



*Sunday 26th April 2015 at 3pm
Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells*

J.S. Bach St. Matthew Passion

Conducted by Rebecca Miller

Royal Tunbridge Wells

CHORAL
SOCIETY
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Sunday 26th April 2015 at 3.00pm

Assembly Hall Theatre - Tunbridge Wells

The Passion of our Lord according to St. Matthew

A sacred oratorio set for soloists, double choir and double orchestra.

By Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

The Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society

The London Handel Orchestra - leader Adrian Butterfield

Gwilym Bowen (*tenor*) as the Evangelist

Robert Rice (*baritone*) as Jesus

Ruth Holton (*soprano*)

Clare McCaldin (*mezzo soprano*)

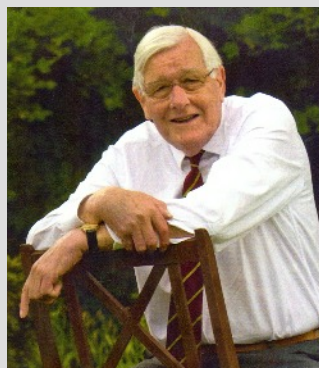
Greg Tassell (*tenor*)

James Birchall* (*bass-baritone*)

Conducted by Rebecca Miller

** James Birchall sings in place of Alex Ashworth who was the originally advertised bass*

This concert is dedicated to the memory of Sir Derek Day (1927-2015)



Derek had a highly distinguished career in the Diplomatic Service including service as Great Britain's High Commissioner in Canada. He was, along with his wife Sheila, for many years a singing member of the Society and a reliable and inspirational stalwart of the Tenor section.

After ceasing to sing a few years ago he and Sheila continued to support RTWCS in various ways including as Patrons of the Society, invariably attending our concerts and, when possible, social events right up to the time of his death on March 7th. Despite his severe and terminal illness many members had the pleasure of seeing him at the last Goudhurst Christmas concert - albeit in a wheelchair - but as cheerful and charming as ever.

Our deepest sympathy goes to Sheila and the family along with fond memories of this delightful man who epitomised all that is best about being a member of the Society. He will be very greatly missed.

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Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

St. Matthew Passion, BWV 244

The St. Matthew Passion was written for St Thomas's 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 at Leipzig 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!).



St. Thomas Church, Leipzig (Wikimedia Commons)



The work was repeated on Good Friday 1729, and again in 1736 and the late 1740s. Unlike the St. John Passion however, which underwent extensive revision for later performances, the St. Matthew appears to have been little altered. For the 1736 performance the original closing movement of Part 1, a simple four-part setting of the chorale "*Jesum lass ich nicht von mir*" was replaced by the elaborate chorale fantasia "*O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde gross*" (translated in the English edition as "*O man thy grievous sin bemoan*") taken from the second version of the St. John Passion. In addition, the continuo instruments were divided into two distinct groups and a third organ was added to the chorale line sung by the ripieno chorus in the opening and closing movements of Part 1. It is this 1736 version which has come down to us in Bach's autograph score, a fair copy in which the Gospel text is written in red ink.

The libretto for the St. Matthew Passion is by Christian Friedrich Henrici, better known as Picander, the local tax official and talented poet with whom Bach had collaborated before on other projects. 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, which was published in 1729, divides the action up into 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 and 26, 33, 36, 69 and 70, 77 and 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.

The biblical text from Chapters 26 and 27 of St. Matthew's Gospel is set in a variety of ways. The words of the Evangelist (the narrator) are assigned to a tenor and set as recitative accompanied by the continuo alone; the words of Peter, Pilate, Judas and other minor characters are similarly treated. The words of Christ, however, which are sung by a bass, follow the example of various earlier German Passion settings in using string accompaniment, the music at times breaking into a more melodic arioso style. The only point at which Christ's words lose this halo of strings is for his despairing cry on the cross "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*", something which underlines Christ's human aspect at this moment. The words of the crowd, and on occasion the disciples, are set for one or other (or both) of the two choruses. These are sometimes just short interjections, as in the single shout of "*Barrabbas*" to a dramatic diminished seventh chord in No. 54, and sometimes more substantial pieces in motet style. The two choruses "Let him be crucified" which frame the moving soprano aria with flute and oboes da caccia (No. 58) use the same music, but the transposition of the second chorus up a tone into B minor heightens the dramatic tension. For the line "*Truly, this was the Son of God*", spoken in the Gospel by the centurion and his companions, Bach uses both choruses in unison, suggesting that this is a comment on behalf of all humanity.

