

HANDEL

MESSIAH

Wells Cathedral

Saturday 3 December, 2016

Ali Darragh	soprano
Louise Mott	mezzo soprano
Alexander James Edwards	tenor
Andrew Mahon	bass

Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society

Music For Awhile Orchestra
(on period instruments)

Matthew Owens conductor

PROGRAMME



in 2017

Saturday 1 April at 7.00pm

WALTON *BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST*

HOLST *THE PLANETS*

Neal Davies bass-baritone

Southern Sinfonia

Matthew Owens conductor

Saturday 6 May, 9.30am to 6.00pm

Come and Sing Day

with Matthew Owens

BACH *MAGNIFICAT*

in The Methodist Church, Wells

Saturday 11 November at 7.00pm

BACH *MAGNIFICAT*

VIVALDI *GLORIA*

Music for Awhile Orchestra

Matthew Owens conductor

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Messiah (1741)

A Sacred Oratorio, words by Charles Jennens

Ali Darragh	soprano
Louise Mott	mezzo soprano
Alexander James Edwards	tenor
Andrew Mahon	bass

Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society

Music for Awhile Orchestra (on period instruments)
Maggie Faultless leader

Matthew Owens conductor

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Messiah an Oratorio

Programme Notes

Born in 1685, Handel was 56 when he composed *Messiah*. He had received his training in his native Germany, in Halle and Hamberg, and then in Italy. His influences were the German polyphonic and the Italian Baroque composers, especially Corelli and Scarlatti.

Handel was much admired by J. S. Bach, who was born a month after him and who had tried but failed to meet him in Halle. Beethoven said of Handel “the master of us all... the greatest composer that ever lived. I would uncover my head and kneel before his tomb”. Beethoven emphasised above all the simplicity and popular appeal of Handel’s music when he said, “Go to him to learn how to achieve great effects by such simple means.” Mozart said of him: “Handel understands *affect* better than any of us. When he chooses, he strikes like a thunder bolt.”

In 1712 Handel settled in England and in 1727 became a naturalised British subject. Within fifteen years he worked with, or started, three opera houses and between 1711 and 1739 more than 25 of Handel’s operas were premiered at the Queen’s Theatre alone (now Her Majesty’s Theatre). Handel wrote a total of 42 Italian operas.

In 1737, aged 52, Handel suffered a stroke which left him with a disabled right hand and some confusion and it was not expected that he would play again. However, after a stay at the spa in Aachen, he

returned and turned his attention to oratorio. Public taste for Italian operas had declined and oratorio was popular, giving audiences a chance to hear works in their own language. When Handel followed this trend he produced a series of 20 oratorios which helped him regain his title as the country’s favourite composer.

In 1741 Handel was invited to visit Dublin to stage a series of concerts. Shortly after receiving this request, and in the period of just over three weeks, with much of the music borrowed from his operas, he created *Messiah*. He staged a dozen successful concerts there and then announced with a fanfare that his new oratorio would receive its premiere on April 13, 1742. With 26 boys and 5 men, from St Patrick’s and Christ Church cathedrals—plus soprano and contralto soloists who also helped with the choruses—he arranged for a public rehearsal to take place the day before. This caused a sensation and hundreds of eager listeners had to be turned away from the first performance.

Some of the origins of Handel’s *Messiah* may well have been in Wells. This was Handel’s sixth English oratorio and, although its structure resembles that of conventional opera, it is not in dramatic form; there are no impersonations of characters and very little direct speech. Charles Jennens’s text is an extended reflection on Jesus Christ as Messiah. In writing to his close friend Jennens, Handel frequently referred to it as ‘Your *Messiah*’ and it was probably Jennens’s idea in the first place. After he had written the libretto and sent it to Handel, it was he who had to continually pressure Handel to complete it, and sometimes he complained about some of the items and requested revisions.

