

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY

St Mary's Church, Nantwich

Saturday January 10th 2015



'Come and Sing'

Gioachino Rossini

Petite Messe Solonnelle

Suzanne Winter - soprano

Freya Jacklin – mezzo soprano

Tom Morss – tenor

Peter Edge – baritone

Tony Metcalfe – piano

Simon Russell – keyboard and organ

John Naylor - conductor

Welcome

On behalf of the Nantwich Choral Society may I welcome you to this evening's performance of Rossini's Petite Messe Solonnelle. Tonight's performers have taken part in our very popular 'Come and Sing' event and have rehearsed throughout the day Rossini's tuneful work, culminating in this evening's performance.

The Nantwich Choral Society is now in its 42nd season of performing choral works. From humble beginnings in 1972 the Local Authority evening class has now become one of the leading and distinguished choirs in the North West with 100+ mixed choral voices. Under the inspirational baton of our Music Director John Naylor and our accomplished accompanist Simon Russell we strive to keep the choral tradition alive by singing great choral works and by having a varied and expanding repertoire of music - some familiar and some less so. We enjoy a fine choral reputation and excellent critique of our performances in the Nantwich and wider Cheshire area.

Each year we perform four major concerts, and in addition to our 'Come and Sing' we offer an educational singing workshop. Later in the spring we will sing Handel's Judas Maccabeus and in the summer we will welcome a German exchange choir, Lüdenscheid Oratorio, to sing Haydn's Harmoniemesse accompanied by our fully professional Northern Concordia Orchestra.

The resources required to stage these performances are not inconsiderable and we wish to acknowledge the receipt of legacies, sponsorships, grants and donations which help us to maintain and develop our musical standards, for without such generosity it would not be possible for our choral society to have the opportunity of taking part in, or for our audience to listen to these wonderful choral works. Long may we continue to do so.

Elizabeth Lea
Chairman

Acknowledgements

Nantwich Choral Society gratefully acknowledges the support during the recent past from The Harding Trust, Cheshire East Council, Nantwich Town Council, Barclays Bank, the family of the late Peter Nurse and the advertisers in our programmes.

Petite Messe Solennelle - Gioachino Rossini (1792 - 1868)

Rossini is remembered primarily for his immense contribution to the Italian operatic repertoire, but he also produced two important pieces of sacred music that are notable, amongst other things, for their overtly operatic style. This incorporation of the music of the opera house into the sacred repertoire may appear to have been a bold innovation, but in terms of dramatic content it was a well-established practice. Most composers who were familiar with the theatre as well as the church used elements of the operatic style in order to give their sacred compositions greater impact. A prime example is Handel, but the tradition goes back to Monteverdi, the first great opera composer, who even borrowed his own overture to *The Coronation of Poppea* for the opening movement of his 1610 *Vespers*. What is original about Rossini's sacred music is not so much its dramatic power, impressive though that is, as its unashamed romanticism.

Like so many of the great composers, Rossini was born into a musical family. His father was the town trumpeter in Pesaro and his mother was an opera singer. Both parents worked in various theatres in the region, and from an early age Gioachino went with them. As a talented boy soprano he was soon in great demand, and by the time he had reached his teens he could play the viola and the horn and was rapidly acquiring a reputation as a first-rate harpsichord-player and pianist. He went on to study at the Bologna Academy of Music, composing his first opera whilst still a student.

From then on his rise to fame was meteoric. He received his first professional commission in 1810, which led to a string of further commissions. With the enormous success of his first full-length opera, *Tancredi* (1812), and the even greater triumph of *The Italian Girl in Algiers* (1813), he became celebrated throughout Italy and his international reputation was firmly launched. He was still only 23 when he was engaged as Musical Director of the two opera houses in Naples, for each of which he was required to compose a new opera annually, the ever-popular *Barber of Seville* being one of the happiest results.

Rossini was always greatly attracted to a life of leisure, and as he was of a somewhat indolent nature he would frequently put off until the last possible moment the completion of his latest commission. He would then work at an incredible speed; several of his operas were written in under three weeks, an astonishing feat by any standards. He travelled widely throughout Europe, and in 1824 settled in Paris as Director of the Théâtre Italien. A string of new compositions followed, culminating in his acknowledged masterpiece, *William Tell*, completed in 1829 when he was still only 37.

At this point Rossini's life changed dramatically. For no apparent reason he gave up composing, and apart from two important religious works, the *Stabat Mater* (1842) and the *Petite Messe Solennelle* (1863), he wrote nothing of significance during the last forty years of his life. It may be that he had run out of energy and inspiration - *William Tell* had

been his thirty-sixth opera in nineteen years - or perhaps simply that he was by now so immensely wealthy that he had no particular incentive to go on working. He retired to a luxurious villa specially built for him at Passy, on the outskirts of Paris, where he was able to live the life of idleness and self-indulgence that, as a renowned gourmet and *bon vivant*, he had always found so appealing.