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 and 55 and Nos. 16 and 44 also use the same tune. Bach however often varies the harmonisations; 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.

Most of Picander's free texts are set for solo voices, generally a short arioso introducing a contemplative aria often in da capo form that was so popular in contemporary opera. Both ariosos and arias make use of a wide variety of scorings, often exploiting obbligato instruments such as the violin (Nos. 47 and 51) and viola da gamba (Nos. 41 and 66). The alto aria "*Ah, Golgotha!*" (No. 69) is particularly interesting from a harmonic point of view, as nearly every chord contains a dissonance. Some arias dispense with the introductory arioso; this is the case for the two arias using solo violin, which describe the despair and guilt felt by Peter and Judas.

The other free texts supplied by Picander are those of the opening and closing choruses. In the first case Picander's words are set as a dialogue between the two choirs in E minor, but this tonality contrasts with the more optimistic G major of the chorale "*O Lamb of God*" sung by the ripieno chorus. The final chorus, as in the St. John Passion is a gentle C minor sarabande, whose falling arpeggios in the orchestra and sighing vocal phrases create an appropriately solemn atmosphere for the work's close.

This programme note was supplied through Making Music's programme note service.

RTWCS is affiliated to Making Music, a charity which supports amateur music making.



The Libretto

Picander's words and the biblical text set by Bach were, of course, in German. The English version sung today and printed in this programme are those used in the Novello edition edited by Sir Edward Elgar and Ivor Atkins.

To keep the performance within reasonable time limits, regretfully the following numbers have had to be omitted: nos 2-9, 18-22, 25, 38-40, 61, 64-65, 70 & 76.

Part I

Prologue

I. Chorus

*Come ye daughters, share my mourning;
See Him! Whom? The Bridegroom Christ.
See Him! How? A spotless Lamb.
See it! What? His patient love
Look! Look where? On our offence.
Look on Him. For love of us
He Himself His Cross is bearing.*

Ripieno (soprano semi-chorus)

*O Lamb of God most holy,
Who on the Cross didst languish;
O Saviour, meek and lowly,
Who suffered bitter anguish
The sins of man Thou bearest.
Our ev'ry grief Thou sharest.
Have mercy on us, O Jesu!*

10. Aria (mezzo-soprano)

*Grief for sin
Rends the guilty heart within.
May my weeping and my mourning
Be a welcome sacrifice.
Loving Saviour, hear in mercy!*

The Treason of Judas

11. Recitative:

EVANGELIST: *Then went one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, to the chief priests and said*

JUDAS: *What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?*

EVANGELIST: *And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver, and from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.*

12. Aria (soprano)

*Break in grief, Thou loving heart;
For a son whom Thou hast nourished,
Yea, a friend whom Thou hast cherished,
Gathers cruel foes around Thee,
And will like a serpent wound Thee.*

The Preparation of the Passover

13. Recitative:

EVANGELIST: *Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him:*

14. Chorus:

Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the Passover?

15. Recitative and chorus:

EVANGELIST: *And He said, Go ye into the city to such a man and say unto him, The Master saith, JESUS: My time is at hand I will keep the Passover at my house with my disciples.*

EVANGELIST: *And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them and they made ready the Passover. Now when even was come he was sitting at meat with the twelve. As they did eat He said,*

JESUS: *Verily I say to you that one of you shall betray Me.*

EVANGELIST: *And they were exceeding sorrowful and began every one of them to say unto Him:*

CHORUS: *Lord, is it I?*

16. Chorale

*'Tis I, whose sin now binds thee,
With anguish deep surrounds Thee,
And nails Thee to the tree;
The torture Thou art feeling,
Thy patient love revealing,
'Tis I should bear it, I alone.*

The Institution of the Eucharist

17. Recitative:

EVANGELIST: *And he answered and said,*

JESUS: *He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of Man truly goeth as it is written of Him: but good for that man if he had never been born.*

Evangelist: *Then answered Judas, which did betray Him, and said*

JUDAS: *Master, is it I?*

EVANGELIST: *He said unto him,*

JESUS: *Thou hast said.*

EVANGELIST: *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, said,*

JESUS: *Take, eat, this is My Body.*

EVANGELIST: *And He took a cup, and gave thanks, gave it to them saying,*

JESUS: *Drink ye all of it. This is My Blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins. I say unto you I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*