Jennens was a devout Christian, wealthy landowner and patron of music. Interested in primitive Christianity he was influenced by the writings of Bishop Kidder of



George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Bath and Wells. The viewpoint taken in Kidder's noted book, *'A Demonstration of the Messiah. In which the Truth of the Christian Religion is proved, against all the enemies thereof; but especially against the Jews'*, may have been influential in the selection of texts made by Jennens for *Messiah*. His interpretation of Psalm 2 was as a foretelling of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans. The Hallelujah Chorus, following it, would thus have probably been seen in the 18th century as a celebration of the dispersal of the Jewish nation.

After protests at the presentation of the *Messiah* as a subject for an entertainment, for the first London performance a year later at Covent Garden Jennens used his influence to supervise the 'wordbook' —the 1743 programme notes. He presented the work, sub-titled 'A Sacred Oratorio', very much as if it were an opera, organised into three distinct 'Acts' and subdivided into scenes:

- I
 - (i) The prophecy of Salvation;
 - (ii) the prophecy of the coming of Messiah and the question of what this may portend for the World;
 - (iii) the prophecy of the Virgin Birth;
 - (iv) the appearance of the Angels to the Shepherds;
 - (v) Christ's redemptive miracles on earth.
- II
 - (i) The redemptive sacrifice, the scourging and the agony on the cross;
 - (ii) His sacrificial death, His passage through Hell and Resurrection;
 - (iii) His Ascension;
 - (iv) God discloses his identity in Heaven;
 - (v) Whitsun, the gift of tongues, the beginning of evangelism;
 - (vi) the world and its rulers reject the Gospel;
 - (vii) God's triumph.
- III
 - (i) The promise of bodily resurrection and redemption from Adam's fall;
 - (ii) the Day of Judgement and general Resurrection;
 - (iii) the victory over death and sin;
 - (iv) the glorification of the Messianic victim.

In the "Pastoral Symphony" (entitled Pifa) that introduces the shepherds, Handel refers to the music of the *pifferari*, country bagpipers in the Italian mountains who play in the villages during the Christmas season.

Despite Jennens's promotion, the first London performance of *Messiah* was not well received. It was only in 1750, when *Messiah* began to be presented in annual performances for a London charity at the Foundling Hospital, that the public embraced the work. The *Hallelujah Chorus* at the end of the second part was the point in the oratorio, during one of the early London performances, that King George II is said to have risen to his feet. Audiences have repeated this practice ever since.

Before the first performance Handel had

made numerous revisions to his manuscript score, in part to match the forces available for the 1742 Dublin premiere. Between 1742 and 1754 he continued to revise and recompose individual movements, sometimes to suit the requirements of particular singers, sometimes at Jennens's insistence.

Over subsequent years Handel revised *Messiah* many times to accommodate new soloists, performing forces, and audiences. He performed it 36 times, every time at Eastertide.

Handel died in 1759. Two significant performances of *Messiah* were given in Westminster Abbey in 1784, as part of a "Commemoration of Handel" festival with as many as 500 musicians, setting a standard for further large-scale performances. In 1789 Mozart re-orchestrated the work to bring to it the dimensions of a Classical

period orchestra. Other versions came in the 19th and 20th centuries, helping to make the work viable for large choral festivals with many hundreds of singers, sometimes over a thousand.

The first published score of *Messiah* was issued in 1767, eight years after Handel's death, though this was based on relatively early manuscripts and included none of Handel's later revisions. This evening's performance uses Watkins Shaw's final edition of 1992 that he had worked on between 1957 and 1965. He had access to many of Handel's papers, including his conducting score from the first Dublin performance. This edition of *Messiah* revolutionised its interpretation, and has been called 'a landmark in what we now know as the Early Music movement.'

Programme by Neill Bonham

Part One

1. Sinfonia (Overture)

2. Recitative Tenor

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,
saith your God. Speak ye comfortably
to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that
her warfare is accomplished, that her
iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him
that crieth in the wilderness; prepare
ye the way of the Lord; make straight
in the desert a highway for our God.