A visit to his villa was obligatory for every musician of importance visiting the capital, and here Rossini would hold court, entertaining everyone with his sparkling wit and good food, and revelling in the adulation of the constant stream of admirers and eminent visitors. These included Wagner, of whom he once wryly observed, '*His music has lovely moments but awful quarters of an hour!*'. In his latter years Rossini turned once again to composition, producing what he called his *Péchés de Vieillesse* (*Sins of Old Age*), a collection of light-hearted pieces for piano, some also with voices. Despite his withdrawal from the operatic world, he continued to be held in such enormous esteem that when he died 6,000 mourners, four military bands, a chorus of 400 singers and several of the finest opera soloists of the day attended his funeral.

The *Petite Messe Solennelle* is the most substantial of the works written during Rossini's Indian summer of composition. It was composed in 1863 for private performance and is scored for four soloists and chorus, with harmonium and piano accompaniment. It was not heard in public until 1869, the year after his death, when it was performed in the composer's own orchestral version at the Théâtre Italien. The work's title is misleading, since the *Petite Messe Solennelle* is neither *petite* nor particularly solemn. It lasts well over an hour, and despite the religious text is unmistakably operatic in style, in common with the *Stabat Mater* of twenty years earlier.

The music ranges from hushed intensity to boisterous high spirits, and abounds in the memorable tunes and rhythmic vitality for which Rossini became justly famous. The quiet A minor opening of the Kyrie Eleison contrasts sustained choral writing with a running bass part in the piano accompaniment. This soon gives way to a brighter mood as the music moves into the major. For the Christe Eleison, Rossini adopted a deliberately archaic style, echoing the church music of Palestrina some 300 years earlier. As the second Kyrie unfolds, the movement returns to the serious mood in which it began.

The Gloria begins with a short introduction for chorus and soloists, followed by four extended solo movements that are operatic arias in all but name. The chorus returns for the final section of the Gloria, an extended fugue to the words 'Cum sancto spiritu in gloria Dei Patris, Amen.' This is a real *tour de force* of musical craftsmanship, reflecting the thorough classical training in harmony and counterpoint that Rossini received all those years ago at the Bologna Academy.

In the Credo Rossini ingeniously uses the word 'credo' as a unifying motif to which he repeatedly returns. This section of the mass concludes with another brilliant fugue for the chorus, at the words 'Et vitam venturi saeculi, Amen.' There follows an extended piano solo, leading to a lyrical Sanctus and Benedictus, and the work ends with a moving Agnus Dei for the alto soloist and chorus.

There is a sense in which Rossini's extraordinary musical facility was one of his weaknesses as well as one of his strengths. He once remarked, *'Show me a laundry list and I will set it to music!'* and this neatly illustrates his complete confidence in his own ability to produce music to order, whatever the words. To some extent, this is what he has done in the *Petite Messe*. Of course, there are many sections which beautifully reflect the words, such as the Christe Eleison and the Agnus Dei, but in other places one feels that Rossini has paid little regard to the essential meaning and form of the text.

The two extended choral fugues are good examples of this; they are disproportionately grand in relation to the rest of the Gloria and Credo. Yet at no point in the work does the music become remotely dull or routine. Such was Rossini's genius that even when the spirit of the music seems to depart from the spirit of the text one can't help but be captivated by the beautiful melodies and sheer *joie-de-vivre* of the piece. As he himself said, *'Delight must be the basis and aim of this art'*, and that is what he has achieved – a work not of profound religious insight, but one that is a delightful, life-enhancing musical experience.

The Text

Rossini's inscription in the introduction to the first version of his score reads:

"PETITE MESSE SOLENNELLE, in four voices with accompaniment of two pianos and harmonium (a small reed organ) composed during my country stay at Passy. Twelve singers of 3 sexes (men, women, and castrati) will be enough for its performance: that is, eight for the chorus, four for the soloists, a total of twelve cherubim..... Lord, rest assured, that (my cherubim) will sing properly and con amore your praises and this little composition which is, alas, the last mortal sin of my old age."

He ended the manuscript:

"Dear God, here it is finished, this poor little Mass. Have I written sacred music or damned music? You well know I was born to write comic opera. It contains scant learning, but all my heart. Praise be to you, and grant me entry into Paradise."

G Rossini- Passy, 1863".