Peter's Denial Foretold by Christ

23. Chorale

*Here would I stand beside Thee;
Lord, bid me not depart!
From Thee I will not sever,
Though breaks Thy loving heart.
When bitter pain shall hold Thee
In agony opprest,
Then, then will I enfold Thee,
Within my loving breast.*

The Agony in the Garden

24. Recitative:

EVANGELIST: *Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto His disciples,*

JESUS: *Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray*

EVANGELIST: *And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith Jesus to them*

JESUS: *My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with Me*

26. Aria (tenor) and chorus:

*I would beside my Lord be watching
And so our sin will fall asleep.
By his cross I am saved from sin and loss
His sorrows win my soul its ransom
The griefs that He for us endureth,
How bitter, yet how sweet are they.*

Christ's Prayer in the Garden

27. Recitative:

EVANGELIST: *And He went a little further, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying,*

JESUS: *O My father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: yet not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

28. Recitative (bass)

*The Saviour, low before His Father bending,
To gain for man by His oblation a full
salvation,
The love of God toward man commendeth.
He now will drink the Cup unto its last and
bitterest dregs,
Which with the sin of men is filled and
overflows.
He will not shrink, but suffer all that God hath
willed.*

29. Aria (bass)

*Gladly would I take upon me
Cross and Cup, and all His burden,
Could I follow Christ my Lord.
Lo, our Lord, in love our burden sharing,
Bears for us, The Cross with all its shame,
He has lightened all our sorrow.*

30. Recitative:

EVANGELIST: *And He cometh to His disciples, and findeth them asleep, and said unto Peter,*

JESUS: *What would ye not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.*

EVANGELIST: *He went away again the second time and prayed and said.*

JESUS: *O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.*

31. Chorale

*O Father, let Thy will be done,
For all things well Thou doest,
In time of need refusest none,
But helpest e'en the lowest.
In deep distress Thou still dost bless,
In wrath rememberest mercy;
Who trusts in Thee shall ever be
In perfect peace and safety.*

The Betrayal and Arrest

32. Recitative:

EVANGELIST: *And He came and found them asleep again; for their eyes were very heavy.*

And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time saying again the same words. Then cometh He to His disciples, and saith unto them,

JESUS: Sleep on now, and take your rest, behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray Me.

EVANGELIST: And while he yet spake, lo, Judas one of the twelve came, and with him a great multitude with swords and with staves from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed Him had given unto them a sign, saying 'Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he; hold him fast'. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said,

JUDAS: Hail Master

EVANGELIST: And kissed him. Jesus said unto him,

JESUS: Friend, friend, wherefore art thou come?

EVANGELIST: Then drew they near, and laid hands on Jesus and took him.

Christ is Bound and Led into the City

33. Duet (soprano and mezzo) and chorus

*Behold, my Saviour now Is taken,
Moon and stars
Have for grief the night forsaken,
Since my Saviour now is taken.
They lead Him hence;
with cords they bind Him!*

*Loose him, leave him
Bind him not*

*Have lightning and thunder their fury forgotten?
Then open, O fathomless pit, all thy terrors!
Destroy them, o'erwhelm them, devour them,
consume them
With tumult of rage,
The treach'rous betrayer, the merciless throng.*

The Disciples Forsake Christ

34. Recitative:

EVANGELIST: And behold, one of them which were with Jesus, stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him,

JESUS: Put up again thy sword into its place: for all that take the sword, shall perish with sword. Or thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be.

EVANGELIST: In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes,

JESUS: Are ye come out against a thief with swords and with staves for to take Me? I sat among you, teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on Me. But all this was done, that the scriptures of the Prophets might be fulfilled.