(Isaiah 40: 1-3)

3. Air Tenor

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry
mountain and hill made low; the crook-
ed straight and the rough places plain.

(Isaiah 40: 4)

4. Chorus

And the glory of the Lord shall be
revealed, and all flesh shall see it
together: for the mouth of the Lord
hath spoken it.

(Isaiah 40: 5)

5. Recitative Bass

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts:
Yet once a little while and I will shake
the heavens and the earth, the sea
and the dry land. And I will shake all
nations; and the desire of all nations
shall come. The Lord, whom ye seek,
shall suddenly come to His temple,
even the messenger of the Covenant,
whom ye delight in; behold, He shall
come, saith the Lord of hosts.

(Haggai 2: 6-7) (Malachi 3: 1)

6. Air Mezzo soprano

But who may abide the day of His
coming, and who shall stand when
He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's
fire.

(Malachi 3: 2)

7. Chorus

And He shall purify the sons of Levi,
that they may offer unto the Lord an
offering in righteousness. *(Malachi 3: 3)*

8. Recitative Mezzo soprano

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel, God with us.

(Isaiah 7: 14; Matthew 1: 23)

9. Air and Chorus Mezzo soprano

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain.

O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God! Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

(Isaiah 40: 9)

10. Recitative Bass

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

(Isaiah 60: 2-3)

11. Air Bass

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

(Isaiah 9: 2)

12. Chorus

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

(Isaiah 9: 6)

13. Pifa (Pastoral Symphony)

14a. Recitative Soprano

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

(Luke 2: 8)

14b. Recitative Soprano

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they

were sore afraid. *(Luke 2: 9)*

15. Recitative Soprano

And the angel said unto them: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

(Luke 2: 10-11)

16. Recitative Soprano

And suddenly there was with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying:

(Luke 2: 13)

17. Chorus

"Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men."

(Luke 2: 14)

18. Air Soprano

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.

(Zechariah 9: 9-10)

19. Recitative Mezzo soprano

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

(Isaiah 35: 5-6)

20. Air Mezzo soprano and Soprano

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; and He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

(Isaiah 40: 11)

Come unto Him, all ye that labour, come unto Him that are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Take his yoke upon you, and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

(Matthew 11: 28-29)

21. Chorus

His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light.

(Matthew 11: 30)

Interval - 20 minutes

Wine and soft drinks are available in the Transepts

Part Two

22. Chorus

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. (*John 1: 29*)

23. Air *Mezzo soprano*

He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off His hair: He hid not His face from shame and spitting.

(*Isaiah 53: 3, 6*)

24. Chorus

Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows! He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.

(*Isaiah 53: 4-5*)

25. Chorus

And with His stripes we are healed.

(*Isaiah 53: 5*)

26. Chorus

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way. And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (*Isaiah 53: 6*)

27. Recitative *Tenor*

All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying: (*Psalms 22: 7*)

28. Chorus

“He trusted in God that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him.” (*Psalms 22: 8*)

29. Recitative *Tenor*

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart: He is full of heaviness. He looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort him. (*Psalms 69: 20*)

30. Air *Tenor*

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow.

(*Lamentations 1: 12*)

31. Recitative *Tenor*

He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgressions of Thy people was He stricken. (*Isaiah 53: 8*)

32. Air *Tenor*

But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell; nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption. (*Psalms 16: 10*)

34. Recitative *Tenor*

Unto which of the angels said He at any time: “Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee”? (*Hebrews 1: 5*)

35. Chorus

Let all the angels of God worship Him. (*Hebrews 1: 6*)

36. Air *Mezzo soprano*

Thou art gone up on high; Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, even from Thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them. (*Psalms 68: 18*)

38. Air *Soprano*

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. (*Isaiah 52: 7; Romans 10: 15*)

40. Air Bass

Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing?

The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed.

(Psalm 2: 1-2)

41. Chorus

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us.

