

J.S.BACH
ST JOHN PASSION



CHESTER CATHEDRAL
SATURDAY APRIL 1st 2006

Johann Sebastian Bach

ST JOHN PASSION

Text by Barthold Heinrich Brockes, Christian Weise, Christian Postel and others
in an English Translation by Neil Jenkins, Thomas Alexander and John
Troutbeck, with English Biblical text from the Authorised Version of the King
James Bible - 'The New Novello Choral Edition.'

Rogers Covey Crump – Evangelist
Jamie Hall – Jesus
James Hall – Pilate

Frances Howard – Maid
Ron Kelley – Peter
Wal Kaye – Officer
John Howard – Servant

Janet Ollier – Soprano
Ruth Theobald – Contralto
Stephen Newlove – Tenor
Quentin Brown – Bass

Andrew Mildinhall – Organ Continuo
Chris Howell – Cello Continuo

Nantwich Choral Society
The Lydian Singers
The 18th Century Concert Orchestra,
Leader – David Lewis

John Naylor – Conductor

Message from the Chairman

On behalf of Nantwich Choral Society, it is my pleasure to welcome you to this evening's performance. We are most grateful to the Dean and Chapter of Chester Cathedral for their permission to perform in this great and wonderful building.

Similarly, we are indebted to the staff of the Cathedral for their assistance in helping us to prepare for this evening's concert.

We have enjoyed preparing for tonight's performance and we very much hope that you will enjoy it.

Ron Kelley, NCS Chairman

Reflections on Bach's St John Passion

Perhaps we have just turned on the television or opened a newspaper. We notice an international news item and see local leaders in the Middle East protesting with loud and frightening indignation about some issue or other. We observe the self-serving proconsul of an occupying power seeking to justify his actions, and a frenzied mob crying for blood. Some might ask themselves what has changed in two thousand years?

Nevertheless, especially if we are Christians, we know why an apparently similar incident that otherwise might long ago have been consigned to the footnotes of history has made such an impact on the development of the world's beliefs, philosophy and history.

Bach lived in a society when one of the main ways of retelling, explaining and pondering on that great event was through the Good Friday services of the Lutheran Church. He began composing his Passion according to St John in 1723 in anticipation of performing it in the following year on the first Good Friday of his appointment as Cantor at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig.

After very careful consideration I decided to perform in English rather than in Bach's original German. I feel strongly that the importance of telling the Passion story in language all of us can understand (surely Bach's purpose) outweighs considerations of language authenticity.

The version performed this evening is the new English version by Neil Jenkins, himself a distinguished interpreter of the Evangelist's role. His concern with the Gospel text has been to make the Authorised Version of the King James Bible fit Bach's original German vocal line as nearly as possible. Bach's non-biblical texts, extracted from a variety of sources, have either been newly translated or considerably revised, especially where previous translations now sound quaint to modern ears.

The narrative is assigned in recitative form to the Evangelist and to the main protagonists, Jesus and Pilate. As in a Greek tragedy the Chorus also take part in the story, but their words are set to more elaborate music. From time to time they step aside from the unfolding narrative and sing chorales which comment in detached observations upon each development as it unfolds. The Lutheran hymn tunes Bach selected for these chorales would have been very familiar to contemporary congregations.

In contrast to the relative simplicity of the recitatives, four additional soloists reflect on the Passion Story in musically complex arias. Their extended contributions draw Christian inspiration from the narrative whilst challenging the listener with deeply thoughtful interpretations and insights.

Bach's orchestral accompaniment is often lean and sinuous. In most of the arias only two instruments form trios with the singers, supported by the continuo players. Elsewhere the harmonic structure is much more rich and complex, especially when orchestra and chorus have independent parts in the full-blooded crowd scenes.

Unlike St Matthew's gospel, St John's version of the Passion is pared down almost to a bare bones account. Much of the story recounted by Matthew, Mark and Luke is omitted, including the Last Supper, the Garden of Gethsemane and Pilate's wife's dream. But Bach cannot resist adding drama to the story by borrowing Peter's remorse and the earthquake from St Matthew.

The main dramatic focus is on Jesus' brief trial before Pilate and his summary execution. Pilate seems to attempt to make some sort of logic of the case put before him whilst the mob outside, egged on by the High Priests, howl for

blood. Of the three narrative roles, that of Jesus is the most brief. Jesus is portrayed as a passive human being, somewhat otherworldly, rising above and almost detached from the situation in which he finds himself.

Pilate, despite his intellectual curiosity about Jesus' position and motivation, is ever the wily Roman bureaucrat with an eye to how his actions may be interpreted by his superiors. Although he clearly despises the Jews and can find no case proven against Jesus, he gives in to the crowd's blackmailing threat - releasing a local troublemaker might not read well in Rome. He wins a petty victory by insisting that his ironic superscription over the cross should stand despite the High Priests' protests, and taunts the Jews sarcastically about the crucifixion of their king. But in truth, only weakness and expediency has caused him to execute a man who in his heart he knows to be innocent.

