

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY

A GERMAN REQUIEM

JOHANNES BRAHMS



Hear My Prayer – Felix Mendelssohn
Songs by Mendelssohn and Brahms

Janet Ollier – soprano
David Butt-Philip – baritone
Vivian Redfern – piano
Andrew Mildinhall – piano and organ

John Naylor - conductor

St Mary's Church, Nantwich
Saturday March 8th 2008

Message from the Chairman of Nantwich Choral Society

We are delighted to present tonight's concert of Brahms and Mendelssohn in this beautiful church. It is a real privilege for us to perform such great music in such lovely surroundings and we continue to be very grateful to the authorities of St Mary's for all their help and support.

Our 2007/8 season has already seen a memorable performance of Mozart's Requiem which prompted many favourable comments from the audience and guest musicians who filled St Boniface, Bunbury for the occasion. Our Christmas Concert was a great success, with this church of St Mary's almost full to capacity, and it was marked by a very welcome debut performance with us by Nantwich Young Voices.

As our successes continue our full membership has now grown to 100 singers, an increase of some 40% over the last two years. Our audience numbers also have grown commensurately, and there have been increasingly healthy attendances at all our recent concerts. Unfortunately we are now in the very difficult position of not being able to 'fit' into St Mary's for concerts which have full orchestral accompaniment – the performing space currently available can only comfortably accommodate a limited number of instrumentalists.

Nevertheless, we do regard St Mary's as very much our home, and considerable thought goes into planning our programmes to perform as many concerts as possible here. However, when we do have to move out of the town to perform, it is often a new and exciting experience for us and for you too, as every church has different qualities. We would welcome any of your comments on the subject of performance venues, but we do hope that you will continue to support us when we are 'playing away from home'!

We continue to welcome new members who can be assured of a warm and friendly welcome. Details of some of our future concerts are contained in this programme, or can be found on our website www.nantwichchoral.org.uk.

We very much hope that you enjoy this evening's performance and we thank you for your continuing support.

Anne Barnard
Chairman

Nantwich Choral Society gratefully acknowledges help and support during the recent past from The Harding Trust, The National Lottery through Awards for All, Barclays Bank plc, Bentley Motors Limited, our auditors Hall Livesey Brown, Chartered Accountants, Tarporley and GT webMarque.

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FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Hear my Prayer

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809 – 1847) was a genius of many talents. He had reached full maturity as a composer by the age of sixteen when in 1825 he wrote the String Octet, one of his greatest works. He was already famous as a youthful prodigy on both the piano and the violin. Mendelssohn was an exceptional athlete, a strong swimmer, a talented poet who numbered Goethe amongst his close friends, a multi-linguist, a very talented water-colourist and a philosopher. He seemed to be one of life's 'Golden Characters' who excelled at almost everything to which he turned his hand, but music was the principal medium which fired his creative imagination.

Mendelssohn himself referred to 'Hear My Prayer' as 'a trifle'! If pressed for an account of its origin, many people would assume that it was written for liturgical performance by a church choir with a boy treble as the soloist. The most famous singer of the work is still the young Ernest Lough whose recording with the Temple Church Choir in 1927 became one of the best selling records of all time, eventually selling more than 6 million copies.

In fact the piece was written as a concert piece for an adult soprano soloist. The title page of the autograph score, which is in Mendelssohn's usual neat handwriting, states: "A sacred Solo for a Soprano and Chorus, with Organ accompaniment, composed for W. Bartholomew Esq. by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy". Bartholomew had requested the composition of music for his own word setting for his popular series of concerts at Crosby Hall in Bishopsgate Street, London.

'Hear my Prayer' was first performed there on January 8th 1845 with Miss Mounsey (later Mrs Bartholomew) at the organ. Mendelssohn subsequently orchestrated it and provided an alternative German text, but its origins were firmly in an English concert with forces almost exactly the same as this evening. Bartholomew's poem follows the Coverdale text of Psalm 55 almost exactly:

'Hear my prayer'

Hear my prayer, O God, incline Thine ear!
Thyself from my petition do not hide!
Take heed to me! Hear how in prayer I mourn
to Thee!
Without Thee all is dark, I have no guide.