(Psalm 2: 3)

42. Recitative Tenor

He that dwelleth in Heav'n shall laugh them to scorn;

The Lord shall have them in derision.

(Psalm 2: 4)

43. Air Tenor

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

(Psalm 2: 9)

44. Chorus

Hallelujah: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah!

(Revelation 11: 15; 19: 6 & 16)

Part Three

45. Air Soprano

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

(Job 19: 25-26)

For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep.

(1 Corinthians 15: 20)

46. Chorus

Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

(1 Corinthians 15: 21-22)

47. Recitative Bass

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

(1 Corinthians 15: 51-52)

48. Air Bass

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

(1 Corinthians 15: 52-53)

52. Air Soprano

If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us.

(Romans 8: 31, 33-34)

53. Chorus

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Blessing and honour, glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen. *(Revelation 5: 12-14)*

Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society

Patron: John Rutter, CBE
President: The Dean of Wells

Conductor: Matthew Owens
Chairman: Robin Duys

Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society (WCOS) was founded in 1896 and is one of the Southwest's leading choral societies. It performs the great choral works with some of the UK's finest soloists and professional orchestras in the glorious surroundings of 'The Queen of English Cathedrals'. Numbering around 160 voices, WCOS gives three concerts a year, under the direction of the distinguished conductor, Matthew Owens, Organist and Master of the Choristers at Wells Cathedral.

Under Owens it has performed Bach's *St John Passion*, *B minor Mass*, and *Christmas Oratorio*; Brahms's *German Requiem*; Britten's *War Requiem* and

Saint Nicholas; Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*; Fauré's *Requiem*; Handel's *Four Coronation Anthems*; Mendelssohn's *Elijah*; Mozart's *Requiem* and *C Minor Mass*; Orff's *Carmina Burana*; Verdi's *Requiem*; and major works by Finzi, Purcell, Rutter, and Vaughan Williams. The Society also presents Handel's ever-popular *Messiah*, each December. WCOS hosts an annual *Come and Sing* day each spring, to which any singers are welcome to learn and perform a work from scratch, in just a few hours.

For further details about WCOS, including how to join, please visit :

www.wcos.org.uk

ALI DARRAGH soprano

Ali Darragh was born in County Antrim, Northern Ireland and studied English Literature and Art History at the University of St Andrews, where she also held a choral scholarship. She has since performed with many of the leading early music ensembles, with highlights including performances of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* (with Collegium Vocale, Gent /Philippe Herreweghe, and the Dune-din Consort/John Butt) and Blow's *Venus and Adonis* (with The Musicians of the Globe Theatre, London/Phillip Pickett). She has sung frequently with the *Gramophone* and *MIDEM* award-winning Dunedin Consort in

works such as Handel's *Messiah*, *Dixit Dominus* and Bach's *B Minor Mass* and with which she recently made her solo CD debut in a recording of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* released by Linn Records. She has also sung with The Exon Singers (Matthew Owens), and with Chorus Angelorum (Gavin Carr), performing Olivier Messiaen's *Trois Petites Liturgies de la présence divine* in Turin Opera House.

Ali is increasingly active as a soloist and recitalist, with highlights including performances of Vivaldi's solo cantata *Nulla in Mundo* with Philharmonia of Edinburgh and Brahms *Liebeslieder Walzer* in Glasgow and at the



Edinburgh Festival. In Wells, as part of the 'Early Music Wells' series she has recently given a performance of Handel's *Neun deutsche Arien*, and working with duet partner Lesley Jane Rogers, she has given a recital of Baroque music, including the original Handel *Messiah* duets. In the Southwest of England more generally she has given recitals as part of the Exon Singers Festival in Tavistock, at Stogursey Parish Church, the Bishop's Palace in Wells, in Bristol and in Bath. She performs regularly as a soloist with choral societies with recent performances including Mozart's *C Minor Mass; Requiem*; Haydn's *Nelson Mass*; Handel's *Messiah* and *Acis and Galatea*; Bach's *St John and St Matthew Passions, B Minor Mass* and *Magnificat*; Karl Jenkins's *The Armed Man*; and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. She was also a soloist in a Gala Concert with Wells Cathedral Choir and soloists Dame Emma Kirkby, James Bowman, Daniel Norman and Neal Davies (Bach's *Magnificat* and Handel *Utrecht Te Deum and Jubilate*). She is also in increasing demand in

the area of film music, with her most recent appearance being as 'the voice' of Gillian Anderson on the soundtrack for the new 'Moby Dick' mini series!