EVANGELIST: Then all the disciples forsook him and fled:

The Christian Soul Bewails the Frailty of Mankind

35. Chorus

*O man thy grievous sin bemoan,
For which Christ left His Father's throne,
From highest heaven descending.
Of virgin pure and undefiled,
He here was born, our Saviour mild,
For sin to make atonement.
The dead He raised to life again,
The sick He freed from grief and pain,
Until the time appointed,
That He for us should give His blood,
Should bear our sins' o'erwhelming load,
The shameful cross enduring.*

— Interval —
(15 minutes)

Part II

The Daughter of Zion Seeks the Saviour

36. Aria (mezzo-soprano) & Chorus

*Ah! Now is my Saviour gone!
Whither went He? I would follow.
Ah! my Lamb, the slayers hold Thee.
Where now is my Saviour gone?
Ah! how shall I find an answer
To assure my anxious soul?
Ah, where is my Saviour gone?*

*Whither is thy beloved gone,
O thou fairest among women?
Whither is thy friend gone aside?
For we would go with thee to seek him.*

In the Court of Caiaphas

37. Recitative:

EVANGELIST: *And they that laid hold on Jesus, led Him away to the house of Caiaphas the high priest where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. But Peter followed Him afar off, unto the court of the high priest, and went in and sat with his servants to see the end. Now the chief priests and the elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death, but found none.*

41. Aria (tenor)

*Endure, when falsehood's tongues are stinging.
Suffering, sinless, that my foes sneer and scoff.
Ah! So may my dearest God for my heart so pure take vengeance.*

Christ's Silence before Caiaphas

42. Recitative and chorus:

EVANGELIST: *And the high priest answered, and said unto him*

HIGH PRIEST: *I adjure Thee by the name of the living God, thou Thou tell us, whether Thou be the Christ the Son of God.*

EVANGELIST: *Jesus saith unto him,*

JESUS: *Thou has said: Nevertheless I say unto*

you, hereafter shall ye see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven.

EVANGELIST: *Then the high priest rent his garments and said,*

HIGH PRIEST: *He hath spoken blasphemy: what further need we of witnesses? Behold. Now ye have heard His blasphemy yourselves, what think ye?*

EVANGELIST: *They answered and said*

CHORUS: *He is worthy of death.*

43. Recitative and chorus:

EVANGELIST: *Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him, and others smote Him with the palms of their hands, and said:*

CHORUS: *Now tell us, thou Christ, who is he that smote Thee?*

44. Chorale

*O Lord, who dares to smite Thee,
And falsely to indict Thee,
Deride and mock Thee so?
Thou dost not need confession,
Who knowest not transgression,
As we and all our children know.*

Peter's Denial

45. Recitative and chorus:

EVANGELIST: *Now Peter was sitting without in the court: and there came to him a damsel, and said*

1ST MAID: *Thou also was with Jesus of Galilee*

EVANGELIST: *But he denied before them all, and said,*

PETER: *I know not what thou sayest*

EVANGELIST: *And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there,*

2ND MAID: *This man also was Jesus of Nazareth,*

EVANGELIST: *And again he denied with an oath,*

PETER: *I do not know the man.*

EVANGELIST: *And after a little while came to him they that stood by, and said unto Peter,*

CHORUS: *Surely thou also art one of them, for thy speech betrayeth thee.*

46. Recitative:

EVANGELIST: *Then began he to curse and to swear,*

PETER: *I know not the man.*

EVANGELIST: *And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the words of Jesus, which said unto him, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly.*

47. Aria (mezzo-soprano)

*Have mercy, Lord, on me,
Regard my bitter weeping.
Look on me,
Heart and eyes both weep to Thee
Bitterly.*

48. Choral

*Lamb of God, I fall before Thee
Humbly trusting in Thy Cross:
That alone be all my glory,
All things else I count but loss,
Jesu, all my hopes and joy
Flow from thee, Thou sov'reign good.
Hope and love and faith and patience,
All were purchas'd by Thy Blood.*

The End of Judas

49. Recitative and chorus:

EVANGELIST: *Now when the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people, took counsel against Jesus to put him to death, And when they had bound Him, they led Him away, and deliver'd him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, which had betray'd Him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, and said.*

JUDAS: *I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.*

EVANGELIST: *And they said,*

CHORUS: *But what is that to us? See thou to that.*

50. Recitative:

EVANGELIST: *And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and he departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said,*
1ST & 2ND PRIEST: *It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury because it is the price of blood.*

51. Aria (bass)

*Give, O give me back my Lord,
See the silver, price of blood,
At your feet in horror poured
By the lost betrayer.*

Before Pilate

52. Recitative:

EVANGELIST: *And they took counsel together, and bought with them the potter's field, to be a burying place for strangers. Wherefore that field was call'd the field of blood, unto the present day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the Prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value: and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.*

Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him and said,

PILATE: *Art thou the King of the Jews?*

EVANGELIST: *Jesus said unto him,*

JESUS: *Thou sayest*

EVANGELIST: *And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate saith unto him,*

PILATE: *Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?*

EVANGELIST: *And He answered him never a word: insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.*

53. Chorale

*Commit thy way to Jesus,
Thy burdens and thy cares;
He from them all releases,
He all thy sorrow shares.
He gives the winds their courses,
and bounds the ocean's shore,
He suffers not temptation
To rise beyond thy power.*

Barabbas

54. Recitative and chorus:

EVANGELIST: *Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner whom they would. And they had at that time a notable prisoner called Barabbas, Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them,*
PILATE: *Whom will ye that I release unto you?*

Barabbas or Jesus, which is called Christ?

