



HANDEL



MESSIAH

Wells Cathedral

Saturday 9 December 7.00pm 2017

Amy Carson	soprano
Louise Innes	mezzo soprano
Paul Phoenix	tenor
Craig Bissex	bass
Music for Awhile Orchestra	on period instruments; leader Maggie Faultless
Matthew Owens	conductor

PROGRAMME



in 2018

Saturday 24th March at 7.00pm

Bernstein *Chichester Psalms*

Rutter *Gloria*

Barber *Adagio for Strings*

Copland *Appalachian Spring*

Copland *Fanfare for the Common Man*

Southern Sinfonia

Matthew Owens conductor

Saturday 6 May, 9.30am to 6.00pm

Come and Sing Day

Faure *Requiem*

with Matthew Owens

in The Methodist Church, Wells

Saturday 10 November at 7.00pm

Fauré *Requiem*

Dove *For an Unknown Soldier*

Choristers of Wells Cathedral Choir

London Mozart players

Matthew Owens conductor

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Messiah (1741)

A Sacred Oratorio, words by Charles Jennens

Amy Carson	soprano
Louise Innes	mezzo soprano
Paul Phoenix	tenor
Craig Bissex	bass
Music for Awhile Orchestra (on period instruments)	
Maggie Faultless	leader

Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society

Matthew Owens	conductor
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Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society is affiliated to Making Music.

Programme by Neill Bonham



Messiah an Oratorio

Messiah is deservedly one of the most popular of all major musical works, at the top of the charts. The music is of a high standard, with the dramatic changes of pace and style expected of a practiced writer of operas.

Handel was 56 when he composed *Messiah*. He had received his training in his native Germany, in Halle and Hamburg, 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.

In 1703 at 18 years old Handel was playing in the Hamburg opera house and produced his first two operas. In 1706 he travelled to Italy at the invitation of Ferdinando de' Medici who had a keen interest in opera and was trying to make Florence Italy's musical capital. He also moved to Rome where he composed cantatas for musical gatherings in the cardinals' palaces and produced another four very popular operas. It is not recorded whether he met Vivaldi when he produced his opera *Agrippina* in Venice in 1709, just as Vivaldi was preparing to publish his *L'Estro Armonico*. Back in Germany, in 1710 Handel

became *Kapellmeister* to prince George, the Elector of Hanover, who in 1714 would become King George I of Britain.

In 1712 the 27 years old 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.

Messiah was Handel's sixth of twenty-two English oratorios and, as with five of the others, he had asked his close friend Charles Jennens to prepare the libretto.



George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

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. Jennens was a devout Christian, wealthy landowner and patron of music and his text is an extended reflection on Jesus Christ as Messiah. In writing to 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.

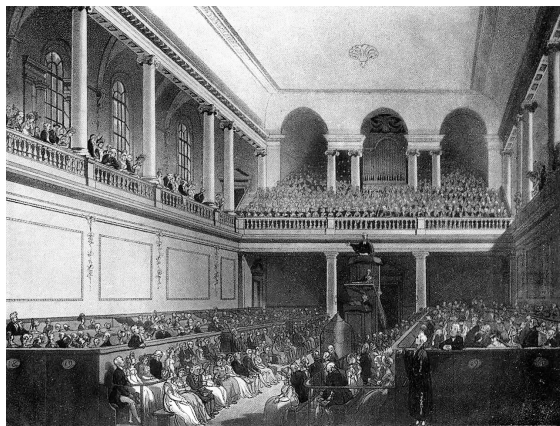
There were protests about the presentation of the *Messiah* as a subject for an entertainment. So, for the first London performance a year later at Covent Garden, Jennens used his influence to supervise the 'wordbook' — the 1743 programme notes. He presented the work,

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 chapel of the London Foundling Hospital

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.

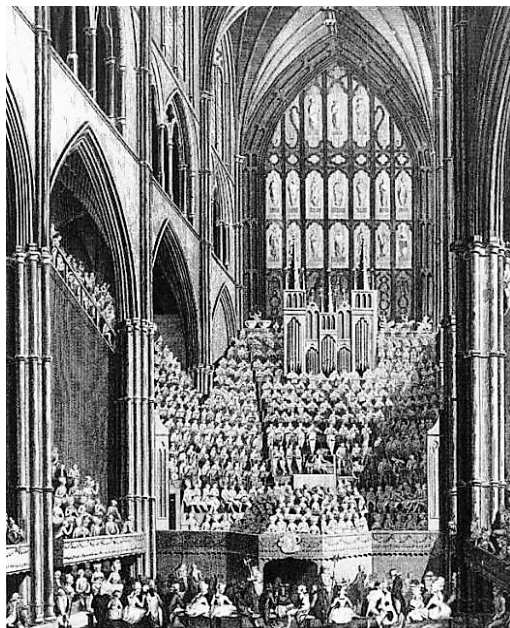
Before the first performance Handel had made numerous revisions to his manuscript score, in part to match the forces available for the 1742 Dublin premiere. Between 1742 and 1754 he continued to revise and recompose individual movements, sometimes to suit the requirements of particular singers, sometimes 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 it to 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.'