Ali has also been heavily involved with *Music in Hospitals* – a registered charity whose mission it is to improve the quality of life of adults and children in hospitals and care homes through the joy and therapeutic benefits of live music. In 2011 she was awarded a PhD in Architectural History from the University of St Andrews.

LOUISE MOTT mezzo soprano

Mezzo Soprano **Louise Mott** studied singing at the Guildhall School of Music, Royal College of Music and the National Opera Studio. She has sung with all the major opera companies in the UK and opera roles include Ariodante for English Touring Opera, Larina *Eugene Onegin* for Scottish Opera on Tour,



Fidalma *The Secret Marriage* and Annina *Der Rosenkavalier* for Opera North, Bradamante *Alcina*, ENO, Annio *La Clemenza di Tito*, WNO, Edith *Alfred*, Agrippina, Ariodante, Sesto *Giulio Cesare*, Orlando, Rosmira *Partenope*, Serse and Dido *Dido and Aeneas* for The Early Opera Company. Louise's most recent engagements have included Marcella *Alban* (Tom Wiggall) at St Albans Abbey, Marcellina *Marriage of Figaro* for Opera Project, Katarina Schrott *Mayerling* for The Royal Ballet at The Royal Opera House, Meg Page *Falstaff* and Count Orlofsky *Die Fledermaus Party Scene* for Diva Opera in the UK and on tour in Europe, Meg Page *Falstaff* for Pfalztheater Kaiserslautern, Mozart's *Requiem* and *Solemn Vespers* for the Bach Choir and the OAE at the Royal Festival Hall, London, Helen King *Priam* at the Brighton Festival, 2nd Witch (& Dido cover) Dido and Aeneas for Opera North & Flora Bervoix *La Traviata* for Diva Opera, and Third Lady *The Magic Flute* for Opera Project, Elgar's *The Kingdom* and Bach's *St Matthew Passion* at Truro Cathedral, Bach's *B minor Mass* at Exeter Cathedral, Nicklausse *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* for Diva Opera and Ottavia (cover) *The Coronation of Poppea* for Opera North. Mrs Grose *The Turn of the Screw* for Seastar Opera, Mrs Segstrom *A Little Night Music* for Opera Project and Ottavia (cover) *The Coronation of Poppea* for Opera North, Waltraute *Die Walküre* for Secret Opera, Alisa Lucia *di Lammermoor* and Marcellina *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Diva Opera and Nicklausse/Muse *The Tales of Hoffmann* (and Charlotte (cover) *Werther*) for English Touring Opera.

Plans for 2016/17 include Verdi *Requiem* at Oxford Town Hall, further performances of *Le Nozze di Figaro* in London, Cherbourg and Cape Town, South Africa and Mayor's Wife *Jenůfa* for Opera Project at Longborough Festival Opera, Tisbe in *La Cenerentola* for Diva Opera.

ALEXANDER JAMES EDWARDS tenor

Born in Essex, Alexander James Edwards began singing as a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral, continuing his studies at the Royal Northern College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music, later joining the Young Artists Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Elsewhere, he has sung principal roles at the Buxton Festival, the Salzburg Landes-theater and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, as well as with English National Opera, Gothenburg Opera, Grange Park Opera, Opera Holland Park and the Opéra Royal de Wallonie. His recordings and broadcasts include *The Carmelites* for Chandos and *Friday Night is Music Night* for BBC Radio 2.