The St John Passion is arguably Bach's most vividly dramatic work. St John's lean narrative has a compelling urgency which Bach illuminates through rich word painting. In the Evangelist's part there is a darkly humorous arpeggio for the cockcrow and intense chromaticism for Peter's bitter weeping, and dramatic polyphony in the crowd scenes.

The focus on the political conflict with the Jews and the psychological, curiously academic dialogue between Pilate and Jesus creates an almost unbearable intensity. This piles increasing emotional pressure on the listener as the tragedy moves to its appallingly inevitable conclusion.

Much has been made of the ingenious palindromic structure of the work which begins and ends with two great choruses. The first sets the scene, and appears to depict a bustling, darkly murmuring Jerusalem welcoming the Lord and Master. However, it is soon apparent that it is a more general commentary on the triumph of the Resurrection after the agony of the Cross and Passion. In contrast, the last full chorus 'Sleep well, and rest in God's safekeeping' is a tender Song of Farewell to the dead Jesus.

Pilate seems to be seeking some way out for Jesus until No 40 after which the mob blackmail him and howl for blood. Bach ingeniously uses the same music in the four

choruses before and the four choruses after this point. He couples the music for the soldiers' mocking of Jesus as the 'King of the Jews' with that for the High Priests' demand that Pilate should change the wording on the superscription 'King of the Jews'. The same fugue is used both when the Jews pompously assert the implications of their own law, and also when, as this fails, they then craftily invoke Roman law. The same chorale music reflects both on the bitterness of Peter's denial and later on the tenderness of Jesus' provision for his mother. The disturbing dissonance of the oboes playing in sevenths, first heard in the opening chorus, pervades those subsequent choruses which depict the blood lust of the crowd as they scream 'Crucify, crucify!'

Bach's word painting in the arias also shows his genius in full flow. There is a complex interweaving of melodic lines, like the twisted cords of a rope, in the Alto aria 'From the bondage of iniquity'. As the Soprano sings 'I follow thee gladly' the accompanying flute dutifully follows the voice two beats later. In the great Tenor aria 'Behold him!' the rainbow of God's love after the flood of man's sin is described in an arcing phrase of no less than sixty three semi-quavers. In the Bass aria 'Haste, haste', urgency is conveyed by a two bar rising scale of semi-quavers followed by injunctions to 'Fly' described in longer and flowing four bar phrases.

Bach's setting of the St Matthew Passion also ends with a Song of Farewell, its lullaby poignantly interrupted by a discordant B natural which agonisingly merges into the final chord of C minor as Jesus is left in the tomb.

But in the St John Passion there is more. After the sadness of the last extended chorus (which also ends in C minor) Bach adds a final simple but thrilling chorale in which all join: 'O Jesus when I come to die, let angels bear my soul on high And when from Death you waken me ... let my eyes see... my Saviour and my risen Lord'.

After such a telling of the 'merits and most precious death and passion of God's dear Son', there can be no greater affirmation of the Christian's belief that we are 'heirs through hope of God's everlasting kingdom'.

John Naylor

THE TEXT

PART ONE

1. *Chorus:* Hail, Lord and Master; every tongue shall offer praises to Thy name. Show by Thy Cross and Passion that Thou art God's redeeming Son, who humbly came to save mankind from depths of shame: and rose on high to reign. Then blessed be Thy name.

2. *Evangelist:* Jesus went with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden into which He entered with His disciples. Judas also, which did betray Him, knew the place full well, for Jesus resorted there oft together with His disciples. Therefore Judas, having received a band of men and officers from the Chief Priests and the Pharisees, he cometh thither with lanterns, torches and with weapons. Therefore Jesus knowing all things that were to come upon Him, He went out and said unto them

Jesus: Whom seek ye?

Evangelist: And they answered him:

3. *Chorus:* Jesus of Nazareth!

4. *Evangelist:* Jesus saith to them:

Jesus: I am He.

Evangelist: Judas also, which did betray Him, was standing with them. As soon then as he had said "I am He" they went backward and fell to the ground. Then asked He then a second time:

Jesus: Whom seek ye?

Evangelist: Again they answered:

5. *Chorus:* Jesus of Nazareth!

6. *Evangelist:* Jesus answered them:

Jesus: I told you but now, I am He. If ye seek for me, let these men go their way.

7. *Chorale:*

O mighty love, O Love beyond all measure,
That leads Thee on this path of such displeasure.
I live with all the joys the world can offer;
Yet Thou must suffer.

8. *Evangelist:* So that the saying might be fulfilled which He had spoken "of them that Thou gavest me have I lost not one". Then Simon Peter, having a sword, he drew it out and smote at the High Priest's serving man, and cut his right ear off; and his name was Malchus. Then said Jesus to Peter:

Jesus: Put up thy sword in the scabbard! Shall I not drink the cup which my Father hath given me?