The enemy shouteth, The godless come fast!
Iniquity, hatred upon me they cast!
The wicked oppress me, Ah, where shall I fly?
Perplexed and bewildered, O God, hear my
cry!

My heart is sorely pained within my breast,
My soul with deathly terror is oppressed,
Trembling and fearfulness upon me fall,
With horror overwhelmed, Lord, hear me call!

O for the wings of a dove!
Far away would I rove!
In the wilderness build me a nest,
And remain there for ever at rest.

Psalm 55

Hear my prayer, O God:
and hide not thyself from my petition.
Take heed unto me, and hear me:
how I mourn in my prayer, and am vexed.

The enemy crieth so, and the ungodly cometh on
so fast: for they are minded to do me some
mischief;
so maliciously are they set against me.

My heart is disquieted within me:
and the fear of death is fallen upon me.
Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me:
and an horrible dread hath overwhelmed me.

And I said, O that I had wings like a dove:
for then would I flee away, and be at rest.
Lo, then would I get me away far off :
and remain in the wilderness.

After a lyrical introduction by the soloist who calls upon God to hear the petitioner's prayer, the chorus reiterates the opening statement before beginning a dialogue in compound time with the soloist describing oppression by the ungodly. The soloist becomes increasingly excited – perplexed and bewildered, until the music becomes more introspective as trembling and fearfulness overtake the mood, culminating in a rather frantic cry - 'Lord hear me call!'

The final section begins with the famous tune to 'O for the wings of a dove!' which, in a poignant expression of escapism, plangently and wistfully begs for a place far away from wickedness and oppression. The music gently subsides as both soloist and chorus dream of being 'for ever at rest'.

'Der trübe Winter' - Opus 86 no. 6

Entitled 'Old German Spring Song', this is clearly a composition of Mendelssohn's maturity. A setting of words by Friedrich von Spee (1591-1635), it is the last of Six Songs for voice and piano (1826-1847) "Der Mond", op. 86 and was published posthumously in the year of the composer's death.

The gently flowing semi-quaver accompaniment supports the simple melodic line of the singer who tells of the joys of spring which are tinged with sadness since he and his love had to part. The simplicity of the song conceals a harmonic structure which reveals Mendelssohn's genius as a composer at its finest.

Der trübe Winter ist vorbei,
Die Schwalben wiederkehren;
Nun regt sich alles wieder neu;
Die Quellen sich vermehren.

Laub allgemach nun schleicht an Tag,
Die Blümlein nun sich melden;
Wie Schlänglein krumm gehn lächelnd um
Die Bächlein kühl in Wälden.

Wo man nur schaut, fast alle Welt
Zur Freuden sich tut rüsten;
Zum Scherzen alles ist gestellt,
Schwebt alles fast in Lüsten.

Nur ich allein, ich leide Pein,
Ohn' Ende werd ich leiden:
Seit du von mir und ich von dir,
O Liebste, mußte scheiden.

The dismal winter is over,
The swallows are returning;
Now everything is renewing itself;
The springs are increasing.

The leaves gradually slip into the day,
The little flowers make themselves known.
Like a crooked snake, the stream
Goes laughingly through the forest.

Wherever one looks, almost all the world
Arms itself with Happiness;
Everything is fun and jovial,
Almost everything is swept up in the merriment.

Only I, alone, suffer pain,
Without end will I suffer,
Ever since you and I,
My darling, had to part.

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Songs

In 1853 the 20 year old Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897) appeared unannounced at the Schumanns' door in Leipzig where he was met with instant excitement and enthusiasm by both Clara and Robert: thus began his lifetime relationship with the Schumann family. In due course Brahms became a lifelong friend to the concert pianist and composer Clara, sustaining her through the illness and death of her husband, asking for her advice about new compositions, even caring for her eight young children while she went on tour. It is clear that they developed a deep love for each other, although there is no indication that it was ever consummated physically.

Brahms experienced much emotion during his life, and the tragic death of his dear friend Robert and his own frustrated love for Clara must have been the inspiration for many of his songs. He often chose texts by minor poets or from anonymous folk songs to allow him to adapt verse "for autobiographical purposes". Of the two hundred songs that he wrote, seventy are settings of actual folk songs, whilst many of his original compositions came to be considered not only popular music but actual folk songs themselves.