The chorus, orchestra and organ in Westminster Abbey during the Handel Commemoration in 1784



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 crooked 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)*

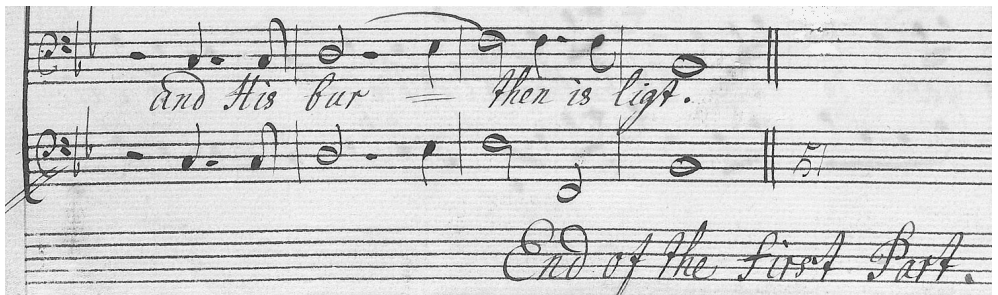
20. Air Mezzo soprano and Soprano

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



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*)

33. Chorus

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.

Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, The Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.

Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory.

(Psalm 24: 7-10)

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. *(Psalm 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)

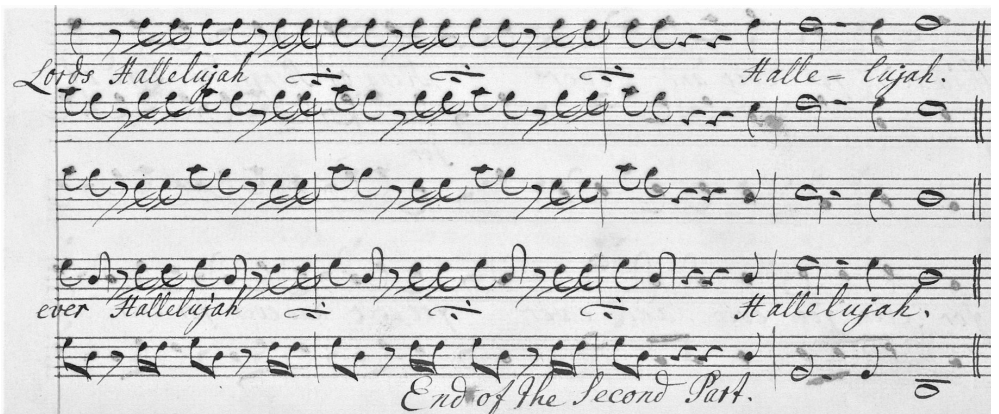
43. Air Tenor

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)





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. (I 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. (I 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. (I Corinthians 15: 51-52)

48. Air Bass

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead

shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

(I 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)



AMY CARSON

Soprano

Amy Carson began her singing career as the youngest founding girl chorister at Salisbury Cathedral, and went on to study at Trinity College, Cambridge and the Royal Academy of Music. She has been fortunate enough to study with such eminent voice teachers as Patricia McCaffrey, Mikael Eliassen, and Nolle Barker both individually and on prestigious courses such as *Academie du Festival d'Aix* and *The North Sea Vocal Academy*.

From a young age Amy has been performing and recording in venues around the world, both as a soloist and as an ensemble singer. She is a versatile artist, who performs recital, oratorio, and operatic repertoire and whose regular commitments in both choral and solo contexts mean she enjoys exciting and diverse performance opportunities.