9. *Chorale:*

Thy will O God be always done
On earth as round thy heavenly throne.
In time of sorrow patience give,
That we obediently may live.
With thy restraining Spirit fill
Each heart that strives against thy will.

10. *Evangelist:* The band then, together with the Captain and the soldiers of the Jews, took hold of Jesus and bound Him fast and led Him away first unto Annas, who was Caiphas' father-in-law, which that same year was the High Priest. Now it was Caiphas who had counselled the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

11. *Alto aria*

'From the bondage of iniquity that ever binds me,
my Redecmer sets me free. From the evils that
immure me, fully He'll cure me by His death upon
the tree.'

12. *Evangelist:* Simon Peter followed Jesus afar off, with another disciple.

13. *Soprano aria*

'I follow Thee gladly, my Lord and my Master, and
keep Thee in sight, my life and my light. O let me
not stray from Thy narrow way, when dangers
surround me and torments confound me.'

14. *Evangelist:* Now that other disciple was known unto the High Priest, and entered in with Jesus to the Palace of the High Priest. Simon Peter stood outside at the door. And then that other disciple who was known unto the High Priest went out and spake unto her that kept the door and brought Peter also within. Then saith the Maid, that kept the door, to Peter:

Maid: Art thou not also one of this man's disciples?

Evangelist: He said:

Peter: I am not.

Evangelist: The officers and the servants stood there had made them a fire of coals (for it was cold) and warmed themselves. Peter also stood there among them and warmed himself. Then did the High Priest Annas question Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine. Jesus made answer to him:

Jesus: I always spake openly and freely to the World. And at all times I have taught within the Synagogue whither the Jews always do resort, nor have I spoken in secret at all. Why dost thou ask me of this? Ask ye rather them who have heard me speaking, what I have said and what I have taught

them. See now! For they themselves know all the things that I have said.

Evangelist: And when He had thus spoken, an officer who was standing by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, and said:

Officer: Dost Thou dare make answer unto the High Priest so?

Evangelist: Jesus answered unto Him:

Jesus: If I have spoken evil, then do thou bear witness of the evil; but if I have spoken well, why smitest thou me?

15. *Chorale:*

O Lord who dares to smite Thee?
And falsely to indict Thee?
Deride and mock thee so?
Thou canst not need confession
Who knowest not transgression,
As we and all our children know.

Why doth the Saviour languish
Beneath this heavy anguish?
Whence comes this mortal woe?
The justice that we merit
The Sinless doth inherit
And pays the debts His debtors owe.

16. *Evangelist:* Now Annas sent him bound unto the other High Priest, Caiphas. Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Then said they unto him:

17. *Chorus:* Art thou not one of his disciples?

18. *Evangelist:* But Peter denied it and said:

Peter: I am not

Evangelist: And then one of the High Priest's servants, being kin to him whose ear Peter cut off that night, said:

Servant: Did I not see him in the garden with Him?

Evangelist: Then did Peter deny a third time; and immediately the cock crew. Then did Peter think upon the word of Jesus, and he went out and wept bitterly.

19. *Tenor aria*

'Ah, my soul, where shall I hide my shame, where
find some consolation? Shall I stay till the
mountaintops fall on me in desolation? Doth this
world my guilt record? And for vile and cruel
denial shall I be abhorred? Yea, the servant hath
denied his Lord.'

20. *Chorale*

Peter, with his faithless lies
Thrice denied his Saviour.

One look from those pitying eyes
Saw him as a traitor.
Jesus, turn and look on me
Who persist in sinning.
Set my fettered conscience free
For a new beginning.

PART TWO

21. *Chorale*

Christ, whose life was as the light,
By His friends forsaken,
In the darkness of the night
Like a thief was taken.
Judgement of a Godless court,
Witness falsely proffered;
Bitter taunts and cruel spot,
As foretold He suffered.

22. *Evangelist:* And then they led forth Jesus from Caiphas to the Judgement Hall, and it was early. And they went not into the Judgement Hall, lest they should become defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. And then went Pilate out unto them, and said:

Pilate: What accusation bring ye now against this man?

Evangelist: And they answered and said unto him:

23. *Chorus:* If this man were not a malefactor, we had not delivered Him, no, we had not delivered Him.

24. *Evangelist:* And Pilate said unto them:

Pilate: Then take ye Him away, and judge ye him according to your law.

Evangelist: The Jews therefore said unto him:

25. *Chorus:* For us it is not lawful to put a man to death.

26. *Evangelist:* So that the saying might be fulfilled which He had spoken when He signified by what manner of death He should die. And then went Pilate once more again to the Judgement Hall, called for Jesus, and said to Him:

Pilate: Art Thou the King of the Jews?