1. Kyrie: Soloists and Chorus

Kyrie eleison
Christe eleison
Kyrie eleison

Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy

2. Gloria - Laudamus te: Soloists and Chorus

Gloria in excelsis Deo

Glory to God in the highest

Et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.

And in earth peace, goodwill to all men.

Laudamus te, benedicimus te, glorificamus te,

We praise you, we bless you, we glorify you,

3. Gratias: mezzo,tenor and bass soloists

Gratias agimus tibi
propter magnam gloriam tuam,

We give thanks to you for your great glory,

4. Domine Deus: tenor solo

Domine Deus, Rex cælestis, Deus Pater omnipotens, Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe altissime, Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.

Lord God, King of Heaven, God the Father almighty, only son of the Father, Jesu Christ the highest, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

5. Qui tollis: soprano and mezzo duet

Qui tollis peccata mundi misere nobis, qui tollis peccata mundi misere nobis, qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram.

You who take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us, you who take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us, you who take away the sins of the world, hear our prayer.

Qui sedes ad dextram Patris miserere Nobis.

You who sit at the right hand of God, have mercy upon us.

6. Quoniam: Bass solo

Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus altissimus Jesu Christe.

You only are holy, you alone are the Lord. You, O Christ, alone are the most high.

7. Cum Sancto Spiritu: Soloists and Chorus

Cum Sancto Spiritu in Gloria Dei Patris, Amen.

With the Holy Spirit you are (most high) in the glory of God, Amen.

Part 2

8. Credo: Soloists and Chorus

Credo in unum Deum
Patrem omnipotentem, factorem coeli
et terrae, visibilium et invisibilium. Et
in unum Dominum Jesum Christum,
Filium Dei unigenitum et ex Patre
natum ante omnia saecula.

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.

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 coelis. Et
incarnatus est de Spiritu sancto ex
Maria virgine et homo factus est.

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.

9. Crucifixus: Soprano solo

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio
Pilato, passus et sepultus est.

He was crucified also for us under
Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was
buried.

10. Et resurrexit: Soloists and Chorus

Et resurrexit tertia die secundum
scripturas: et ascendit in coelum,
sedet at dexteram Dei Patris, et iterum

And on the third day he rose again
according to the scriptures, and
ascended into heaven and sits at the

venturus est cum gloria iudicare vivos
et mortuos, cuius regni non erit finis.

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.

Et in spiritum sanctum Dominum et
vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque
procedit, qui cum Patre et Filio simul
adoratur et conglorificatur; qui locutus
est per Prophetas. Et unam sanctam
catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam.

(And I believe) in the Holy Ghost, the
Lord and giver of life, who proceeds
from the Father and the Son, who with
the Father and the Son together is
worshipped and glorified, who spoke
through the Prophets. And I believe
one holy, catholic and apostolic church.

Confiteor unum baptisma in
remissione peccatorum et expecto
resurrectionem mortuorum

I acknowledge one baptism for the
remission of sins and look for the
resurrection of the dead

Et vitam venturi saeculi, Amen

and the life of the world to come. Amen

11. Preludio religioso and Ritornello

Piano and Harmonium

12. Sanctus: Soloists and Chorus

Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth,
pleni sunt coeli gloria eius.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy is the Lord God of hosts, the
heavens are full of his glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

13. O salutaris: Soprano solo

O salutaris Hostia, quae caeli pandis
ostium: Bella premunt hostilia, da
robur, fer auxilium.

O saving Victim, opening wide
The gate of Heaven to us below;
Our foes press hard on every side;
Your aid supply; your strength bestow.

14. Agnus Dei: Mezzo and chorus

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.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world, Grant us your peace.

Suzanne Winter – soprano

Suzanne has been singing and playing the piano since the age of 10 and studied music at The University of Sheffield and then as a Post Graduate at The University of Birmingham. She worked for many years as a peripatetic singing teacher followed by 12 years as Head of Music at a large Comprehensive school in Sheffield.

She has always enjoyed a semi professional and amateur career on the concert platform both in Opera and Operetta singing many roles including: Adele in *Die Fledermaus*, Susannah in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Despina in *Così fan Tutte*, Musetta in *La Bohème* by Puccini and Michaela in Bizet's *Carmen*. Her Gilbert and Sullivan roles include; Mabel (*Pirates of Penzance*) Yum Yum (*The Mikado*) Phyllis (*Iolanthe*) Gianetta and Casilda (*The Gondoliers*) She has also performed the role of Anna in Franz Lehar's *The Merry Widow*.

