

St Matthew Passion



Spring Concert
Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society
Holmewood House School Choir

Spring Concert

St Matthew Passion

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Richard Braebrook	Evangelist
John Cunningham	Christus
Jeffrey Carl	Baritone
Lynn Cook	Soprano
Antony Rich	Tenor
Shelagh Squires	Mezzo-Soprano

Rita French	Leader of the first orchestra
Harry Saunders	Leader of the second orchestra
David Maw	Organ
Wilmarc Ellman	Harpsichord
Sarah Stuart-Pennink	Cello

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY

Musical Director and Conductor: Derek Watmough

HOLMEWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL CHOIR

Musical Director: Christopher Bass

Musical Notes

The St. Matthew Passion was written for St. Thomas' Church, Leipzig, where Bach held the post of Kantor from 1723 until his death in 1750. Two years before Bach's arrival it became customary to incorporate Passion settings into the Vespers service on Good Friday. Recent evidence strongly suggests that the St. Matthew Passion was composed for Good Friday 1727, placing it between the St. John Passion (1724) and the St. Mark Passion (1731, for which only the libretto has survived). The St. Matthew Passion was conceived on an extraordinarily large scale, its use of double chorus and orchestra setting it apart from his other sacred music. Like the longer cantatas, however, it was written to be performed in two parts either side of the sermon (which probably lasted about an hour!).

The libretto for the St. Matthew Passion is by Christian Fredrich Henrici, known as Picander, with whom Bach had collaborated before. It is probable that Bach was involved in preparing the literary text, which like the music, reveals considerable concern with creating a unified work. Picander's text divides the action up in numerous sections, each of which ends with a passage of free poetry reflecting on the previous action. The chorales, whose texts and melodies would have been familiar to the Leipzig congregation, provide further points of articulation to the drama. Six of Picander's contemplative sections are conceived as dialogues between 'The Daughter of Zion' and 'The Believers' (nos. 1,25 & 26, 33,36,69 & 70, 77 & 78) - something which must have suggested to Bach the antiphonal use of two choirs or of a single soloist and chorus which is found in all six sections.

As well as providing reference points for the congregation and a commentary on the action of the Passion story, the chorales in the St. Matthew Passion serve a unifying function. Many of them share a common melody: the Passion chorale 'O Sacred Head' is used five times, while nos. 3,25 & 55 and nos. 16 & 44 also use the same tune. Bach, however, often varies the harmonizations; the most obvious example of this is the version of the Passion chorale directly following Christ's death (no. 72), where the extraordinary chromatic harmonies movingly reflect the dramatic situation.

NOTES

- 1 Part I of this work takes approximately 70 minutes and part II takes approximately 40 minutes. Patrons who have public transport to catch may wish, therefore, to leave in the interval. The performance is expected to finish at 5.10pm.
- 2 The Holmewood House Choir will leave at the end of Part I. Please show your appreciation of their, and their Musical Director's, part in this performance at the end of part I.

Musical Notes

Part 1

- 1 Chorus Come ye daughters share my mourning

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PASSION

- 2 Recitative When Jesus had finished all these sayings, He said unto his disciples
3 Chorale O Blessed Jesu, how has Thou offended...

THE RULERS CONSPIRE AGAINST CHRIST

- 4 Recitative Then assembled the chief priests and the scribes together...
5 Chorus Not upon the feast, lest haply there be an uproar...

THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY

- 6 Recitative Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper...
7 Chorus To what purpose is this waste?
8 Recitative When Jesus understood it, He said unto them...
9 Arioso My Master and my Lord...
10 Aria Grief for sin rends the guilty heart within...

THE TREASON OF JUDAS

- 11 Recitative Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot...

THE PREPARATION OF THE PASSOVER

- 13 Recitative Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread...
14 Chorus Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the Passover?
15 Recitative And He said, Go into the city to such a man...
16 Chorale 'Tis I, whose sin now binds Thee...

THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST

- 17 Recitative And He answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me...
18 Arioso Although our eyes with tears o'erflow...
19 Aria Jesus, Saviour, I am Thine...

