

HANDEL MESSIAH



Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society ♦ Music for Awhile
Jeremy Cole conductor Maggie Faultless leader

Saturday 3 December at 7.00pm

Mhairi Lawson soprano Tim Morgan alto James Oxley tenor Stephan Loges bass

CONCERT PROGRAMME

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

MESSIAH

A Sacred Oratio

Words by Charles Jennens

Mhairi Lawson *soprano*

Tim Morgan *countertenor*

James Oxley *tenor*

Stephan Loges *bass*

Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society

Music for Awhile Orchestra (*on period instruments*)

Maggie Faultless *leader*

Jeremy Cole *conductor*

This concert takes place in the Cathedral by kind permission of the Chapter of Wells Cathedral. The use of mobile telephones, photography, or recording of any kind is forbidden except by express permission of the Chapter.

The New Novello Choral Edition (Shaw) is used in this performance

Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society is affiliated to Making Music.





'Handel famously composed Messiah in only a few hectic days, creating a work which has been performed every year since its first performance, a unique achievement. It is no surprise the work has found such fame, containing as it does so many memorable pieces, including possibly the most famous and recognisable of any, the Hallelujah chorus. Messiah is really Opera for the church, and the drama of the narrative carries us through chorus, aria and recitative for a thoroughly engaging and entertaining evening.

'In a small London house on Brook Street, a servant sighs with resignation as he arranges a tray full of food he assumes will not be eaten. For more than a week, he has faithfully continued to wait on his employer, an eccentric composer, who spends hour after hour isolated in his room.

'Morning, noon, and evening the servant delivers appealing meals to the composer and returns later to find the bowls and platters largely untouched.

'Once again, he steels himself to go through the same routine, muttering under his breath about how oddly temperamental musicians can be. As he swings open the door to the composer's room, the servant stops in his tracks.

The startled composer, tears streaming down his face, turns to his servant and cries out, "I did think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God Himself." George Frederic Handel had just finished writing a movement that would take its place in history as the Hallelujah Chorus.'

(from Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers by Patrick Kavanaugh)

George Frederic Handel was born in Saxony in Germany in 1685 but from 1712 he resided almost solely in England, patronised by Kings George I and II so that he has rather been adopted as an English composer (and, heaven knows, we have few enough great composers as of right!) He had enjoyed enormous critical and financial success as a composer of operas but by 1741 his fortunes had fallen mightily. His operas were regarded by many as scurrilous and the Covent Garden Theatre, which he ran, a 'den of rascals'. He was close to ruin and the debtors' prison.

Out of the blue, two letters arrived, which changed Handel's position and musical history forever. First came an invitation from the Duke of Devonshire to come to Dublin and provide a series of benefit concerts 'For the relief of the prisoners in the several gaols, and for the support of Mercer's Hospital in Stephen Street, and of the Charitable Infirmary on the Inn's Quay'. Then, a letter arrived from Charles Jennens, a literary scholar and editor of Shakespeare's plays, who had previously written libretti for Handel. The letter contained Old and New Testament texts, which Handel read and re-read and was so moved that he immediately embarked on writing a sacred opera using them. Messiah premiered on April 13, 1742 in Dublin as a charitable benefit, raising £400 and freeing 142 men from debtor's prison. It has not been out of performance for a single year since, a record unsurpassed by any other classical work.

Handel believed that God spoke to him and required him to write the piece down. It was performed again and again for charitable concerts and Handel would not take a penny from the ticket sales, believing that God, not he, had written the piece. At his death, he bequeathed the manuscript and parts to the Foundling Hospital, founded by Thomas Coram in 1739, which continues to benefit to this day from performances of the Messiah. Charles Burney, 18th century music historian, remarked that Handel's Messiah "fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and fostered the orphan."

Why then, is Messiah such an enduring and monumental piece? Why is it performed every year all over the world? Why are there choral

societies committed to performing nothing else?

For one thing, it is a work whose three parts take in the entire sweep of the traditions and beliefs of the Christian faith:

Part One - Prophecy of Salvation, the birth of Christ Jesus

Part Two - Crucifixion and Death

Part Three - Resurrection and the promise of eternal life for believers

A complete performance requires nearly three hours and therefore it is common to hear cut versions, particularly those around Christmas time, which focus on Part I with other good bits thrown in.