He made his BBC Proms debut in 2006, and his concert engagements have included performances with the Academy of Ancient Music, the BBC Philharmonic, the Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra, the CBSO, the Hallé, Huddersfield Choral Society, the Israel Camerata, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Choral Society, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Northern Sinfonia and the Wexford Sinfonia. He has also been Featured Soloist at the Battle Proms and at the Leeds Castle Classical Open Air Concert.

Current engagements include Rodolfo *La Bohème* for Lyric Opera, Dublin, and Festival Opera, Napier, New Zealand, Cavaradossi *Tosca* for English Touring Opera, Third Jew *Salome* for the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Foresto *Attila* at the Theater Lübeck, Beethoven *Symphony No. 9* with the Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra, Berlioz *Grande Messe des Morts* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, *Classical Spectacular* for Raymond Gubbay Ltd and *The Puccini Scandal* at the National Concert Hall, Dublin.



In 2011, Alexander James Edwards was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music by the Governing body of the RAM for distinguishing himself in the field of Opera.

ANDREW MAHON bass

Bass-baritone Andrew Mahon has appeared with many ensembles in Canada, the UK, and around the world, performing both concert and operatic repertoire. His past solo engagements include performances with Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Theatre of Early Music, Les Voix Baroques, Toronto Consort, Tallis Choir, Aradia Ensemble, Toronto Masque Theatre, Opera Atelier, Internationale Bachakademie Stuttgart, NDR Sinfonieorchester, Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, Tilford Bach Festival, London Handel Orchestra, Mid Wales Opera, and the choirs of St Paul's Cathedral and Wells Cathedral.

He has collaborated with such conductors as Christopher Hogwood, Adrian Butterfield, Andrew Parrott, Nicholas Cleobury, Christoph Eschenbach, Helmuth Rilling, Keri-Lynn Wilson, Ivars Taurins, Daniel Taylor, and David Fallis.

Highlights include Bach's *St John Passion* with the Orchestra of St John's in Dorchester; Bach's *Mass in B Minor* with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and at the Tilford Bach Festival; Handel's *Israel in Egypt* and Zelenka's *Missa Votiva* in Toronto with Tafelmusik; for the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival the role of Il Mandarino in a concert performance of Puccini's *Turandot* in Lübeck with the NDR Sinfonieorchester, a performance and live television broadcast of Beethoven's *Chorfantasie* with the SHMF Choir and Orchestra under Eschenbach, and Schumann's *Mass in C minor* under Hogwood; Handel's *Messiah* with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra; the role of Samuel in Handel's *Saul* with the Bach-Collegium and Gächinger Kantorei Stuttgart under



Rilling; Haydn's *Nelson Mass* with the Wells Cathedral Choir alongside Dame Felicity Lott, Haydn's *Mass in Time of War* in Toronto with the Tallis Choir and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the Augsburgers Domsingknaben in Germany.

In the 2016-2017 season, Andrew can be heard singing Handel's *Messiah* with the Harrogate Choral Society, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* in Canada with Masterworks of Oakville, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at Wakefield Cathedral with the Yorkshire Philharmonic Choir, and Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* with Cumbria Rural Choirs in Carlisle. A frequent song recitalist, he has performed on the stages of Wigmore Hall, and the Forge in London. Andrew is a graduate of the University of Toronto and now resides in the UK.



MATTHEW OWENS conductor

Matthew Owens became Organist and Master of the Choristers of Wells Cathedral in January 2005, having previously been Organist and Master of the Music at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh, and Sub Organist of Manchester Cathedral. In addition to being responsible for the 1100 year old tradition of daily sung worship at Wells Cathedral, Matthew has toured, broadcast, and recorded extensively with Wells Cathedral Choir which, in 2011, was named by an international jury for *Gramophone* as the best choir in the world with children, and the sixth greatest overall. He recently prepared the choristers for Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, with the Berlin Radio Choir, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, and Sir Simon Rattle, for the 2014 BBC Proms. Matthew is the Founder Artistic Director of three initiatives at Wells: *Cathedral Commissions*, a scheme which commissions new works from pre-eminent British composers; the cathedral's

innovative festival, *new music wells*; and its counterpart, *Early Music Wells*.