Brahms was by no means a scholar or collector of folk song material, but his songs often idealise the folk song style of simple melodies and rhythms. He once wrote to Clara Schumann, "Songs today have gone so far astray that one cannot cling too closely to one's ideal, and that ideal is the folk song" .

The five songs of Brahms Opus 49 were written in 1868, the year of the first performance of the German Requiem. In *An ein Veilchen* Hölty's poetry seems to epitomise the anguish of the lover whose passion appears to be unrequited. Brahms sets the text to a flowing melody, but the complexity of the emotions expressed is underlined in the rather more elaborate accompaniment. The highest notes in the piece are reserved for the blue cup of the lovely violet, the lowest for the lover's longing for the release of death.

The five songs of Opus 71 date from 1876, between the year of the successful premieres of the First Symphony and twelve months later, the Second Symphony. Despite his great success and now established position, Brahms still sets texts which speak of unrequited love. In *An der Mond* the bashful lover asks the Moon to convey his love to his beloved, just as he asked the violet in the previous song, although there is a degree of optimism as the initially mournful G minor opening leads to a happier final section in G major.

Minnelied from Opus 71 expresses more mature emotions: the birdsong is sweeter, the flowers brighter and the poet's heart is joyful in his wife's company – perhaps an expression of the deeply loving companionship (if not marriage) which Brahms enjoyed with Clara. Here Brahms adopts a relaxed, folk song melody to convey a sense of contentment from which the angst of being apart has been banished.

Opus 49 No. 2

An ein Veilchen (Hölty)

Birg, o Veilchen, in deinem blauen Kelche,
Birg die Tränen der Wehmut,
Bis mein Liebchen diese Quelle besucht!
Entpflückt sie lächelnd dich dem Rasen,
Die Brust mit dir zu schmücken:
O dann schmiege dich ihr ans Herz, und sag ihr,
dass die Tropfen in deinem blauen Kelche
aus der Seele des treu'sten Jünglings flossen,
Der sein Leben verweinet, und den Tod wünscht.

Opus 71 No. 2

An den Mond (Simrock)

Silbermond mit bleichen Strahlen pflegst du Wald und
Feld zu malen,
Gibst den Bergen, gibst den Talen der Empfindung
Seufzer ein.
Sei Vertrauter meiner Schmerzen, Segler in der Lüfte
See:
Sag' ihr, die ich trag' im Herzen, wie mich tötet
Liebesweh.
Sag' ihr, über tausend Meilen sehne sich mein Herz
nach ihr.
"Keine Ferne kann es heilen, nur ein holder Blick von
dir."
Sag' ihr, dass zu Tod getroffen diese Hülle bald zerfällt;
Nur ein schmeichlerisches Hoffen sei's, das sie
zusammenhält.

Opus 71 No.5

Minnelied (Hölty)

Holder klingt der Vogelsang,
wenn die Engelreine,
die mein Jünglingsherz bezwang,
wandelt durch die Haine:

Röter blühen Tal und Au,
Grüner wird der Wasen,
Wo die Finger meiner Frau
Maienblumen lasen.

Ohne sie ist alles tot,
Welk sind Blüt' und Kräuter:
und kein Frühlingsabendrot
Dünkt mir schön und heiter.

Traute, minnigliche Frau,
Wollest nimmer fliehen,
Dass mein Herz, gleich dieser Au,
Mög' in Wonne blühen!

(Brahms Songs translations by Vivian Redfern)

To a Violet

Hold, oh violet, in your blue cup
Hold the tears of melancholy,
Until my beloved comes to this well!
When with a smile she plucks you from the grass
To adorn her breast with you:
Then nestle close to her heart, and tell her
That the drops in your blue cup
Flowed from the soul of the most devoted young man,
Who is crying his life away and longs for death.

To the Moon

Silver moon, you paint wood and field with pale rays,
And adorn the mountains and valleys with a sigh of
feeling.
Let me confide my sorrows to you, sailor in the
heavenly sea:
Tell her, whom I carry in my heart, how the pain of
love is killing me.
Tell her, that my heart longs for her over a thousand
miles.
"No distance can cure it, only a sweet glance from
you."
Tell her that this mortally wounded shell will soon
collapse;
It is only a vain hope that is holding it together.