Evangelist: Jesus answered him:

Jesus: Dost thou say this of thyself, or rather did others tell it thee of Me?

Evangelist: And Pilate answered him:

Pilate: Am I a Jew? The Chief Priests and Thine own nation have delivered Thee unto me; what hast Thou done?

Evangelist: And Jesus answered him:

Jesus: My kingdom is not of this world; were my kingdom of this world, then My servants would be fighting that I should not be delivered unto the Jews; but now is My kingdom not from hence.

27. Chorale

O mighty King, how marvellous thy glory!
How can our falt'ring tongues proclaim thy story?
No human heart can ever rightly show Thee
How much we owe thee.

With feeble power unworthy hymns we fashion
Wherewith to praise Thy mercy and compassion.
Thou wert and art the source of every blessing
That we're possessing.

28. Evangelist: Then Pilate said unto Him:

Pilate: Now tell me, art Thou a King, then?

Evangelist: Jesus answered him:

Jesus: Thou say'st I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came hither, that I should witness to the truth. Each one that is of the truth shall hearken to my voice.

Evangelist: Pilate saith unto Him:

Pilate: What is truth then?

Evangelist: And when he had thus spoken he went out again to the Jews, and saith to them:

Pilate: I find in Him no fault at all. But ye have a custom at this time that I release one unto you. Will ye then that I should release the King of the Jews?

Evangelist: Then cried they all with one accord, saying:

29. Chorus: Not this man, no, not this, but Barabbas.

30. Evangelist: Now this Barabbas was a robber. Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him.

31 Bass arioso

'Come, ponder O my soul, with fearful trepidation,
with trembling hope and anxious expectation; thy highest good is Jesu's suff'ring. For thee the sharp thorns He is wearing like Heaven's fairest flowers will seem. For thee the sweetest fruit the wormwood tree is bearing. Then gaze, for ever gaze on Him.'

32. Tenor aria

'Behold him! See His body bruised and bleeding is interceding for us in Heaven above. But when, our flood of sin declining, and toward His saving grace inclining, we find, at last, the rainbow shining, then God will welcome us with love.'

33. Evangelist: And when the soldiers had plaited Him a crown of thorns they put it upon His head, and put on Him a purple robe and said:

34. Chorus: See! We hail thee King of Jews!

35. Evangelist: And they smote Him with their hands. Then Pilate therefore went out again and said to them: Behold, I bring Him forth unto you all, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him. And then did Jesus come forth, still wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Then Pilate said to them:

Pilate: Behold, the man!

Evangelist: And when the Chief Priests and the officers saw Him, they all cried out saying:

36. Chorus: Crucify!

37. Evangelist: Then Pilate saith to them:

Pilate: Take ye Him away and crucify Him; for I find no fault in Him at all.

Evangelist: The Jews therefore answered him:

38. Chorus: We have a sacred law, and by this same law He should die, for he made himself the Son of God.

39. Evangelist: And when Pilate heard that saying he was the more afraid, and he went in again to the Judgement Hall and saith to Jesus:

Pilate: From whence then art thou?

Evangelist: But Jesus gave him no answer. Then said Pilate to Him:

Pilate: Speakest thou not to me? Knowest Thou not that I have the power to crucify, and also the power to release Thee?

Evangelist: Jesus answered him:

Jesus: Thou couldest have no power over Me had it not been given unto thee from above; therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.

Evangelist: And from thence forward Pilate sought that he might release Him.

40. Chorale

Our Lord, in prison cell confined, releases us from prison.

And through His throne of grace we find our freedom has arisen.

Had He not worn these bonds before,
Our bonds had lasted evermore.

41. Evangelist: But the Jews cried out the more and said:

42. Chorus: If thou let this man go, then thou art not Caesar's friend; for, whoever maketh himself a King, he speaketh against Caesar.

43. Evangelist: And when Pilate heard that saying, straightway he brought Jesus forth, and sat down upon the Judgement Seat, in a place that is called 'the High Pavement', but in the Hebrew: Gabbatha. And it was the Preparation of the Passover, about the sixth hour, and he saith to the Jews: Behold! Your King! But they cried out:

44. Chorus: Away with Him, crucify Him!

45. Evangelist: Pilate saith unto them:

46. Pilate: Shall I crucify your King, then?

Evangelist: The Chief Priests answered and said to him:

Chorus: We have no King but Caesar.

47. Evangelist: And then he delivered Him to them, that they might crucify Him. And therefore they took Jesus and led Him away. And He bore his cross, and went forth to a place that is called the place of a Skull; which is called in the Hebrew: Golgatha.

48. Bass aria

'Haste all ye whose souls are weary. Leave your daily toil so dreary, Haste (Chorus – O where?) to Golgatha! With the wings of faith be flying. Fly, fly (O where?) where he is dying; your new life awaits you there!