Highlights of Amy's operatic roles include Pamina (in a film of *The Magic Flute* directed by Kenneth Branagh), Soprano chorus in *The Rakes Progress* and cover Alinda in *L'incoronazione di Dario* (Garsington Opera), Amy Cumnor in *The Cumnor Affair* (Tete a Tete Opera), Susanna in *Marriage of Figaro*, and Constance in *Dialogue des Carmelites* (Royal Academy Opera Scenes), Musetta in *La Boheme* (Choir of London, conducted by Nick Collon), Galatea in *Acis and Galatea* (Music for a While directed by Margaret Faultless), The Spirit in *Dido and Aeneas* (alongside Magdalena Kožená conducted by Nicholas Kraemer), Soprano Role in *The Fairy Queen* (at The Wigmore Hall conducted by Matthew Halls), Newspaper Seller, and Strolling Girl in *Death in Venice* (at The Queen Elizabeth Hall conducted by Richard Hickox and at St Endellion Festival conducted by Martyn Brabbins).



On the concert platform, Amy has sung much of the core repertoire from Monteverdi to MacMillan, and has appeared as a soloist at many of the UK's most prestigious venues including the Barbican, Wigmore Hall, St John's Smith Square, Cadogan Hall, and The Queen Elizabeth Hall. Highlights include singing the Semi Chorus in the premiere of James MacMillan's *St John Passion* with the LSO (Barbican) conducted by Sir Colin Davis; Soprano soloist in *St Matthew Passion* (Barbican) with The Monteverdi Choir conducted by Sir John Eliot Gardiner, and a consort performance of *St John Passion* with the OAE directed by Mark Padmore, which toured Japan and Korea.

Amy has sung with many of the UK's leading ensembles (with some solo appearances) including The Sixteen, The Monteverdi Choir, Tenebrae, The Gabrieli Consort, London

Voices, Philharmonia Voices, Contrapunctus, and The Choir of the Enlightenment.

Amy has a long-standing partnership with accompanist Nicola Rose and together they have performed recitals across the South West and in London. They have recently recorded Aaron Copland's song cycle of *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson*, which they plan to perform as part of a longer programme (that will also feature some of Amy's own song compositions) in various UK venues next year.

Recent projects include a major European tour of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and *Magnificat* with Sir John Eliot Gardiner and The Monteverdi Choir; a performance of Bach's *Magnificat* with London Voices conducted by Francois Xavier Roth, and Amy's debut appearance with Solomon's Knot in *The Discovery of Bomarzo*, both at The Aldeburgh Festival 2016.

Upcoming engagements include singing in *L'Orfeo* performances throughout Europe and in the USA with The Monteverdi Choir, performing the role of Galatea in *Acis and Galatea* directed by Margaret Faultless, and singing *St John Passion* with Tilford Bach Society directed by Adrian Butterfield.

LOUISE INNES

Mezzo soprano

Louise Innes studied at City University, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and at the National Opera Studio.

Recent and future engagements include the title role *Carmen* and Sesto *La Clemenza di Tito* for Opera North, Javotte *Manon* (Teatro alla Scala, Milan, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and on tour in Japan), Mrs



Andersson *A Little Night Music* (West Green House, Opera Project), Miss Baggott *The Little Sweep* (Blackheath Halls Opera), King Galafrò in Steffani's *Orlando generoso* (Birmingham), Bach's *Magnificat* at Sage Gateshead with the Royal Northern Sinfonia.

Further operatic roles include Sesto at English National Opera, *Carmen* (Castleward Opera and Opera Holland Park), Cherubino *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Garsington), Second Lady *Die Zauberflöte* (Aix-en-Provence), and Mezzo 1 in John Casken's *God's Liar* at the Almeida Theatre and at La Monnaie. Other roles include Dido *Dido and Aeneas* in Bordeaux, Dorabella *Così fan tutte* for British Youth Opera, Siebel *Faust* with Opera de Massy, Rosette *Manon* for Opera North, The Oracle *Minotaur* for Scottish Opera, Hamor *Jephtha* with Opera Fuoco and Laura *Iolanta* with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra under Alexander Lazarev. Frequent engagements with Les Solistes de Lyon include a

recital of French salon music at the Musée d'Orsay with pianist Cedric Thiberghien, Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle* in Quebec and Vancouver, and Sorceress *Dido and Aeneas* at the Théâtre des Célestins, Lyon, Angelica in Vaughan Williams' *The Poisoned Kiss*, Hamor *Jephtha* in Lucerne and at the The Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and Mercedes *Carmen* at ROH and with Sir John Eliot Gardiner at the Opera Comique, Paris and the Festival de Granada.