AT THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

- 20 Recitative And when they had sung an hymn, they went out...
21 Chorale Receive me, my Redeemer....

Musical Notes

PETER'S DENIAL FORETOLD BY CHRIST

- 22 Recitative Peter answered, and said unto Him...
23 Chorale Here would I stand beside Thee...

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

- 24 Recitative Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane...
25 Solo/Chorus O grief! that bows the Saviour's troubled heart!
26 Solo/Chorus I would beside my Lord...

CHRIST'S PRAYER IN THE GARDEN

- 27 Recitative And He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed...
28 Arioso The Saviour, low before His Father bending...
29 Aria Gladly would I take upon me...
30 Recitative And He cometh to His disciples, and findeth them asleep...
31 Chorale O Father, let Thy will be done...

THE BETRAYAL AND ARREST

- 32 Recitative And He came and found them asleep again...

CHRIST IS BOUND AND LED INTO THE CITY

- 33 Duet/Chorus Behold, my Saviour is now taken...

THE DISCIPLES FORSAKE CHRIST

- 34 Recitative And behold, one of them which were with Jesus...

THE CHRISTIAN SOUL BEWAILS THE FRAILITY OF MANKIND

- 35 Chorale O man, thy grievous sin bemoan...

-o- INTERVAL 15 MINUTES -o-

Musical Notes

Part 2

THE DAUGHTER OF ZION SEEKS THE SAVIOUR

36 Aria Ah! Now is my Saviour gone!

IN THE COURT OF CAIAPHAS

37 Recitative And they that laid hold on Jesus, led Him away...

CHRIST'S SILENCE BEFORE CAIAPHAS

39 Recitative And the high priest arose...

40 Recitative He holds His peace...

41 Aria Endure, endure! Even lying tongues and taunting...

42 Recitative And the high priest answered...

Chorus He is worthy of death...

43 Recitative Then did they spit in His face...

Chorus Now tell us, thou Christ, who is he that smote Thee?

44 Chorale O Lord, who dares to smite Thee...

PETER'S DENIAL

45 Recitative Now Peter was sitting without in the court...

Chorus Surely thou also art one of them, for thy speech betrayeth thee...

46 Recitative Then began he to curse and swear...

47 Aria Have mercy, Lord on me...

48 Chorale Lamb of God, I fall before Thee...

THE END OF JUDAS

49 Recitative Now when the morning was come...

Chorus But what is that to us? See thou to that.

50 Recitative And he cast down the pieces of silver...

52 Recitative Jesus stood before the governor...

53 Chorale Commit they way to Jesus...

BARABBAS

54 Recitative Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people...

Chorus Let Him be crucified.

56 Recitative And the governor said, Why, what evil hath He done?

57 Arioso To all men Jesus good hath done:

58 Aria For love my Saviour now is dying...

Musical Notes

THE SCOURGING

- 59 Recitative But they cried out the more, and said...
Chorus Let Him be crucified.
Recitative When Pilate therefore saw that he prevailed nothing...
Chorus His blood be on us...
Recitative Then released he Barrabas unto them...
60 Arioso O gracious God..

THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

- 62 Recitative Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus...
Chorus Hail, King of the Jews.
Recitative And they spit upon Him...
63 Chorale O Sacred Head, surrounded by crown of piercing thorn!

THE CRUCIFIXION

- 67 Recitative And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha...
Chorus Thou that destroyest the temple of God...
68 Recitative The thieves also which were crucified with Him...
69 Arioso Ah, Golgotha! Unhappy Golgotha!

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

- 71 Recitative Now from the sixth hour there was darkness...
Chorus He calleth for Elias...
Recitative And straightway one of them ran...
Chorus Let be, let us see, whether Elias will come to save Him.
Recitative Jesus, when he had cried again...
72 Chorale Be near me, Lord, when dying...

AFTER THE CRUCIFIXION

- 73 Recitative And behold the veil of the temple...
Chorus Truly this was the Son of God.

AT THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS

- 74 Arioso At evening, hour of calm and peace...
75 Aria Make thee clean my heart from sin...