A Song of Courtly Love

The birdsong sounds sweeter
When the angel of purity
Who conquered my boyish heart
Wanders through the groves.

Valley and meadow bloom more brightly,
The pasture is greener,
Where my wife's fingers
Gathered mayflowers.

Without her all is dead
Blossoms and leaves are withered:
And no spring sunset
Seems beautiful and joyful to me.

Beloved, honoured wife
May you never leave me
So that my heart, like this meadow,
Can bloom in delight!

(PAUSE)

A German Requiem

Even in his youth Brahms had been preoccupied with the idea of composing a Requiem, but only in 1866 when he was 33 did he begin serious work on it. It was completed the following year with the exception of the fifth movement. After the false start of a poor performance of three of the movements in Vienna in December 1867, Brahms himself took over as conductor and in its incomplete form *Ein Deutsches Requiem* was first heard in Bremen Cathedral on Good Friday 1868. The final version was performed in 1869 at the Leipzig Gewandhaus and the work was published in the same year.

Brahms may have written the *Requiem* in memory of his mother, who died in 1856; it is equally possible that he had in mind his great friend and mentor, Robert Schumann, whose madness and tragic death profoundly affected him. Schumann's widow Clara, with whom Brahms enjoyed a deep but probably platonic relationship, was of the opinion that the work was in memory of the composer's mother. However, it is probable that the chorus "All flesh is as grass" started life as part of an early sonata for two pianos that eventually became the D minor Piano Concerto, a work which we know was originally intended as a tribute to Schumann and begun in 1854 when Brahms moved to Düsseldorf to look after Clara and her seven surviving children. Whilst the deaths of his mother and his friend influenced him profoundly, Brahms himself gave no indication of whose memorial the *Requiem* might be, if indeed it was any one person's.

Although it is not entirely clear what Brahms' religious views were, the title '*A German Requiem*', (referring to its language) reflects the fact that Brahms selected verses from the Lutheran Bible, one of his greatest influences, rather than employing the customary Latin. He compiled the text himself from both Old and New Testaments and from the Apocrypha to convey a humanist message with a focus on the living rather than the dead. The result has little in common with the conventional Requiem Mass, omitting as it does the horrors of the Last Judgement which are such a striking feature of the *Missa Pro Defunctis*, or any final plea for mercy or prayers for the dead. It also makes only a passing reference in the final movement to Christian redemption through the death of Jesus.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Brahms was content with the culture of Lutheranism but could not accept its dogma. So concerned was Reinthaler (Music Director at Bremen Cathedral) about the omission of overt Christian references that he took the liberty at the Bremen Cathedral performance of inserting the aria "I know that my Redeemer liveth" from Handel's *Messiah* with a view to satisfying the clergy.

So it is hardly surprising that the title of "Requiem" has at times been called into question. What is clear, is that Brahms was a deeply serious thinker with an intimate knowledge of the Scriptures. He proclaimed that he did not want to write a Requiem for the dead, but one to comfort the living, and it is in this context that the *German Requiem* needs to be considered. As far as the title a *German* requiem is concerned, Brahms told his friend Reinthaler that *German* refers primarily to the language rather than the intended audience and that he would have gladly called the work *A Human Requiem*. Years later, Brahms was quite moved when he discovered that Robert Schumann had planned a work of the same name.

Despite its unorthodox text, the work was immediately recognised as a masterpiece and as with all great music, the universal message of its vision transcends the circumstances of its conception.

The similarity of the opening and closing sections unifies the whole work, whilst the funeral-march of the second movement is balanced by the triumphant theme of the resurrection in the sixth. Similarly, the baritone solo in the third movement, "Lord, make me to know that the measure of my days is set", is paralleled in the fifth by the gentleness of the soprano solo, "Ye now are sorrowful, but yet I will again behold you". The fourth section, "How lovely are all thy dwellings fair", therefore stands at the centre of the work, framed as it is by the solemnity of the first three movements and the transition from grief to the certainty of comfort in the last three.