On the concert platform Louise has performed Handel's *Messiah* in Barcelona with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and with the National Orchestra of Seville, Duruflé *Requiem* and Beethoven *Mass in C* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, *Beethoven 9* at Aldeburgh, and a selection of Sibelius songs with the Basel Chamber Orchestra at the Folle Journée Festival in Nantes. Recordings include Ino *Semele* with Opera Fuoco and Second Cretan Woman *Idomeneo* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Sir Charles Mackerras.

PAUL PHOENIX

Tenor

Paul's long career in music began when he became a Chorister at St. Paul's Cathedral, London. He sang in the Queen's Silver Jubilee service in 1977 and as the best-known boy soloist of his generation he recorded the Ivor Novello award-winning theme *Nunc Dimittis* by Geoffrey Burgon in the BBC adaptation of John Le Carré's *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* in 1979, for which he was later awarded a gold disc.

Paul's musical education continued at the Royal Northern College of Music, in Manchester between 1986 and 1991 where he



studied voice and academic studies, spending his spare time singing in various styles and guises – as a member of Manchester Cathedral Choir, fronting a Big Band as well as recording with a Dutch group called 'Janus'. There followed a six-year period during which he continued to diversify, singing as a soloist in oratorio, taking part in pop and classical sessions, coaching the choristers of Westminster Under School and performing with the Monteverdi Choir.

In 1997, Paul successfully auditioned for The King's Singers. Averaging more than 120 concerts annually, he sang in many of the world's greatest concert halls, from Sydney Opera House to New York's Carnegie Hall, and travelled as far as Chile and New Zealand, Russia, China and South Africa. As well as a packed concert schedule, King's Singers recordings were released to critical acclaim. Paul was co-producer on the 2009 Grammy-winning album, *Simple Gifts*, and performed on the 2011 Grammy-winning recording, *Light and Gold*, featuring works by the Amer-

ican composer Eric Whitacre. In 2013, The King's Singers were voted into the Gramophone Magazine Hall of Fame.

2014 marked Paul's last concert with The King's Singers and the launch of PurpleVocals: Perform and Engage, his coaching and engagement consultancy. Paul's PurpleVocals work takes him around the world, with recent visits to Colombia playing Aristeo in a new production of *Orfeo* with the renowned ensemble L'Arpeggiata, to China coaching and speaking in Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing and Shenyang, the USA coaching and performing the role of Evangelist in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* under the direction of Craig Jessop, with the American Festival Chorus, and as guest coach with the Philadelphia Boys Choir, as well as across the UK and Europe.

This season Paul's varied work sees him coaching and performing in Germany as guest soloist with the WDR Orchestra in the Köln Philharmonie, and working in Finland, Italy, Iceland, Switzerland, Hong Kong, China and the USA.

Paul lives in Cambridge, England with his wife, Helena and two sons, William and Edward. When not singing he cycles in aid of a friend's charity.

CRAIG BISSEX

Bass

Craig was a chorister at Manchester Cathedral and studied piano and percussion at Chetham's School of Music. He went on to study piano at Trinity College of Music, percussion at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and singing at Bath Spa University.

Craig is now a successful oratorio and recital soloist, and performs regularly around the UK and often abroad.



He has sung with numerous choirs in London and throughout the South West. He is a member of the Choir of the English Concert, and guests regularly as soloist with the Sherborne Chamber Choir. He has sung as a lay-clerk of Bath Abbey since 2001 and continues to deputise there, and he is also a deputy of Westminster Abbey.

Having been a regular deputy with the choir of Wells Cathedral for many years, Craig was appointed Vicar Choral in the summer of 2016 and commenced his permanent duties in September of that year.

Craig teaches vocal studies both privately and at Monkton Combe School, Bath. He is also a skilled accompanist, working regularly with singers and instrumentalists.

He continues his professional vocal training under the guidance of his teacher, Rosa Mannion.

MATTHEW OWENS

Conductor

Matthew Owens is Organist and Master of the Choristers of Wells Cathedral. In addition to being responsible for the 1100 year old tradition of daily sung worship at Wells Cathedral, Owens 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. In 2014 he prepared the choristers for Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, with the Berlin Radio Choir, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, and Sir Simon Rattle, for the BBC Proms. Owens 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*.

He was educated at Chetham's School of Music; The Queen's College, Oxford; the Royal Northern College of Music; and the Amsterdam Conservatorium. Studying with Gordon Stewart, Margaret Phillips, and Jacques van Oortmerssen, he won all the major prizes in the diplomas of the Royal College of Organists. His career appointments include Tutor in Organ Studies at the RNCM and Chetham's, and working for BBC Religious Broadcasting (1994-99); Sub Organist of Manchester Cathedral (1996-99), Conductor of The Exon Singers (1997-2011), and Organist and Master of the Music at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh (1999-2004); he also served as President of the Cathedral Organists' Association (2010-13).