The second reason for its recurrent popularity is that it is simply full of good tunes and rousing choruses, which enable us as Everyman to grasp something of the ineffable mysteries of these sacred texts and to go away feeling spiritually uplifted regardless of our beliefs and understandings.

The main reason, however, has to be the sheer genius of the man (or perhaps it really was his divine inspiration). Handel paints the texts so vividly and gloriously that it seems impossible not to be profoundly moved by each and every aria, chorus and instrumental interlude. The contents page reads like a Classic FM 50 greatest hits countdown and this is no accident. Each and every piece is immaculately conceived in melodic, harmonic and textural terms and thus is as unforgettable as Michaelangelo's David or Da Vinci's Last Supper. But theirs were single pieces and this is a mighty collection of such works.

To begin the countdown, who can forget the affirmative 'And the Glory, the Glory of the Lord' as it strides upwards in A major to its home note? Or, after the ferocious portent of his coming 'as a refiner's fire', the chorus delicately sprinkling water upon us in 'And he shall purify'? Next, 'For unto us a child is born' uses the melody of a love song previously used in one of Handel's operas and is simply the joyous babble of the christening party. In Part II, can there be a more gut-wrenching portrayal of misery and betrayal than the aria

'He was despised and rejected of men'? It relentlessly pursues the falling semitone, long acknowledged to be as close to a human sigh as mere notes can be.

We all know the Hallelujah Chorus and it is traditional to stand for it as King George II spontaneously did when he first heard it. But it is the words which begin Part III, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth', which were inscribed on Handel's tomb in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey when he died in 1759. Written in the optimistic, bright and certain key of E major, the opening two notes (dominant rising to tonic) sum up for me the entire piece; without any shadow of a doubt, with no possibility for confusion, Handel says, 'I believe'.

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 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** *Countertenor*

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** *Countertenor*

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** *Countertenor*

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 Countertenor

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 Countertenor 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 Countertenor

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: *(Psalm 22: 7)*

28. Chorus

"He trusted in God that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him." *(Psalm 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. *(Psalm 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. *(Psalm 16: 10)*

36. Air Countertenor

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)

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. *(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)*



Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society

Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society (WCOS) was founded in 1896 and is one of the South West'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 150 voices, WCOS gives three concerts a year.

In past years, the society has performed many of the major oratorios and choral concert works. 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. New singers are always welcome to apply to join the choir. Why not join us? Please see our website (www.wcos.org.uk) for more details.

The Friends of Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society

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Sopranos

Alison Ballamy
Anna Bernard
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Maureen Boylan
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Kate brown
Denise Bush
Ruth Bush
Barbara Calverly
Felicity Chapman
Katherine Constable

Rosemary Cooke
Susannah Essex
Sue Gould
Sue Hanson
Dorothy Hunter
Caroline Legg
Ruth Lickfold
Della Luetchford
Rosemary Mann
Sarah May
Janice Merritt
Ann Parsons

Maureen Pickford
Pamela Pye
Marion Robinson
Gill Round
Frances Rowe
Maggie St Quintin
Christine Tudor
Lynn Waldron
Jan Weaver
Claire Webster
Lucie Williams

Altos

Jenny Abraham
Christine Barker
Louise Burton
Liz Carey
Polly Corbishley
Penelope Cowman
Olga Crist
Gill Cumming
Gill Deamer
Joan Dovey
Kate Fielder
Wendy gregory
Faith Guest

Elizabeth Hand
Jenny Harrow
Catherine Hay
Jenny Henderson
Lynn Jarman
Janet Johnson
Deborah Jonas
Lynn Jordan
Elaine Kinsella
Sophie Laurie
Jessica Leach
Alex Lemanski
Barbara Riches-Lewer
Jennifer MacKenzie

Phillipa Mains
Della Menday
Liz Metcalf
Muriel Mitcheson
Mary Newman
Margaret Mayfield
Janet Rundle
Celia Smith
Sue Stoughton-Harris
Celia Townend
Sue Wells
Olivia Wilkinson

Tenors

Ian Bynoe
Martin Godfrey
Cris Lambert-Sheila
Peter Lawrence
Nigel Lloyd
John Morton
Bernard North
Chris Ray
Julian Thompson
Robin Walker
Stacey Williams