Oratorio performances include Mozart's *Mass in C*, *Missa Brevis* and *Requiem*. Handel's *The Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*, Schubert's *Mass in G*, Duruffe's *Requiem*, Haydn's *Imperial Mass*, *Gloria* by Vivaldi and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

Suzanne has also trained and conducted a wide range of choral groups including adult and youth choirs winning awards at prestigious festivals including the Llangollen Eisteddfod. She now works as a private singing teacher and is a member of The Lydian Singers.

Freya Jacklin – mezzo soprano

Freya graduated from University of York in 2010 with First Class Hons in Music, and is currently studying on the MPerf course at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, under Theresa Goble. Outside GSMD she performs professionally with ensembles such as London Voices, Opera Holland Park, RSVP and Bellaphonics.

Career highlights so far include solos with Birmingham Opera Company in Stockhausen's *Mittwoch aus Licht* directed by Graham Vick, title role in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* for Opera Up Close in a 7 week run at the King's Head Islington, film soundtracks (including *Interstellar*, *Maleficent*, *The Hobbit* and *Hunger Games* series to name a few) and she recently had her solo debut at the Wigmore Hall with the Wigmore Hall Voiceworks programme.

Opera credits include Dido / sorceress / 2nd Witch in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, The Mother in Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Annio in Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*, Julia Bertram in Jonathan Dove's *Mansfield Park*, Annina/Flora in Verdi's *La Traviata*. Most recently Freya has been performing in the Oxford Lieder Festival in a new Music Theatre piece written and directed by Iain Burnside.

Future projects include solos recitals in London and Oxford, recording Wigglesworth's *Echo and Narcissus* with Mark Padmore, and originating the role of Stephanie in the new Opera *Evariste*, to be performed at Somerset House in July 2015.

Tom Morss - tenor

Tom completed his post-graduate studies at the RNCM in July 2013 where he was tutored by Thomas Schulze and is now a freelance singer based in London. Notable performances in the last two years include the title role in a production of Britten's *Albert Herring* (RNCM), a role which he repeated for Mid Wales Opera as a young artist and cover; Vogelgesang in a concert performance of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Halle) and Pan in Cavalli's *La Calisto* for Hampstead Garden Opera.

Roles in 2014 include First Soldier and Nutrice in *The Coronation of Poppea* at Ryedale, Lammermuir and Grimeborn Festivals, Masetto in *Madame X* (Grimeborn Festival) and Albert in *Albert Herring* (Hampstead Garden Opera).

Tom is a busy concert soloist, with bookings throughout the UK in the coming months.

Peter Edge – Baritone

Peter is in his second year studying voice at the Royal Northern College of Music, under the tuition of Quentin Hayes. In 2010, he made his debut on television by winning the Vocal Solo category at the International Musical Eisteddfod in Llangollen. Additionally, he obtained the People to People Chester Association Vocal Scholarship for the third consecutive year in 2014.

As well as appearing on television, Peter has also sung solo on BBC Radio Three and Four. Peter has enjoyed his roles in operas and made his principal debut last

year in Blackburn Cathedral, when he played the role of Alfio in Mascagni's short Opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Pooh-Bah in the Manchester University production of *The Mikado*.

In March, Peter is looking forward to be playing Snug in Britten's *Midsummer Nights Dream* in the RNCM Opera Theatre. Aside from Opera, Peter enjoys singing with choirs and, most notably, he is currently a member of Harry Christopher's Genesis Sixteen.

Tony Metcalfe – piano

Tony Metcalfe was born in Sunderland. He has played the piano since the age of six and gained an ARCM diploma as an external student. He read Classics at St. John's College, Cambridge before embarking on a career in education.

His singing and conducting career began in Doncaster where he cut his teeth as a choral conductor on the choir of Doncaster Grammar School where he taught.

He moved on to Warwickshire where he continued to be active as a pianist and harpsichordist: a singer (with the St. Michael's Singers of Coventry Cathedral): and conductor (of the Warwick and Kenilworth Choral Society).

Moving to Hertfordshire he was a member of the Fayrfax Consort of St. Alban's, accompanist to the Hemel Hempstead Singers, with whom he performed Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, Director of Music at Holy Trinity, Leverstock Green and conductor

of the Chipperfield Choral Society from 1979 - 1986.

Since moving to Cheshire 28 years ago he has continued to be active as a singer (including as a deputy lay clerk at Chester Cathedral), a concert organiser and an accompanist. Among the musicians with whom he has given concerts are the violinists Richard Howarth and Francis Cummings, the clarinettist Colin Bradbury, the recorder player John Turner and the bassoonist Graham Salvage as well as many singers.