Owens is Musical Director of the Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society, a chorus of over 150 singers with which he has performed major works of Bach (*St John Passion*, *B mi-*



nor Mass, *Lutheran Mass in F*, *Christmas Oratorio*); Bernstein (*Chichester Psalms*); Brahms (*Ein Deutsches Requiem*, *Alto Rhapsody*); Britten (*War Requiem*, *Saint Nicholas*); Elgar (*The Dream of Gerontius*, *The Kingdom*); Fauré (*Requiem*); Handel (*Messiah*, *Four Coronation Anthems*); Holst (*The Planets*); Mendelssohn (*Elijah*); Mozart (*Requiem*, *C Minor Mass*); Orff (*Camina Burana*); Verdi (*Requiem*); Walton (*Belshazzar's Feast*); and major works by Finzi, Purcell, Rutter, Vaughan Williams, and Vivaldi. He has guest conducted, among others, the Southern Sinfonia, the Scottish Ensemble, the Nash Ensemble, and the Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra, and has directed choral workshops and summer schools throughout the UK and abroad – including Australia, China, Germany, Hong Kong, Luxembourg, New Zealand, and the USA. As a conductor he has made over 30 CDs with major labels including Hyperion, Signum, Regent, and Resonus Classics.

As an organist, Owens has given recitals in Australia, France, Ireland, Spain, Switzerland, New Zealand, the USA, and throughout the UK, and he is currently performing the complete works of Bach at Wells Cathedral over a series of 36 recitals.

Owens has championed new music, particularly of British composers, conducting over 200 world premieres, including works by leading composers ranging from Jools Holland to Sir James MacMillan, and John Rutter to Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. He is Director of

the *Cranmer Anthem Book* (launched in October 2017), a project which will set all 92 Collects from the Book of Common Prayer to music, by some of the world's finest composers. As a composer himself, Owens is published by Oxford University Press, Novello, and the Royal School of Church Music. He was made an Honorary Fellow of the Guild of Church Musicians in November 2012, and a Prebendary (Canon) of Wells Cathedral – “for outstanding service” to the Diocese and Cathedral – in October 2017.

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, Rachel Stroud,
Henry Tong, Anna Curzon, Flora Curzon

Violin 2

Dan Edgar, Nia Lewis, Claudia Norz,
Stephen Pedder, Alice Earll

Viola

Nick Logie, Roc Fargas, Jordan Bowron,
James Orrell

Cellos

Lucy Scotchmer, Bianca Riesner,
Tabea Debus

Bass

Bill Hunt, Zaynab Martin

Oboe

Leo Duarte, Bethan White

Bassoon

Zoe Shevlin

Trumpet

Paul Bosworth, Darren Moore

Timpani

Feargus Brennan

Harpichord

Sean Heath

Organ

Jeremy Cole

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

Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society Corporate Patrons

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Companies willing to join this scheme will be assured of a warm welcome.

For further information, please contact Robin Duys at 01749 871105.

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Juliet Bench
Pam Booth
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Janet Saxon
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Mary Sage
Celia Smith
Sue Stoughton-
Harris
Celia Townend
Emma Trantham
Sue Wells
Olivia Wilkinson
Fenella Williams
Kate Wilson
Jo Wright

Tenor

Neill Bonham ¶
Alan Brown
Ian Bynoe
Oliver Chubb †
Ben Clay ¶
Andrew
Cruikshank
Alexandra de
Glanville
Martin Godfrey
Peter Harle
Martin Lovell

Nigel Lloyd
John Morton
Bernard North
Andrew Phillips
Sarah Villiers
Robin Walker ¶
John Williams X

Bass

David Abels
Christopher Boddie
Michael Calverley
John Castree
Geoffrey Clarke
Peter Farrell
Colin Ferguson
David Flinders ¶
Niall Garden
Walford Gillison
Adrian Grey
Harry Guthrie †
Wesley Hallam
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Trevor Hazelgrove
Richard Henderson
Derek Hiller
Chris Jenkins ¶
Dennis Johnson
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Michael Leach
Brian Marshall
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X Guest Singer

-

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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 in September of up to four prime Nave tickets for each concert of the season
- Names of Friends acknowledged in concert programmes
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Contact our Friends Secretary, Frances Rowe: friends@wcos.org.uk



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