Basses

Michael Calverley
John Castree
Peter Farrell
Adrian Grey
Michael Harris
Richard Henderson
Andrew Hunt
Tony Iveson
Chris Jenkins
Dennis Johnson
John King

Richard Lander
Michael Leach
Brian Marshall
Roger Parsons
Alan Rayfield
David Rosser
David Salmon

Music for Awhile

Leader: Margaret Faultless

In 1996, Simon Whistler and Margaret Faultless decided to celebrate their love of a tiny church in its magical setting with a concert, inviting musician friends of international standing to perform. The church was All Saints', Alton Priors, and *Music for Awhile* was born. Its annual focus remains the summer festival in the Vale of Pewsey but there are many other performances throughout the year, including a chamber series, which for many years was held at Conock Manor. Festival programmes have included performances of early English opera, masques and theatre music. *Music for Awhile* has premiered new editions of manuscript material from the British Library and has created new works combining music and poetry.

The Cecil King Memorial Foundation and other sponsors, support our series of concerts in churches, fundraising for these historic buildings, as well as bringing professional music-making of the highest calibre to local communities. These chamber recitals give rise to adventurous programming, notably in creating arrangements of large-scale works for more intimate venues.

As well as performing chamber recitals in churches, the larger MFA ensemble collaborates with choirs performing major choral works in venues such as Westminster Abbey, Bath Abbey, and the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford. Tonight we are thrilled to be back in Wells to perform the Messiah with a choir with whom we've performed for over a decade, with another collaboration in the inspirational surroundings of Wells Cathedral.



Founder and Artistic Manager of *Music for Awhile*, **Margaret Faultless** has had a varied musical career, as leader of a West End Musical and the violinist in contemporary music ensembles, but is best known as a specialist in historical performance practice. She is a leader of The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, with whom she has performed all over the world: at Glyndebourne, the Lincoln Centre New York, Tokyo, Vienna, Paris, the Salzburg Festival and frequently at the South Bank in London. She was on the Board of Directors for many years and currently directs the OAE Experience scheme for young professionals.

As a specialist, she has guest-led the LPO (London), the Handel and Haydn Society (Boston) and the Russian National Orchestra and has performed with, led and guest directing many of the best-known period instrument groups in Europe. Margaret was leader of the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra in their ten-year Bach cantata project, performing and recording every cantata. She was also a member of The London Haydn Quartet, whose CD of the Opus 9 quartets was hailed as "one of the great Haydn quartet recordings." A graduate of Clare College, Cambridge, she is Director of Performance at the Faculty of Music, and lectures and broadcasts on performance; her research interests include leadership and social interactions in Haydn, and Bach's notation for performers. An Honorary Fellow of Birmingham Conservatoire, Margaret is Head of Historical Performance at The Royal Academy of Music (and is currently a member of their Governing Body), is the recipient of the prestigious Honorary Membership of The Royal Academy of Music and has been made a Professor of the University of London.

First Violin	Second Violin	Viola	Cello
Maggie Faultless	Anna Curzon	Francesca Gilbert	Jon Rees
Rachel Stroud	Rebecca Bell	Alice Poppleton	Carina Drury
Nia Lewis	Simon Kuderand		Double Bass
Dan Edgar	Sharon Lindo		Zaynab Martin
Oboe	Bassoon	Trumpet	Timpani
Bethan White	Zoe Shevlin	Paul Sharp	Jude Carlton
Nicola Barbagli		Ross Brown	
Harsichord	Organ		
Benedict Williams	Adam Wilson		



Jeremy Cole is Director of Music at Wells Cathedral, a position he took up in January 2020, having previously been Acting Organist and Master of the Choristers, and Assistant Organist since 2017. He was organ scholar at Trinity College from 2010-2013, where he studied the organ with Colin Walsh, Stephen Farr, and David Briggs, and conducting with Stephen Layton. He was closely involved in the world-famous choir's routine of services and concerts, and features on several of their recordings on the Hyperion label. Jeremy has held positions at St Paul's Knightsbridge and St Martin-in-the-

Fields in Trafalgar Square, where he was the principal organist, playing for all regular and special services, as well as concerts and special events, in one of London's busiest churches and concert venues. He combined this role with a busy freelance career as an organist, conductor and piano accompanist. While in London he was assistant conductor and accompanist of the Holst Singers, and worked regularly with leading choirs such as Polyphony and the City of London Choir. He is in demand and as a repetiteur for solo singers and instrumentalists and as a continuo player.