EVANGELIST: *For he knew well that for envy they had delivered Him up. And while he was sitting on the judgement seat, his wife sent unto him, saying,*

PILATE'S WIFE: *Have nothing to do with this just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream, because of him.*

EVANGELIST: *But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them,*

PILATE: *Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?*

EVANGELIST: *They said:*

CHORUS: *Barabbas!*

EVANGELIST: *Pilate said unto them*

PILATE: *What then shall I do unto Jesus which is called Christ?*

EVANGELIST: *They all say:*

CHORUS: *Let Him be crucified.*

55. Chorale

*O wondrous love, that suffers this correction!
The Shepherd dying for the flock's protection;
The Master pays the debts His servants owe
Him,
And They betray Him!*

56. Recitative:

EVANGELIST: *And the governor said,*

PILATE: *Why, what evil hath He done?*

57. Recitative (soprano)

*To all men Jesus good hath done:
The blind man hath He given sight,
The lame man made to walk.
He told us of His Father's Word,
He cast the devils forth,
The mourners hath He comforted,
In Him a friend the sinner found.
Save good, my Jesus nought hath done.*

58. Aria (soprano)

*For love my Saviour now is dying
Of sin and guilt He knoweth nought.
So eternal desolation
And the sinner's righteous doom
Shall not rest upon my spirit.*

59. Recitative and chorus:

EVANGELIST: *But they cried out the more, and said,*

CHORUS: *Let Him be crucified.*

EVANGELIST: *When Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude and said,*

PILATE: *I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.*

EVANGELIST: *Then answered all the people and said,*

CHORUS: *His blood be on us and on our children.*

EVANGELIST: *Then he released Barabbas unto them, and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.*

60. Aria (mezzo-soprano)

*O gracious God!
Behold, the Saviour standeth bound.
Now scourge they Him, and smite and wound Him!
Tormentors, stay your hands!
Are not your hearts with pity moved
To see such anguish meekly borne?
Ah, no! your hearts are hard,
And must be like the rock itself,
Nay, more unyielding still.
Have pity! stay your hands!*

The Crowning with Thorns

62. Recitative and chorus:

EVANGELIST: *Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered to Him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped Him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And they platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his Head, and a reed in his right Hand: and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him and said,*

CHORUS: *Hail, hail, King of the Jews.*

EVANGELIST: *And they spit upon Him. And took the reed and smote Him on the head*

63. Chorale

*O sacred Head, surrounded
By crown of piercing thorn!
O bleeding Head, so wounded,
Reviled, and put to scorn!
Death's pallid hue come o'er Thee,
The glow of life decays,
Yet angel hosts adore Thee,
And tremble as they gaze.*

*In this Thy bitter Passion,
Good Shepherd, think of me
With Thy most sweet compassion,
Unworthy though I be:
Beneath Thy Cross abiding,
For ever would I rest,
In Thy dear love confiding,
And with Thy presence blest.*

The Way of the Cross

66. Aria (bass)

*Come healing Cross - O joy to share it!
My Saviour, lay on me its weight;
And if the burden grow too great,
Then help Thou me, O Lord, to bear it.*

The Crucifixion

67. Recitative and chorus:

EVANGELIST: *And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of the skull, they gave Him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall: and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink. And when they had crucified Him, they parted His garments, and cast lots upon them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, 'They parted my garments among them, and upon my vestments did they cast lots'. And sitting down, they watched Him there: and set up over His head His accusation, written 'This is Jesus King of the Jews'. Then there were two thieves crucified with Him: one on the right hand, and one on the left, And they passed by, reviled Him, wagging their heads, and saying,*

CHORUS: *Thou that destroyest the temple of God, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself: If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross.*

EVANGELIST: *Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and the elders, said,*