This carefully balanced musical architecture is matched by an equally firm musical structure based on two principal themes which Brahms skilfully uses in a variety of subtle guises throughout the work. The most important of these is really a musical fragment rather than a fully-fledged theme. It occurs at the opening choral entry and consists of the first three notes sung by the sopranos to the words 'Blest are they'. Brahms uses this musical cell as the main building block of the whole work, subjecting it to a variety of transformations, including an upside-down version and a back-to-front version, both of which play as significant a role as the original form. The other principal musical idea is a chorale-like melody (played by the violas in the orchestral version) at the very beginning. Its most obvious re-appearance is in the second movement, now in a minor key, as an expansive melody sung by the choir in unison.

What is so unusual about the work is that it combines classical counterpoint with romantic lyricism. There are superb, extended fugues ('And the ransomed of the Lord', 'For the righteous souls are in the hand of God', and 'Lord thou art worthy to gather praise and honour'), poignant romantic passages such as the soprano solo, and lush and inspiring melodies - 'How lovely are thy dwellings'. Unlike most major choral works of the period, the voices never divide, staying in four parts throughout.

Brahms prepared an alternative version of the work to be performed by two pianists on two pianos. This version also incorporates the vocal parts, (suggesting that it could also be self-contained) and it is an authentically acceptable substitute accompaniment for choir and soloists in circumstances where a full orchestra is unavailable. The first complete (excepting the yet-unwritten fifth movement) performance of the Requiem in London was in July 1871 at the home of Sir Henry Thompson and his wife, the pianist Kate Loder who joined Brahms in playing the two piano accompaniment. As in tonight's performance, it was sung in English.

It is Brahms' masterly fusion of robust classical counterpoint and romantic lyricism, heard at its most visionary in *A German Requiem*, which has ensured the work's enduring reputation as one of the supreme masterpieces of the choral repertoire.

A German Requiem

I

Blest are they that sorrow bear, for to them shall be given comfort. *Matthew 5:4*

They that sow lamenting shall reap a joyful harvest.

Who goeth forth with weeping, and beareth precious seed for sowing, shall come home rejoicing and bring his good sheaves with him. *Psalms 126: 5-6*

II

Behold all flesh is as the grass, and all the goodliness of man is as the flower that fadeth. The grass is now withered and the flower thereof is fallen. *1 Peter 1 :24*

Now therefore be patient, my dear brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. See how the husbandman waiteth for the earth's precious fruit to ripen, and long he waiteth with patience, until the coming of morning rainfall and evening showers. *James 5:7*

But yet the Lord's word standeth for evermore. *1 Peter 1 :25*

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return with singing, unto Zion coming rejoicing. Unending gladness forever on their heads shall be. Pleasure and gladness ever shall possess them, and grief and sorrow - they shall vanish. *Isaiah 35:10*

III

Lord, make me to know that the measure of my days is set; that my life hath an ending, and I must go hence.

Surely, all my days here are but a span long to thee, and my whole life is as naught to thee.

Ah, as nothing every man living, he trusts himself but vainly.

He walketh about as a shadow; he is disquieted and is greatly troubled in spirit; his riches - he knoweth not who shall gather them.

Now Lord, wherein is my comfort? My hope is in thee. *Psalms 39:4-7*

For the righteous souls are in the hand of God,

and no more pain touches them now. *Wisdom of Solomon 3: 1*

IV

How lovely are all thy dwellings fair, O Lord of hosts!
For my soul now is yearning and longing sore for the blest courts of the Lord;
my heart and flesh cry out for joy unto the living God. *Psalm 84: 1-2*

How blest are they that in thy house are dwelling;
they give thee praise evermore. *Psalm 84: 4*

(PAUSE)

V

Ye now are sorrowful, but yet I will again behold you and then your hearts shall be joyful, and this your joyfulness no man taketh from you. *John 16: 22*

Now behold me: I had but for a little while labour and trouble to bear, and yet great comfort now I have found. *Ecclesiasticus 51: 27*

For I will comfort, like as a mother giveth comfort. *Isaiah 66: 13*

VI

Here on earth have we no continuing home, rather we seek one to come.
Hebrews 13: 14

Lo, I will show unto you a mystery: we shall not all slumber, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, the twinkling of an eye, at the sounding of the last trumpet. Then the trumpet shall be sounded, and the dead shall all be raised up Incorruptible, and we shall all be changed. *1 Corinthians 15: 51-52*

Then shall be fulfilled the word that is written thus: Now death is swallowed up in victory. Death, where is thy victory? Hades, where is thy sting? *1 Corinthians 15: 54*

Lord thou art worthy to gather praise and honour and power, for it is thou hast all things created, and for thy will's sake they are and have their being, and were created. *Revelation 4:11*

VII

Blessed are the dead, which in the Lord are sleeping from henceforth.