49. Evangelist: And there crucified they Him, and with Him two others on either side, Jesus being in the midst. And Pilate also wrote out a title and put it upon the cross, and there was written: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews". This title then read many of the Jews, for the place was nigh unto the city where Jesus was crucified. And it was written in Hebrew, and in Greek, and in Latin also. Then said the Chief Priests of the Jews unto Pilate:

51. Chorus: Write not; "The King of the Jews", rather that He Himself said: "I am the King of the Jews".

51. Evangelist: But Pilate answered:

Pilate: What I have written, I have written.

52. Chorale

Thy name O Lord is shining upon me day and night,
With thine own cross enshrining my innermost delight.

Thy patience and endurance in suff'ring on the tree
Will give my soul assurance Thy blood was shed for me.

53. Evangelist: And then did the soldiers, after they had crucified Jesus, take His garments and make four parts, unto each of the soldiers there a part, and also his cloak. Now the coat was without a seam and from the top was woven through and through. They said therefore one to another:

54. Chorus: Let us not divide it, but cast lots upon it whose it shall be.

55. Evangelist: So that the Scripture might be fulfilled which is written "They took my raiment and they parted it among them, and for my vesture, yea my coat did they cast lots".

These things therefore the soldiers did then. Now standing beside the cross of Jesus was His mother and also His mother's sister, Maria, Cleophas' wife, also Mary Magdalene. And when Jesus therefore saw His mother and the disciple standing by her whom He loved, He saith unto his mother: 'Woman, behold thy son!' Then saith He to the disciple: 'Behold thy mother'.

56. Chorale

See him in his agony,
Thinking of another;
Bidding this disciple be
Son unto His mother.
O Mankind, be pure within;
Love both God and neighbour;
Live and die without a sin,
Like your guiltless Saviour.

57. Evangelist: And from that hour he took her into his own home. After this, Jesus knowing that all was accomplished that was written in the Scriptures, He saith: 'I thirst'. Now there was a vessel full of vinegar, and placing it upon an hyssop, they put it up to his mouth. And when Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said: 'It is fulfilled'.

58. Alto aria

' "It is fulfilled!" Those words to save us He is sending. O tragic night, His task on earth is ending. The Lion of Judah fought the fight and hath prevailed. "It is fulfilled!"'

59. Evangelist: And bowing His head He gave up the ghost.

60. *Bass aria and Chorale*

'My Lord and Master let me ask Thee: at this Thy glorious crucifixion, was all fulfilled with Thy last breath? By dying hast Thou conquered death? Through Thine own pain and desolation shall we attain salvation? And has the world been saved today? Although Thy sufferings sorely task Thee, yet bow for us Thy head and say, in silence "Yea, yea!"

Jesu, Thou who tasted death,
Livest now for ever!
When I take my final breath
Lord forsake me never.
Help me, God's redeeming Son,
New life to inherit.
Grant me that which Thou hast won:
More I do not merit.'

61. *Evangelist*: And then behold, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain, e'en from the top unto the bottom. And the earth and the rocks did quake, and were rent asunder, and the graves were opened up, and there arose many bodies of the Holy Ones.

62. *Tenor arioso*

My heart, see how the world itself is suffering while our Lord is dying: the sun eclipsed, its light denying; the veil is torn, the rocks are rent, the earth doth quake, the dead are rising to view their Master lifeless lying; and as for thee, what wilt thou do?

63. *Soprano aria*

'O heart, melt in weeping, with tears overflowing, your homage bestowing. Reveal to the world every feeling of pain; thy Jesus is slain.'

64. *Evangelist*: The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the Cross on the Sabbath Day (for that same Sabbath Day was an High Day) came they unto Pilate, beseeching their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers and brake the legs of the first one and the other that was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and they saw that He was already dead, then did they break not His legs. But one of the soldiers then pierced His side with a spear, and forthwith came there out water and blood.

And he that did see these things, he also bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth full well that he saith true, that ye might believe. For all these things were done that the Scriptures might then be fulfilled: "A bone of Him shall not be broken". Again in the Scriptures another saith "And they shall look on Him whom they have pierced!"

65. *Chorale*

Help us, Christ, God's only Son,

By thy bitter Passion.

Help us learn what thou hast done
For Mankind's salvation.

As we gaze upon the tree,
Watching Death enfold thee,
Let us, helpless though we be,
With our thanks extol thee.

66. *Evangelist*: At last, after this, Joseph of Arimathia, who was also Jesus' disciple, (but secretly, for fear of the Jews), went to Pilate to beg for the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave him leave. There came he thither and took the body of Jesus away. And also came there Nicodemus, he who at first had come to Jesus in the night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and of aloes, about an hundred pound in weight. And then they took the body of Jesus and wound it in the linen cloths with the precious spices, as the Jewish manner is to bury.