THE BURIAL

- 76 Recitative And Joseph took the body...
77 Recitative And now the Lord to rest is laid...
Chorus Lord Jesu, fare Thee well.
78 Chorus In tears of grief, dear Lord we leave Thee.

Our Soloists

Richard Braebrook : Evangelist

Richard Braebrook, tenor, was born in Huddersfield and now lives in Tunbridge Wells. He studied at the Royal College of Music, then with Gerald English and is currently studying with Keith Bonnington who is a member of the English National Opera, with whom Richard sang for many years. He has sung with the BBC Singers, the D'Oyley Carte Company and is a founder member, with Petronella Dittmer, of the Kensington Gore Singers. He was also Musical Director of the Feltham Choral Society. With Kent Opera he performed the principal role of Anfinomous in their production of Monteverdi's Return of Ulysses, also Rodolfo in La Boheme with the Singers Company, and Tamino in The Magic Flute with the Figaro Opera Company. In 1983 he was first prize winner in the World International Singing Festival, Rio de Janeiro. As well as his accomplishments as an operatic artist, Richard is just as much at home singing in cabaret and completed highly successful engagements at the Cafe Royale in London and on board the SS Canberra and Sea Princess for P & O.

Richard sings regularly with many of the leading choral societies in the UK in works ranging from oratorios of Handel and Bach Passions to the works of Elgar and Britten. Recent performances have included singing in Britten's Billy Budd with the Royal Opera, Verdi's Simon Boccanegra and Wagner's Gotterdammerung. This is his third engagement for the Choral Society.

John Cunningham : Christus

John Anthony Cunningham was born in Wigan. He studied at Manchester Polytechnic and for over ten years followed a career as a chartered librarian. He studied singing with John Cameron whilst following a free-lance career in fringe opera, oratorio and work in the light music field. On the operatic stage he has worked with English National Opera for several years singing and understudying many roles including Angelotti (Tosca), Krusina (Bartered Bride), Johann (Werther), Marullo (Rigoletto), Bonze (Madame Butterfly), and Donald (Billy Budd). He has performed the roles of Germont (La Traviata), Escamillo (Carmen), Tomsy (Queen of Spades) and Ankerstrom (Masked Ball) with Kentish Opera.

John also pursues a busy concert career having sung with many choral and music societies, including Mozart's Requiem under David Willcocks at the Royal Albert Hall, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at the Festival Hall, Boris Gudenov at the Barbican and Verdi's Requiem in Guildford Cathedral. He is particularly noted for his performance of Elijah, combining his considerable vocal and dramatic abilities. John is equally at home singing in the variety and light music world and took part in the Harry Enfield Guide to Opera and a two part programme entitled Love's Old Sweet Song for Radio Two. John's last performance with the choir was as the King in Verdi's Aida and he is pleased to return to Tunbridge Wells to sing the St. Matthew passion.

Our Solists

Jeffrey Carl : Baritone

Canadian born Jeffrey Carl received his BMusic in voice performance and modern languages from McGill University while studying with Louis Quilico. His studies subsequently took him to the Britten-Pears School in England where he concentrated on the Bel Canto with Ileana Cotrubas.

He has sung the role of Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress*, Ford in *Falstaff*, Escamillo in *Carmen* and Papageno in *The Magic Flute*. His repertoire also includes Sharpless in *Butterfly*, Germont in *La Traviata*, Alfio in *Cavalleria* and Guglielmo in *Così fan Tutte*.

His concert career began in Montreal singing Faure's *Requiem*, Bach's *Magnificat* and Mozart's *Requiem*. At the Royal Albert Hall he sang with Sir David Willcocks in the *Messiah*, and has also taken part in *Elijah*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and the *Verdi Requiem*. Future plans include *Butterfly*, *Macbeth*, *Tannhauser*, and a live recital on Classic FM radio with pianist Malcolm Martineau, as well as two *Lieder* recitals at St. Martin in the Fields.