For the past 25 years he has directed the Nantwich Singers and has been Director of Music at St. Mary's Nantwich since 1994. He can also be found from time to time directing choirs on cruise ships. He is an examiner for and runs workshops for the Royal School of Church Music. He is a member of the Association of British Choral Directors.

Simon Russell – keyboard and organ

Simon was born in Liverpool. He studied organ at Birkenhead School with Timothy Lawford and then at Cambridge as Organ Scholar at St. Catharines's College, where he continued studies with Gillian Weir and the late Peter Le Huray.

After Cambridge he was appointed Assistant Organist at Chester Cathedral but decided after a while to keep music as a hobby and gain fortune from computer keyboards. He worked for Pilkingtons, ICI, AstraZeneca, and was a senior consultant working for an Anglo/Swedish management consultancy company called 3gamma. Now having

retired early from the IT sector, Simon has reverted to his professional music career.

He was firstly accompanist and then Musical Director of the Hoylake Choral Society from 1982 until he moved, in 2000, to Nantwich where he is Organist at St Mary's Parish Church. He has also accompanied the Nantwich Singers on many occasions and directed them when their normal Musical Director is absent. He is an annual recitalist at Chester Cathedral and is on the 'reserve' organist list covering holiday periods and other absences. He is also in demand as an organ tutor and has many Associated Board and other pupil distinctions and diploma successes to his credit.

Simon is an Examiner for London College of Music and the RSCM, and he is currently President of the Liverpool Organists Association. Nantwich Choral Society has been delighted to enjoy Simon's playing since September 2010 when became only the third accompanist in the Society's history.

John Naylor – conductor

As conductor, singer and organist, John combines extensive performance experience in world-class choirs with a lifelong passionate interest in choral music and its performance. Following a successful business career he now devotes most of his activities to conducting 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 The Monteverdi Choir and Louis Halsey Singers, appearing at The Proms, The South Bank, The Aldeburgh Festival and in numerous broadcasts and recordings. He has sung in the cathedral choirs of Carlisle, Christ Church Oxford and Chester where until recently he could still be occasionally spotted on the back row!

John has been Director of The Lydian Singers since founding the choir in 1980. They are now one of the leading chamber choirs in the North West and have performed extensively in the North West, Spain, France, Italy and in most of the cathedrals in Great Britain, often returning several times by invitation. He also conducts The Open University Chapel Choir.

John was appointed Music Director of Nantwich Choral Society in September 2005 for whom he has now conducted highly acclaimed performances of works in the mainstream choral repertoire including Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Bach's *St John Passion* and *St Matthew Passion* (both in Chester Cathedral), and Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* Fauré's *Requiem*, Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man* with Ensemble Vocal Arpège de Mâcon, Mozart's *Requiem* and Bach's *B minor Mass* with the 18th Century Concert

Orchestra, Vaughan Williams *Sea Symphony* and *The Lark Ascending*, Haydn's *The Seasons* and Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* in Chester Cathedral, Coleridge Taylor's *Hiawatha* and Elgar's *Enigma Variations* with the Northern Concordia Orchestra, and Handel's *Coronation Anthems* and *Dettingen Te Deum* with the 18th Century Sinfonia. Most recently he conducted a memorable performance of Karl Jenkins' *The Peacemakers* with NCS and the NCO.

Plans for 2015 include Handel's *Judas Maccabeus*, Haydn's *Harmoniemesse* and Duruflé's *Requiem* with NCS, Tewkesbury Abbey, Brecon Cathedral and The Lymm Festival with The Lydian Singers, and Ely and Ripon cathedrals with OUCC.



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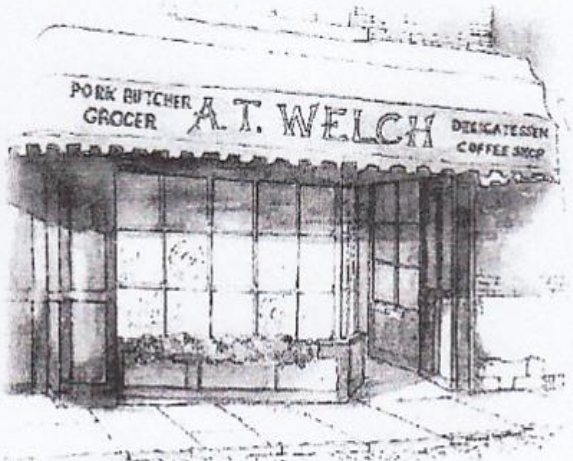
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Nantwich Choral Society – Future Concerts

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St Mary's Nantwich
Handel: Judas Maccabeus

Saturday 27 June 2015
St Mary's Nantwich
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The Northern Concordia Orchestra
Haydn: Harmoniemesse

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