Now there was in the place where He was crucified a garden, and in the garden was a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid. Therein laid they Jesus, for the Jewish Preparation Day, because the tomb was nigh at hand.

67. *Chorus*: Sleep well, and rest in God's safekeeping, who makes an end of all our weeping. Sleep well, and on His breast sleep well. The grave, that was prepared for Thee, from all our sorrows sets us free, and points the way to Heav'n and shuts the gates of Hell.

68. *Chorale*

O Jesus, when I come to die
Let angels bear my soul on high
To Abraham's protection.
And as in Death's repose I lie
Watch o'er me with a Father's eye
Until the Resurrection.
And when from Death you waken me
Let my unworthy eyes then see
With tears of joy my soul's reward
My Saviour and my risen Lord!
O Jesus Christ, give ear to me,
And let me praise Thee endlessly!

[Text copyright 1999 Novello & Company Limited.
Reproduced with permission]

JOHN NAYLOR

John Naylor, conductor, singer and organist, 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 choral conducting and choir development.

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, a music scholarship at Rossall School and singing studies with Wilfrid Brown and Lyndon van der Pump from The Royal College of Music.

He subsequently became a professional member of the Chapel Royal Choir of St Peter ad Vincula at H.M. Tower of London and worked with John Eliot Gardiner, Louis Halsey, Neville Mariner and Richard Hickox, appearing under their direction at The Proms, The South Bank, The Aldeburgh Festival and in numerous broadcasts and recordings. He has sung in the cathedral choirs of Christ Church Oxford, Carlisle and Chester.

John has been Director of The Lydian Singers since 1980 with whom he has performed in most of the cathedrals in Great Britain, often returning several times by invitation. He is also Musical Director of the renowned Newport & District Male Voice Choir. In 2006 he will conduct these choirs on tours to Castile and Slovenia.

He was appointed Music Director of Nantwich Choral Society in September 2005 with whom he made his debut in a highly acclaimed performance of Mendelssohn's 'Elijah' last November.

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP

Rogers Covey-Crump was a boy chorister at New College, Oxford and later a tenor lay-clerk at St Albans Abbey. While studying at the Royal College of Music he gained diplomas and a prize in organ playing. He graduated from London University as a Bachelor of Music.

He might have made a professional career as an organist or as a singer but his vocal activity soon overtook the keyboard and over many years he worked with a variety of early music ensembles – particularly with the late David Munrow's Early Music Consort of London, the Baccholian Singers, the Consort of Musicke, the Medieval Ensemble of London, Gothic Voices, and with the Landini, Deller and Taverner Consorts.

He now spends much of the year as a member of the Hilliard Ensemble, a male voice quartet known globally not only for its concerts and recordings of Medieval and Renaissance repertoire but also for its acclaimed first recordings of the vocal works of the Estonian composer, Arvo Pärt. A collaboration with the saxophonist, Jan Garbarek, has produced a unique fusion of styles in the highly acclaimed album 'Officium' and its successor, 'Mnemosyne'.

As a soloist Rogers has many recordings of Baroque repertoire to his name, in particular the ceremonial and the church music of Purcell with Robert King on Hyperion, and the Passion settings of Bach with Andrew Parrott, Stephen Cleobury and Roy Goodman. His appearances include the London promenade concerts and major venues in Britain, on the Continent and in North America, often as Evangelist in the Bach Passions.

His interest in the nature of vocal tuning and temperaments has resulted in lectures, choral workshops, the sleeve notes accompanying "Hilliard Live" and contributions to two books of essays published in 1992.

JAMIE HALL

Born in South Yorkshire, Jamie read music in Chichester before becoming a Bass Lay Clerk at Chester Cathedral and continuing his studies in Liverpool. Whilst in Chichester, he studied voice with international Bass/Baritone Martin Elliott performing as a soloist in the local region as well as singing as a university choral scholar and as a member of Chichester's Chantry Quire.

Now based in Chester, Jamie combines continuing study in voice with solo and ensemble singing as well as vocal coaching and choral directing.

Forthcoming engagements include an appearance as bass soloist in Mozart's Requiem at St. Martin-in-the-field, London with the London Concertante.

JAMES HALL

Born in Oxfordshire, James practices as a Chartered Surveyor in Cheshire. As a chorister at Christ Church Cathedral School in Oxford, he sang at Exeter College Chapel and Christ Church Cathedral under the direction of Simon Preston and Francis Grier. During that period he toured with the choir in Belgium and performed at its first promenade concerts with Christopher Hogwood and The Academy of Ancient Music, together with the Soprano, Emma Kirkby. James also sang with Peter Pears in St Nicholas and performed in Benjamin Britten's Gloriana.

After leaving Oxford, James attended Pangbourne Nautical College where the choir toured in Holland and he joined a choral course at Uppingham College, under the direction of Ralph Allwood. He then studied Land Agency at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester where he directed the College Choir.