Matthew was educated at Chetham's School of Music; The Queen's College, Oxford; the Royal Northern College of Music; and the Sweelinck Conservatorium, Amsterdam. His major organ studies were with Gordon Stewart, Margaret Phillips, and Jacques van Oortmerssen. From 1994-99, he was Tutor in Organ Studies at the RNCM and Chetham's, and worked for BBC Religious Broadcasting; he was Conductor of The Exon Singers from 1997-2011, and President of the Cathedral Organists' Association from 2010-13.

He is Musical Director of the Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society, a chorus of over 150 singers with which he has performed Bach's *St John Passion*, *B minor Mass*, *Cantata 140*, *Lutheran Mass in F*, and *Christmas Oratorio*; Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*; Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem* and *Alto Rhapsody*; Britten's *War Requiem* and *Saint Nicholas*; Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, and *The Kingdom*; Fauré's *Requiem*; Handel's *Messiah*

and *Four Coronation Anthems*; Mendelssohn's *Elijah*; Mozart's *Requiem* and *C Minor Mass*; Orff's *Camina Burana*; Verdi's *Requiem*; and major works by Finzi, Purcell, Rutter, Vaughan Williams, and Vivaldi, with some of the south of England's leading professional orchestras. Matthew has directed choral workshops and summer schools throughout the UK and abroad – including recent visits to Australia, China, Germany, Hong Kong, Luxembourg, New Zealand, and the USA – and has made over thirty CDs as a conductor with major labels including Hyperion and Signum.

As an organist, Matthew has given recitals in Australia, France, Ireland, Spain, Switzerland, New Zealand, the USA, and throughout the UK, including many festival appearances, and at venues such as St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Cathedral, and St John's Smith Square. He has championed new music, particularly of British composers, conducting over 190 world premieres, including works by leading composers ranging from Jools Holland to Sir James MacMillan, and John Rutter to Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. As a composer himself, he has works published by Oxford University Press and Novello. He was made an Honorary Fellow of the Guild of Church Musicians in November 2012.

MUSIC FOR AWHILE ORCHESTRA

Artistic Director: Maggie Faultless

Since its first performance in 1996, Music for Awhile has continued to inspire audiences and performers with concerts in a variety of venues, and at its own Summer Festival in the magical setting of All Saints, Alton Priors. Musicians from Europe's most acclaimed ensembles come together to perform a wide range of repertoire spanning over two centuries. Music for Awhile specialises in performing English opera from Purcell's time, and

thanks to sponsorship from the Cecil King Memorial Foundation it also features the music of J. S. Bach. The ensemble regularly expands to form a larger orchestra enabling it to perform major choral works in venues such as Westminster Abbey, Gloucester, Hereford and Bristol Cathedrals. It also has its own chamber music series, held in smaller venues appropriate to the repertoire. Music for Awhile has established contacts with schools and groups of young musicians in order to attract children to rehearsals and concerts, and provides important access to live music for the local rural community.