In his role at Wells Cathedral, Jeremy is responsible for the Cathedral Choir's busy schedule of nine sung services each week, as well as its broadcasts, concerts and tours. He is also a visiting organ teacher at Wells Cathedral School, and Musical Director of the Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society, through which he works with many of the country's finest orchestras and soloists.



Mhairi Lawson has performed in opera houses and concert halls worldwide with such companies as English National Opera, The Academy of Ancient Music, Philharmonia Baroque and The Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Whilst still a student at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, she won the International Early Music Network Young Artists Prize with the fortepianist Olga Tverskaya, which led to her first CD

recording of Haydn's English and Scottish Songs.

Mhairi has enjoyed working with the Gabrieli Consort and Players for many years and projects with them include Bach's *St John Passion* and *St Matthew Passion*, the *Mass in B minor* and the *Wedding Cantata*, Handel's *La resurrezione*, and *Acis and Galatea* (title), and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen*.

This season, Mhairi sings Handel's *Messiah* with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Bach's *B minor Mass* with the Bath Bach Choir, Haydn's *Creation* with the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra, and performances of Purcell's *King Arthur* on tour with the Gabrieli Consort.

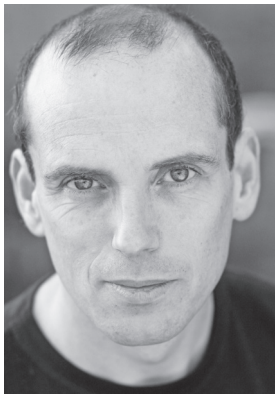
Recent highlights include performances of Purcell *Songes & Ayres* and Handel's *Messiah* with the Dunedin Consort, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with BBC NOW, Haydn's *Creation* with the Arctic Philharmonic, regular residencies at the Carmel Bach Festival in the USA, and Mhairi continues her recital collaboration with Eugene Asti. Recital engagements include songs from the British folksong tradition and Lieder by Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, Strauss and Wolf with appearances in the Edinburgh Festival, Newcastle and York Universities, and recordings for BBC Radio 3.



A member of the tenth edition of Les Arts Florissants' Jardin des Voix, **Tim Morgan** is a Samling artist and was a finalist in the 2019 Kathleen Ferrier Awards. His current and future engagements include; Handel's *Partenope* (Armino) with Les Arts Florissants, tours, as a soloist, of motets by Bach and Schütz, and of Carissimi and Scarlatti with Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Handel's *Agrippina* (Ottone) with English Touring Opera, and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with Polyphony and Stephen Layton.

Recent opera and stage highlights include; the title roles in Handel's *Amadigi di Gaula* and *Giulio Cesare* with English

Touring Opera, Samuel Adams's play 'Gabriel' with Alison Balsom and the English Concert, Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Oberon) Nevill Holt Opera, Blow's *Venus and Adonis* (Cupid) The Dunedin Consort, Purcell's *Indian Queen* with Emanuelle Haim and Le Concert D'Astrée, *Faramondo* (Gernando) RCMIOS/London Handel Festival. On the concert stage; Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* with the Orchestra of the age of Enlightenment, duet recitals with Michael Chance MBE, Bach's *St John Passion* with the OAE, Sir Simon Rattle and directed by Peter Sellars, Handel's *Berenice* (Arsace) with La Nuova Musica, *Esther* (High Priest) both at the London Handel Festival, and Purcell's *King Arthur* with Vox Luminis.



James Oxley's recent highlights include the title role in Handel's *Jephtha* at Teatr Wielki in Poznan, Handel's *Messiah* with the National Symphony Orchestra in Ireland, De Nieuwe Philharmonie Utrecht and also the Krakow Philharmonic, Bach Cantatas with the Oxford Bach Soloists, Dyson's *Quo Vadis* at the Three Choirs Festival, Bach's *B Minor Mass* with The Bach Choir, Trond Kverno's *St Matthew Passion* with the Oslo Cathedral Choir, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, Bach's *St John Passion* with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the Norwegian Wind Ensemble and also with the

Stavanger Symphony Orchestra.