Based near Whitechurch, James now sings and is assistant conductor with the Border Singers under Simon Davis. Recently, he has also been Baritone soloist with the Cradely Singers in Herefordshire in performances of Mozart's Requiem, Vivaldi's Gloria and J S Bach's Magnificat.

JANET OLLIER

Janet has been singing since she started singing lessons at the age of nine followed by early studies at The Royal Northern College of Music. She has sung in church choirs, Cheshire Girls' Choir, Cheshire Youth Choir, (where she met her husband), Enfield Choral society, The London Oriana Choir, the Collegiate Singers and, since 1989, with the Lydian Singers.

In all of these she has undertaken solo work and has been the guest soloist with local choirs and given concerts for many charitable causes, including several performances of Messiah as the soprano soloist. She combines a busy professional and family life with extensive music making.

RUTH THEOBALD

Ruth Theobald is a true contralto and is well established as a leading oratorio and recital soloist. Before singing full time, she was a professional oboist, beginning her musical studies at the Royal Northern College of Music. After appearing as a wind finalist in the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition, she continued her training at the Royal Academy of Music, in London, studying the oboe with Janet Craxton and Celia Nicklin. While at the Academy she also made an extensive study of Lieder with the renowned accompanist David Willison.

Following an interest in early music, Ruth helped found and sings with the Habsburg, an ensemble specialising in 18th century music from the Habsburg court. She is also a member of Platform 4, ensemble in residence at Staffordshire University.

Ruth is a past winner at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod, and now sings throughout the UK for many choral societies, festivals, music clubs and orchestras. She also performs regularly with the international concert pianist John Briggs. When not

in London, Ruth lives on a small farm at Woodseaves, Staffordshire.

STEPHEN NEWLOVE

Stephen Newlove was born in East Yorkshire and sang as a chorister in Beverley Minster before studying for a music degree at Huddersfield, followed by a Masters in composition at the University of Hull. He studies singing with Nicolas Powell.

As an experienced cathedral singer in the choirs of York Minster and Chester Cathedral, Stephen has broadcast on radio and television and has featured on a number of acclaimed recordings. He is currently a member of the Britten Singers, Canzonetta and Chudleigh's Company.

Recent solo engagements include Monteverdi *Vespers* with the Orchestra of the Golden Age and His Majesty's Sagbutts and Cornetts, arias in Bach *St John Passion* with the English Haydn Orchestra, Evangelist in Bach *St Matthew* and *John Passions*, and, *Christmas Oratorio*, Handel *Messiah* and *Saul*, Haydn *Stabat Mater* and *Creation*, Puccini *Messe Di Gloria*, Janacek *Otcenas*, Sir George Dyson *Canterbury Pilgrims*, Britten *St Nicolas Cantata* and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies *Solstice of Light*. Future events include the solos in Bach *Mass in B minor* with Manchester Camerata Orchestra, Dvorak *Stabat Mater*, Haydn *Marie Theresa Mass* and Bach Cantata 78 - *Jesu, der du meine Seele* with Ripon Choral Society.

As well as performing, Stephen is Director of Music at Carmel College in St Helens, Merseyside.

QUENTIN BROWN

Quentin Brown began his musical life as a chorister at Rochester Cathedral and continued to sing while at school and university. Following a period as Principal Bass in the choir of Leeds Parish Church he began a solo career that has taken him all over the UK and abroad.

Quentin is known for his thoughtful and musical concert performances of music from a wide repertoire: this starts with Handel's *Messiah* and J.S.Bach's great masterpieces: the *B-Minor Mass*, *St John Passion*, *St Matthew Passion* as well as some of the *Cantatas*, and continues through the oratorios and Masses of Haydn, Mozart and Rossini to works as varied as Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Herod in Berlioz' *L'enfance du Christ*, Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* and Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs*.

Formerly a member of the Britten Singers and the BBC Northern Singers, Quentin retains a keen

enthusiasm for choral and ensemble singing. He is principal Bass soloist for the St Peter's Singers of Leeds, and recorded all of the diverse bass roles in the choir's CD recording of Francis Jackson's *A Time of Fire*.

When time allows Quentin enjoys opportunities for operatic work, and took the title role in a Leeds College of Music's production of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*. He has given a number of recitals of both operatic and English 20th Century Song repertoire in conjunction with other artists such as Simon Lindley, Darius Battiwalla, Jonathan Lilley, David Jones, Hazel Turner, Kathryn Woodruff and Joyce Tindsley.

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY

The Society was founded in 1972 and there are still founder members singing with the choir. Each concert season typically comprises four or five major performances, with a number of smaller events including an NCS-hosted choral singing day also in the calendar. The society has recently performed at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, Ellesmere College, Bunbury Parish Church and Crewe Hall, but its chosen venue is normally the Parish Church of St Mary at Nantwich, often described as 'the Cathedral of South Cheshire'.

