whilst next year she will undertake engagements with Bedford and South Petherton Choral Societies as well as a return visit to Nantwich. Fiona has won many prizes and awards for her singing including the coveted Ernest Butcher Singing Prize and the prestigious Tom Hammond Opera Prize.

MARJORIE SEDDON (Contralto) was born in Macclesfield and now lives in Betley, North Staffordshire. She trained as a biology teacher in Birmingham and it was then that she started singing lessons with Norma Goldie. She has since studied with Ellis Keeler and Jane Ginsborg.

Marjorie made her Potteries debut as Carmen in a staged version of Bizet's opera. She has built a strong reputation as a soloist with her warm, beautiful voice and sensitive artistry.

Previous engagements include singing Clod of Clay in the opera 'Lamentations of Thel' by Dmitri Smirnov, Didymus in Handel's 'Theodora' and Brahms' 'Alto Rhapsody'. Oratorio performances include Dvorak's 'Stabat Mater', Bach's 'St Matthew Passion', Handel's 'Judas Maccabeus' and many performances of 'Messiah'.

PAUL PHOENIX (Tenor) graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music in 1991. Since then he has been increasingly in demand both as a soloist and as a member of several choirs and ensembles, including London Voices and the Monteverdi Choir, with whom he took part in Beethoven's 'Leonore' this summer in Europe and the USA.

Solo engagements during 1996 include Bach's 'St Matthew Passion' with Nantwich Choral Society, Mozart's 'Requiem' and Puccini's 'Messa di Gloria' in Kendal, and Handel's 'Messiah'.

Paul also enjoys working as a 'session singer', taking part recently as a backing vocalist in the revival

album of the 1970's group 'Sparks', as well as backing Elaine Page in concert. This year will see the release of a solo album with the Dutch group 'Janus', the culmination of a six-year project.

Paul is a founder member of 'Gradualia', a specialist vocal quartet which performs a wide variety of styles, from music of the Renaissance to specially commissioned folk song arrangements. The group have recently released their debut C.D.

When not performing Paul teaches singing at Westminster Under School.

DAVID CAMPBELL (Baritone) was born in Lincolnshire and was a chorister in the choir of Manchester Cathedral as well as a pupil at Chetham's School of Music. In 1987 he moved to London to continue his singing studies at the Royal Academy of Music with help of a Foundation Scholarship, winning many awards, most notably the Chrichton Opera Prize, and participating in masterclasses with Elizabeth Soderstrom, Sir Geraint Evans, Niccolai Gedda and Luigi Alva.

Since leaving college David has been much in demand as an opera performer working with companies such as Opera of the South, DGOS Opera Ireland, Crystal Clear Opera, Opera East and Opera Brava. In 1995 David played the role of Gasparo in a new production of Donizetti's 'The Battered Husband' for the Covent Garden Festival of Opera and he also appeared in the award-winning production of Mussorgsky's 'Kovanshchina' by English National Opera, with whom he will be singing again during 1997.

David has given recitals throughout Britain and abroad and has made appearances at the Cambridge, Chester and Canterbury Arts Festivals. His numerous oratorio performances include 'Messiah', 'B minor Mass', 'Creation' and 'Elijah' with choirs such as Finchley, Kingston and Huntingdon Choral Societies and Nottingham Bach Choir as well as two previous appearances in Nantwich. In 1992 he made his debut at St John's, Smith Square, singing Rossini's 'Petite Messe Solennelle', whilst in 1995 he sang 'St Matthew Passion' at the Snape Maltings Concert Hall, Aldeburgh. Future engagements include concerts with the Danesborough Chorus and Leek and Altrincham Choral Societies.

STEPHEN BUCKMAN (conductor) studied organ, harpsichord, composition, conducting and singing in London and Paris. He has divided his professional life between the concert hall and the theatre. Stephen has toured the UK, France, and Germany as organist, harpsichordist and conductor, and has worked as a musical director in London's West End and in New York.

As well as conducting, Stephen is well-known as a Voice Coach specialising in the field of vocal characterisation. He has broadcast on BBC television and radio. Stephen has written many orchestral and choral arrangements for broadcast and live performance, as well as scores for several radio and television plays.

Stephen began conducting Nantwich Choral Society in 1983, and has been the Conductor of Horsham Chamber Choir since 1993.



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