Lynn Cook : Soprano

Lynn Cook was born at Stroud and was encouraged to pursue a singing career after winning the Gold Cup at the Cheltenham Festival of Music. While studying at the Royal Academy of Music with Marjorie Thomas she gained a notable reputation for her London performances with the student Baroque group under Michael Procter and for a series of recitals with the Norwegian pianist Bjorg Julsrud.

After successfully completing the Diploma course at the Royal Academy she was awarded a Vaughan Williams Trust Award to continue her studies. She gave many performances in Opera, Oratorio and Concert work and her portrayal of Micaela in *Carmen* received much critical acclaim. In 1987 she joined the English National Opera where she has been chosen to sing roles in *Madame Butterfly*, *Osud*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *The Force of Destiny*. In 1990 she toured the U.S.S.R. with the company, performing in Kiev, Moscow and Leningrad.

Amongst recent acclaimed concert performances have been Handel's *Messiah*, Verdi *Requiem*, Bliss *Pastoral* and Bach *B Minor Mass*. Lynn will be performing the role of Papagena at the English National Opera later this year.

Our Solists

Antony Rich : Tenor

Antony Rich was born in Devon and studied at the Royal Academy of Music where he appeared regularly on both the operatic stage and concert platform.

He was a member of the Glyndebourne Chorus before joining the English National Opera where he has sung roles in Salome, La Traviata, Der Rosenkavalier, Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk, the Cunning Little Vixen and Street Scene. Other operatic roles have included Don Jose, (Carmen), Nerone (L'Incoronazione di Poppea), Lensky (Eugene Onegin), Prunier (La Rondine) and Male Chorus (Rape of Lucretia). Last year he sang Hermann (Queen of Spades) and Gustavus (Masked Ball) for Kentish Opera.

Antony has an extensive concert repertoire and has appeared at all the major London venues. Recent engagements have included The Dream of Gerontius at St David's Hall in Cardiff under Vernon Hadley.

He is currently studying with Philip Thomas and the distinguished Welsh tenor Kenneth Bowen.

Shelagh Squires : Mezzo-Soprano

Shelagh Squires, mezzo-soprano, commenced her musical studies at the Guildhall School of Music, after winning a scholarship and county major grant. After graduation, she joined the Phoenix Opera Company under the direction of Joan Cross and Ann Wood, and subsequently the Glyndebourne Festival and Touring Operas.

She moved to Tunbridge Wells in 1970 and became a member of the English National Opera in 1972. She has remained there as a principal mezzo since that time and has sung a wide and varied repertory of roles including Anina in Der Rosenkavalier, Sorceress in Dido and Aeneas, Thisbe in La Cenerentola, Emilia in Otello, Herodias in Salome, Filippjevna in Eugene Onegin, Ottavia in Coronation of Poppea, Mrs. Sedley in Peter Grimes, Margret in Wozzek, Mercedes in Carmen and Jezibaba in Rusalka.

As well as her many performances in this country, her career has taken her overseas singing in Vienna, Japan, North America, including the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, and in Norway at the Bergen International Music Festival.

Future plans include the role of Ulrica in Verdi's Masked Ball.

Forthcoming Events

Sunday November 10th 1996.

Ein Deutesches Requiem	J Brahms
Academic Festival Overture	J Brahms

Assembly Hall - 3.00pm

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Saturday May 24th 1997 at 7pm.

A joint concert with the Wiesbaden Lutherkirk Choir:

Magnificat	Rutter
Rio Grande	Lambert
Chichester Psalms	Bernstein

Assembly Hall, Tunbridge Wells -7pm.

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Sunday 31st March 1996

Royal Tunbridge Wells Symphony Orchestra will give a performance of the Karelia Suite by Sibelius, Four Last Songs by Richard Strauss and Symphony no. 4 in G by Mahler.

Assembly Hall Tunbridge Wells - 3pm

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On 8th & 14th June 1996 the Royal Tunbridge Wells Sinfonietta will be playing pieces by Boyce, Roy Douglas, Glazunov, Schubert and Grieg in St. John's Church Tunbridge Wells and Goudhurst Church, respectively.

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Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society

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The choir also obtains financial support from

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Programme notes compiled from the NFMS programme note bank.