Unfortunately the performance area is not spacious enough to accommodate all the singers and instrumentalists involved in this evening's performance, hence the privileged move to Chester Cathedral.

NCS performs a wide range of choral works ranging from Baroque masterpieces to world premieres of contemporary composers, either *a capella* or with accompaniment ranging from piano or organ to brass consort or full orchestra. Plans for 2006/7 include Monteverdi *Vespers*, *Messiah*, Chichester Psalms, Faure *Requiem*, performances in Prague and a Summer Opera Gala Evening.

Rehearsals are held at 7.30pm each Wednesday, at Malbank High School in Nantwich.

Please see www.nantwichchoral.org.uk for further details.

THE LYDIAN SINGERS

Founded in 1980, the Lydian Singers have developed into one of the North West's leading chamber choirs. The choir is based in Knutsford, Cheshire but draws its core membership of some 24 singers from a wide surrounding area.

The choir has an eclectic repertoire, often combining sacred and secular music in the same concert. However, the Lydian Singers have developed a particular specialism in the performance of sacred music in liturgical settings and have sung in most of the cathedrals of the North of England and the Midlands, and in Edinburgh and Dublin, returning by invitation to many of them. They have undertaken concert tours in Paris and Catalonia, particular highlights being performances in Montserrat Abbey and Barcelona Cathedral.

Most recently they have sung in Christ Church Dublin, Exeter, Chester and Gloucester cathedrals. This year, in addition to their regular local concert programme they will be singing at Chester and Hereford cathedrals, will undertake a concert tour of Castile (Toledo, Avila, Salamanca and Segovia) and will sing at St George's Ccchapel, Windsor in October.

Please see www.lydiansingers.org.uk for further details.

THE 18TH CENTURY CONCERT ORCHESTRA

The Orchestra was founded in September 2001. The players are now firmly established as some of the finest exponents of baroque music. Performing on period instruments (and sometimes in period costume), they have given performances all over the United Kingdom and have undertaken concert tours in the USA and Canada.

They have been resident ensemble at Pacific Road Arts Centre and at Oxford's Holywell Room and have filmed a performance of *Messiah* for Channel 4 in the Georgian Underworld season. Critics have described their performances as "Baroque at its best" - "real communication" and "a rare musical treat not to be missed".

Please see www.the18thcentury.co.uk for further details.

**NANTWICH
CHORAL SOCIETY**

Sopranos:

Anne Barnard
Sue Briscoe
Janice Brown
Jo Butchart
Glenda Colemere
Rita Davies
Christine English
Ann Ferguson
Joyce Foster
Cynthia Gorton
Gillian Handforth
Frances Hughes
Rosemary Jones
Bronwyn Kelly
Liz Kirby
Sheila Luke
Anne-Dorothee Mächtigt
Toni Mathie
Liz Mccron
Sue Munks
Annabel Nielson
Maire Pedder
Rachel Pentecost
Steph Percy
Caroline Robb
Eileen Roberts
Barbara Shone
Sally Sissons
Sandra Wyllie

Altos:

Sharon Arnold
Jean Atkin
Alison Bailey
Shirley Burton
Jocelyn Cooper
Jacqueline Davies
Diane Disbury
Judith Dooley

Fiona Field
Angela Greaves
Joy Guest
Frances Hutchison
Jane Lincoln
Vanessa Macallan
Anne Mackay
Brenda Midgley
Janet Miller
Brenda Morris
Andie Mullineaux
Anne Nichol
Jean Nurse
Gwyneth Rollins
Joan Shaddick
Margaret Smith
Gillian Wakely
Diane Wheatley
Margaret Whitehurst
Melissa Worth

Tenors:

Wal Kaye
Thomas Mächtigt
Mike Moores
Philip Trinder
Joe Watson

Basses:

Peter Bastin
Phil Carrington
Christopher Findlay
David Foster
David Jones
Martin Jones
Ron Kelley
Jock Knight
Jonathan Layfied
Ray Potts
Cameron Paterson
Bob Pugh
Laird Ryan

Simon Stubington
David Walker

**THE LYDIAN
SIN SINGERS**

Sopranos:

Helen Beck,
Maggie Brown,
Marian Greensill,
Frances Howard,
Jane Lever
Caroline Sellers,
Hilary Skinner,
Naureen Wakefield

Altos:

Pat Davis
Judy Studd,
Elisabeth Sullivan,
Pam Venables,
Val Wilkes

Tenors:

Gordon Fielding,
Brian Greensill,
John Howard,
Howard Kane,

Basses:

John Brierley,
John Griffith
Bob Pugh,
John Renshaw,
Mike Sullivan,
Michael Wright.

**REHEARSAL
ACCOMPANISTS**

Amy Bebbington
Andrew Mildinhall
Vivian Redfern