Violin 1

Maggie Faultless, Anna Curzon, Rachel Stroud, Dan Edgar, Nia Lewis

Violin 2

Lucy Russell, Henry Tong, Claudia Norz, Ellen Bundy

Viola

John Crockatt, Nick Logie, Martin Kelly

Cellos

Andrew Skidmore, Jonathan Rees

Bass

Kate Aldridge, Bill Hunt

Oboe

Gail Hennessy, Bethan White

Bassoon

Zoe Shevlin

Trumpet

Stephen Cutting, Brendan Musk

Timpani

Feargus Brennan

Harpichord

Sean Heath

Organ

James Kealey

Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society Members

Soprano

Sarah Allen
Ann Baker
Juliet Bench
Joanna Birkett
Debbie Bettles
Pam Booth
Helen Bowen
Kate Brown
Denise Bush
Barbara Calverley
Felicity Chapman
Julia Davies
Cheryl Evans-Jones
Caroline Fletcher
Heather Forgham
Sandra Freeborn
Carolyn Fussell
Margaret Gelder
Sue Gould
Maureen Grant
Antonia Gwynn
Jane Hancock
Susan Hanson
Sarah Hare
Margaret Heffernan
Rachel Hewson
Sally Hobson
Dorothy Hunter
Caroline Legg
Ruth Lickfold
Della Luetchford
Rosemary Lunn
Jennie Lunnon
Nancy McGiveron ¶
Sarah May
Janice Merritt
Viola Nagel
Louise Palmer
Ann Parsons
Maureen Pickford
Pamela Pye ¶

Margaret Raynes
Chloe Rees
Patricia Rees-Jones
Frances Rowe ¶
Maggie St Quinton
Janet Saxon
Margaret Sutton
Dominique Swain
Pamela Tomlinson
Christine Tudor
Patricia Turner
Helen Wade
Jan Weaver
Jo Weir
Lucy Williams
Jane Withey

Alto

Jenny Abraham
Christine Barker
Sandra Barwise
Anne Beechey
Mhari Brown
Vivienne Burgess
Louise Burton
Liz Clay
Rosemary Cooke
Nikki Copleston
Polly Corbishley
Sue Curragh
Gill Deamer
Sian Decamp
Joan Dovey
Robin Duys ¶
Kate Fielder
Barbara Green
Helen Griffiths
Shelley Gudgin
Faith Guest
Wendy Gregory
Elizabeth Hand
Catherine Hay
Gilly Hayward

Alison Heather
Jenny Henderson
Mary l'Anson
Jane James
Lynne Jarman
Jane Jarratt
Janet Johnson
Amanda Karpinski
Jessica Leach
Annie Lee
Alex Lemanski
Barbara Leuwer
Riches ¶
Jennifer Mackenzie
Philippa Mains
Mary Massey
Della Menday ¶
Liz Metcalfe
Mary Newman
Janet Ravenscroft
Margaret Rayfield
Janet Rundell
Mary Sage
Sue Stourton-Harris
Celia Townsend
Lynne Waldron
Sue Wells
Olivia Wilkinson
Fenella Williams
Kate Wilson
Jo Wright

Tenor

Simon Birkett
Neill Bonham ¶
Alan Brown
Simon Bruce
Ian Bynoe
Ben Clay ¶
Andrew Cruickshank
Alexandra de
Glanville
Richard Garstang ¶

Martin Godfrey
Oscar Golden-Lee †
Peter Harle
Martin Lovell
Nigel Lloyd
John Morton
Bernard North
Andrew Phillips
Sarah Villiers
Robin Walker ¶

Bass

Christopher Boddie
Michael Calverley
John Castree
Geoffrey Clarke
David Cooke
Peter Farrell
David Flinders ¶
Niall Garden
Gabriel Gilson
Wesley Hallam
Michael Harris
Trevor Hazelgrove
Richard Henderson
Derek Hiller
Chris Jenkins ¶
Dennis Johnson
John King
Richard Lander
Michael Leach
Brian Marshall
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Brian Roberts-Wray
David Rosser
Robert Smallcombe
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Kenneth Wade
William White †

¶ Committee

† Choral Scholar

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Your continued support as a Friend of Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society is greatly appreciated and we look forward to seeing you at our concerts.

The Society gives three concerts each year which include an annual performance of Handel's *Messiah* in December. The other two concerts are in early November and in the Spring.

The main features of the Friends scheme are:

- Priority booking of up to four prime Nave tickets for each concert
- Names of Friends acknowledged in concert programmes
- Annual Newsletter
- Invitation to a social event with the Choir and Conductor each year
- Annual subscription of £24

Contact our Friends Secretary, Frances Rowe: friends@wcso.org.uk

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