CHORUS: *He saved others, Himself He cannot save:
If He be King of Israel, let Him now come down from the Cross and we will believe Him.
Let Him deliver Him now, if He will have him
For He hath said, I am the Son of God.*

68. Recitative:

EVANGELIST: *The thieves also which were crucified, cast the same in His teeth.*

69. Aria (mezzo-soprano)

*Ah, Golgotha. Unhappy Golgotha!
The Lord of glory here 'mid shame and scorn must perish;
The blessed Saviour of the world
Upon th'accursed Tree now hangs;
The Lord Who heaven and earth created,
Of life and light is now bereft;
The Sinless here as Sinner dieth.
Ah, how this grief doth pierce my soul.
Ah, Golgotha. Unhappy Golgotha!*

The Death of Christ

71. Recitative and chorus:

EVANGELIST: *Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And at about the ninth hour, Jesus called with a loud voice, and said.*

JESUS: *Eli, Eli, lama, sabachthani,*
EVANGELIST: *That is to say, 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?' Some of them that stood there heard that and said,*

CHORUS: *He calleth for Elias.*

EVANGELIST: *And straightway one of them ran and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink. And others said,*

CHORUS: *Let be, let us see, whether Elias will come to save Him.*

EVANGELIST: *Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.*

72. Chorale

*Be near me, Lord, when dying,
O part not Thou from me!
And to my succour flying,
Come Lord and set me free!
And when my heart must languish
In death's last awful throe
Release me from mine anguish,
By Thine own pain and woe.*

After the Crucifixion

73. Recitative and chorus:

EVANGELIST: *And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top unto the bottom, and the earth did quake, and rocks rent. And the graves were opened and there arose many bodies of the saints which had slept. And coming forth from the graves after His resurrection, they went unto the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earth quake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly saying,*

CHORUS: *Truly this was the Son of God.*

At the Descent from the Cross

74. Aria (bass)

*At evening, hour of calm and peace,
Was Adam's fall made manifest;
At evening, too, the Lord's redeeming love
At evening homeward turned the dove
And bore the olive-leaf as token.
O beauteous time. O evening hour!
Our lasting peace is now with God made sure.
For Jesus hath His Cross endured.
His body sinks to rest.
Go, loving servant, ask thou it.
Go, be it thine, the lifeless Saviour's body
O wondrous gift! O precious Holy burden!*

75. Aria (bass)

*Make thee clean my heart, from sin,
Unto Jesus give thou welcome,
So within my cleansed breast
Shall He rest
Dwelling evermore within me.
World depart, let Jesus in!*

The Burial

77. Recitative and Chorus

*And now the Lord to rest is laid.
Lord Jesu, fare Thee well*

*His task is o'er; for all our sin He hath atoned.
Lord Jesu, fare Thee well*

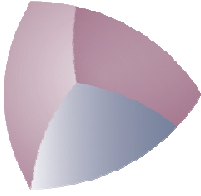
*O blest and holy body,
See, with repentant tears we would bedew it,
Which our offence to such a death has brought.
Lord Jesu, fare Thee well*

*While life shall last, O let Thy sufferings claim
our love,
Since Thou for man salvation sure has wrought.
Lord Jesu, fare Thee well*

78. Chorus

*In tears of grief, dear Lord we leave Thee,
Hearts cry to Thee, O Saviour dear.
Lie Thou softly here.
Rest Thy worn and bruised body,
At Thy grave, O Jesu blest,
May the sinner, worn with weeping,
Comfort find in Thy dear keeping,
and the weary soul find rest,
Sleep in peace,
Sleep Thou in the Father's breast.*





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The Performers

Rebecca Miller

RTWCS Music Director

Conductor Rebecca Miller is acclaimed as a compelling, insightful and energetic force on the podium. Highly regarded for her sophisticated music making and command of varied composers and styles, she is also praised for her ability to communicate with audiences of all ages.

In January 2014, she made her debut with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, performing in a live recording CPE Bach's symphonies for Signum Records. In March she conducted the BBC Concert Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall in a live Radio 3 broadcast. She also performed with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, and at the Proms.

First Prize winner in the fourth Eduardo Mata International Conducting Competition, Miller has guest conducted the Orquesta Filarmónica de la UNAM (the oldest symphonic ensemble in Mexico City), the London Sinfonietta, Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra (Israel), the Houston Symphony and Reno Philharmonic Orchestra (USA), and at The Bard Music Festival (New York). In 2012 she made her much acclaimed debut with the Teresa Carreño Youth Orchestra of Venezuela and is a regular conductor with the South Bank Sinfonia in London.