He has appeared at the vast majority of major concert halls in the UK, and his engagements have taken him throughout Europe, the USA, New Zealand, Australia and Asia, and especially to France where he has worked with Philippe Herreweghe, Hervé Niquet and Christophe Rousset. He has given performances of *Israel in Egypt* with Il Fondamento in France and Belgium, Lully *Alceste* and Rameau *Les Indes Galantes* with L'Atelier Lyrique de Tourcoing and Jean-Claude Malgoire and has performed at the Göttingen Handel Festival in Germany.

He has also sung Purcell's *Fairy Queen* and the title role in Charpentier's *Actéon* for Christian Curnyn and the Early Opera Company, and as part of John Eliot Gardiner's landmark Bach Cantata Pilgrimage with the Monteverdi Choir in the UK and Europe, also recorded for the Soli Deo Gloria label.

James studied as a cellist at the Royal College of Music and later gained a scholarship to Oxford where he read music. He subsequently developed his singing, studying privately with Rudolf Piernay. In 1992 he won first prize at both the Mary Garden and the Great Grimsby International competitions and, in 1994, was awarded first prize at the renowned International Vocalisten Concours at 's-Hertogenbosch



Born in Dresden, **Stephan Loges** was an early winner of the Wigmore Hall International Song Competition. He has given recitals throughout the world, including regular appearances at Wigmore Hall London as well as Carnegie Hall New York, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Vienna Konzerthaus, Klavierfestival Ruhr, La Monnaie Brussels, Schleswig-Holstein Festival, Santiago de Compostela, BBC Radio 3, Musée d'Orsay Paris and the Vocal Arts Series in Washington with pianists Graham Johnson, Eugene Asti, Roger Vignoles, Iain Burnside, Simon Lepper, Joseph Middleton, and Sholto Kynoch.

Since his BBC Proms debut singing Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with Trevor Pinnock in 2002, Stephan has performed the work with many period and modern orchestras, including the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment directed by Mark Padmore, and recorded it with both the Gabrieli Consort under Paul McCreesh and the Monteverdi Choir under Sir John Eliot Gardiner (Deutsche Grammophon).

Other concert highlights include Bernstein *Songfest* with MDR Sinfonieorchester Leipzig; Britten *War Requiem* with Melbourne and Sapporo Symphony Orchestras; Bach *Christmas Oratorio* with London Philharmonic Orchestra and Vladimir Jurowski; Berlioz *L'Enfance du Christ* with Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Robin Ticciati; Haydn *Creation* with the Iceland Symphony and Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestras; Haydn *Die Jahreszeiten* with Staatskapelle Dresden; a tour of Telemann *Brockes Passion* with Raphaël Pichon and Ensemble Pygmalion; Bach Cantatas with Eliot Gardiner; *St John Passion* with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra; and *Easter Oratorio* with the Gabrieli Consort and McCreesh.

Opera roles include Wolfram *Tannhäuser* and Papageno *Die Zauberflöte* at La Monnaie Brussels, Begearss in Milhaud's *La mère coupable* and Sprecher *Die Zauberflöte* at Theater an der Wien; Golaud *Pélleas et Mélisande* with English Touring Opera; Bruno in Macmillan's *Parthenogenesis* for ROH Covent Garden;

Moritz in Mernier's *Frühlings Erwachen* at Opéra National du Rhin; Astrologer in Britten's *The Burning Fiery Furnace* at the Diabelli Sommer festival, The Blind Man and Father in the world première of Mark Grey's *Frankenstein* at La Monnaie, and *The Rake's Progress* in a coproduction between the opera houses of Caen, Limoges, Reims and Luxembourg.

Recent and future highlights include Boris Berezovsky in the world premiere of *The Life & Death of Alexander Litvinenko* for Grange Park Opera, a return to English Touring Opera for his role debut as Don Alfonso *Così fan tutte* and a staged production of Bach's *St John Passion*, his role debut as Falke *Die Fledermaus* with Northern Ireland Opera, *Sweeney Todd* in the title role with the Hannover Staatstheater, *Oberto* in the title role with the Chelsea Opera Group, *Messiah* with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, and Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with the Dunedin Consort.

Current recital appearances include the Wigmore Hall, Oxford Lieder Festival, and Lied Festival Victoria De Los Angeles, Barcelona.

Stephan's most recent CD, *Nature's Solace* with Iain Burnside, featuring Lieder by Schumann, Kilpinen and Brahms, was released by Signum in November 2018.