Yea, saith the Spirit, they may rest now from all their labours; their works shall follow after them. *Revelation 14: 13*

JOHN NAYLOR - Conductor

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 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 extensively in the North West and 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 and conducted the Combined Shropshire Male Voice Choirs (some 300 voices) in their most recent concert. In 2006 he conducted the Lydian Singers and N&D MVC on concert tours to Castile and Slovenia.

He was appointed Music Director of Nantwich Choral Society in September 2005 for whom he has conducted highly acclaimed performances of Mendelssohn's '*Elijah*', Bach's '*St John Passion*' (in Chester Cathedral), and Monteverdi's '*Vespers of 1610*', Bernstein's '*Chichester Psalms*' and Fauré's '*Requiem*'. In July 2007 he conducted a memorable joint performance in Nantwich

of Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man* with Ensemble Vocal Arpège de Mâcon and in November a much praised performance of Mozart's *Requiem* with the 18th Century Concert Orchestra.

2007 activities included a recital in Segovia, a residency at Christ Church Cathedral Dublin and a performance of John Rutter's '*Requiem*' with the Lydian Singers, a series of recitals with Newport & District MVC and a round of Christmas Concerts with all three Choirs.

2008 plans include Tewkesbury Abbey and a tour in Umbria with The Lydian Singers, recitals, a recording and a concert tour to Krakow with Newport & District MVC, and with NCS a performance of Brahms Requiem in March, an Opera Gala evening in June and a performance of Bach's B minor Mass in November. John will also give a Shropshire performance of Vaughan Williams 'On Wenlock Edge' with the pianist Vivian Redfern in May.

JANET OLLIER - Soprano

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 made a notable contribution to the NCS performance of Bach's '*St John Passion*' in April 2006 in Chester Cathedral as the soprano soloist and in *Messiah* at St Mary's Nantwich in February 2007. She combines a busy professional and family life with extensive music making.

DAVID BUTT PHILIP – Baritone

David was born and brought up in Wells in Somerset and began his musical training as a chorister at Peterborough Cathedral. He studied for four years at the Royal Northern College of Music with Peter Alexander Wilson, appearing in the college's productions of *Don Giovanni*, *The Rake's Progress*, *La Cenerentola* and *La Rondine*. Awards include the 2004 Bessie Cronshaw Song Cycle Prize, the 2006 John Cameron Prize for Lieder (both RNCM), the 2006 Elena Gerhardt Lieder Prize and in 2007 the prestigious Richard Lewis/Jean Shanks Award (both RAM).

Recent concert performances include Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* with Blackburn Symphony Orchestra and recitals with the pianist Simon Lane in Bristol's Colston Hall and London's Wigmore Hall.

David is currently in the final year of the postgraduate opera course at the Royal Academy of Music where he studies with Glenville Hargreaves and Iain Ledingham. Operatic roles include Ebn Hakia (*Iolanta*), Betto (*Gianni Schicchi*) and Junius (*The Rape of Lucretia*) for Royal Academy opera and Mr Gedge (*Albert Herring*) for British Youth Opera.

His studies at the RAM are generously supported by the Baroness De Turckheim vocal scholarship (Drapers Company), a Sybil Tutton Award (MBF) and the Josephine Baker Trust.

VIVIAN REDFERN – Piano

Vivian read Modern Languages at Girton College Cambridge and has combined her piano playing with a busy teaching career. She was born in London and played her first piano concerto with a local orchestra at the age of thirteen. She has spent most of her life in Shropshire where she continues to be based. She has appeared on the concert stage in the UK, the USA, Czechoslovakia, Spain

and Slovenia, and recent work includes performances with The Lydian Singers, The Albrighton Musical Theatre, a recording of Schubert's *Schwanengesang* and many performances with Newport & District Male Voice Choir whom she regularly accompanies.

ANDREW MILDINHALL – organ and piano

Andrew studied the organ & piano with Nicholas Danby, Vivian Langrish & Eric Thieman. After a long career in fund-raising & marketing, he is now operates as a freelance musician, playing the organ, piano and harpsichord for concerts, special occasions and church services throughout Cheshire. He was organist of Nantwich Parish Church for 12 years and until recently ran 'Sounds Musical', a specialist cd shop in Nantwich. He is the regular accompanist of Nantwich Choral Society. They have recently performed his compositions 'A Christmas Sequence' (2006) and 'I saw three ships' (2007) to very warm audience receptions.

The Members of Nantwich Choral Society

Sopranos

Anne Barnard
Janice Brown
Jo Butchart
Joyce Clegg
Glenda Colemere
Gail Corfield
Rita Davies
Jenny Edwards
Ann Ferguson
Marlene Flannery
Sian Gilding
Margaret Harvey
Leah Howarth
Frances Hughes
Rosemary Jones
Bronwyn Kelly
Helen Kerr
Erika Letts
Sheila Luke
Sue Munks
Maire Pedder
Rachel Pentecost
Alison Reeve
Caroline Robb
Eileen Stuttard
Diana Taylor
Jane Whiteman
Kathleen Wilks
Sue Briscoe
Christine English
Joyce Foster
Janet Geeson
Cynthia Gorton
Karen Grimwood

Gillian Handford
Grace Johnston
Lucy Kibble
Elizabeth McCrone
Steph Percy
Eileen Robertson
Tracey Robertson
Barbara Shone
Sally Sissons

Altos

Jean Atkin
Jocelyn Cooper
Eileen Corcoran
Diane Disbury
Fiona Field
Frances Hutchison
Vanessa Macallan
Anne Nicol
Margaret Smith
Diane Wheatley
Sharon Arnold
Alice Blackburn
Shirley Burton
Judith Dooley
Angela Greaves
Joy Guest
Marian Hay
Anne McKay
Brenda Midgley
Janet Miller
Margaret Millns
Brenda Morris
Jean Nurse
Gwyneth Rollins
Joan Shaddick

Elizabeth Tilston
Leslie Tuckwell
Heather Welch
Margaret Whitehurst
Janice Yates

Tenors

Martin Colley
Suzanne Edwards
Graham Harbage
Chris Hughes
Wal Kaye
Mike Moores
Philip Trinder
Joe Watson
John Whittingham
Graham Wilks

Basses

Roger Boulton
Christopher Findlay
David Foster
David Johnston
David Jones
Martin Jones
Raymond Jones
Ron Kelley
Jock Knight
Jonathan Layfield
Adrian Percy
Ray Potts
Bob Pugh
Laird Ryan
Simon Stubington
David Walker

FORTHCOMING NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY EVENTS

website: nantwichchoral.org.uk

Saturday June 28th 2008

St Boniface Bunbury

Opera Gala Evening

with Nicola Howard- soprano,
Mark Holland – baritone,
Vivian Redfern and Andrew Mildinhall – piano

Saturday February 28th 2009

St Mary's Acton

Singing Day

Saturday Nov 15th 2008

St Michael's Coppenhall

J.S.Bach - Mass in B minor

with

The 18th Century Sinfonia

Saturday March 28th 2009

St Mary's Nantwich

Mendelssohn – St Paul

Saturday June 27th 2009

Nantwich Civic Hall

Haydn – The Seasons

with

Cheshire Sinfonia

Saturday 20th December 2008

St Mary's Nantwich

Family Carol Concert

with

Nantwich Young Voices

Saturday November 7th 2009

Chester Cathedral

Elgar – The Dream of Gerontius

Sunday January 4th 2009

The Methodist Church, Nantwich

Messiah

(The last event in the present church,
and the last chance to hear the historic
Binns organ in situ.)

We very much look forward to seeing you at one or all of our concerts. Please let us have your e-mail address if you'd like to be kept informed about future performances and events. Better still, come and sing with us – your first term's subscription will be free of charge.

Whether as a singer or a concertgoer you are assured of a very warm welcome!