From 2007 to 2010 Rebecca Miller was Resident Conductor of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra in New Orleans, and previously was Conducting Fellow of the Houston Symphony. She has released two CDs, including the award-winning 2011 disc for Signum Records featuring the world-premiere recording of Aaron Jay Kernis' *Goblin Market*.

Born in California, Rebecca Miller completed her studies in piano at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. She studied conducting at Northwestern University and at the Aspen Music Festival, and was the Paul Woodhouse Junior Fellow in Conducting for two years at London's Royal College of Music.



Gwilym Bowen (tenor)

Born in Hereford, Gwilym Bowen is currently studying at Royal Academy Opera under Ryland Davies and Jonathan Papp, having previously graduated from the University of Cambridge with a double-First class degree in Music.

On the operatic stage, his diverse repertoire has included Pelléas *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Tom Rakewell *The Rake's Progress*, Davey in Jonathan Dove's *Siren Song*, Dwight/God *Jerry Springer: the Opera*, Sailor *Dido & Aeneas*, Intelletto in Emilio de' Cavalieri's *Rappresentatione di anima e di corpo*, Lysander *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Aldeburgh and multiple tenor roles *L'incoronazione di Poppea* for the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme, Ryedale Festival Opera, and the Academy of Ancient Music at the Barbican. Roles with RAO for the 2014-15 season include Gherardo *Gianni Schicchi*, Sellem *The Rake's Progress* and HRH Prince Philippe *A Dinner Engagement*.



In new opera he has created the roles of Sergeant Troy in Barnaby Martin's *Far from the madding crowd*, and the protagonists in two operas by Kate Whitley, *Unknown Position* and *0520*, with performances at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and the Cockpit and King's Head theatres in London. At RAM, roles in scenes include Ferrando *Così fan tutte*, Albert *Albert Herring*, Florville *Il signor Bruschino* and Smith *La jolite fille de Perth*, and with Royal Academy Opera he was Chorus and Peasant Leader *Eugene Onegin*, and Chorus and Bête *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Stephane Denève

Recent concert performances include acclaimed Evangelists in both Bach Passions, the role of Sylph in Rameau *Zaïs* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Handel *Messiah* and Bach *Mass in B Minor* for Stephen Layton and the OAE at St John's, Smith Square, Handel *Israel in Egypt* with the Holst Singers and the Brook Street Band, Bach *Weihnachts-Oratorium* for Oxford Philomusica and Merton College Choir at the Sheldonian Theatre, Bach *Johannespassion* in Poland with Die Kölner Akademie, and Britten *Serenade* for the Amersham Festival. Upcoming engagements include Bach cantatas with Masaaki Suzuki in Alice Tully Hall, New York City, Tamino in a new opera for the Aix Festival, *Be With Me Now*, touring Europe in 2015-16, and Monteverdi and Handel with the AAM in London, Venice and Bucharest. Gwilym is hugely grateful for the support of his studies by the Josephine Baker Trust, the Elmley Foundation, the Clive Richards Charity, the Countess of Munster Musical Trust, and a Travelling Studentship from Trinity College, Cambridge.

Robert Rice (bass)



Among the younger generation of British baritones, Robert Rice has established a reputation as an insightful interpreter of challenging repertoire. He is a valued collaborator and creator of roles in modern chamber opera and music theatre, as well as a concert singer of distinction. Having been a choral scholar at King's College, Cambridge, and a postgraduate at the Royal Academy of Music under Mark Wildman, he continued his studies with Richard Smart and Sheila Barnes.

As a concert artist Robert undertakes a wide variety of repertoire. Recent concerts have included several performances of Bach's *St John Passion*, his *Ich habe genug* and *Mass in G minor*, Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* and Orff's *Carmina Burana*. This season he sings Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem* in Birmingham Symphony Hall, plus Rossini's *Petite Messe solennelle* and Beethoven's *Mass in C*. In recital he has recently collaborated with

pianist Will Vann at the London English Song Festival and York Late Music, and with guitarist Erich Schachtner in Bavaria.

His stage work often involves contemporary music: he has toured Bosnia, Scotland and England with Opera Circus, appearing as Hasan in Nigel Osborne's well-received *Differences in Demolitions*, and in their previous production *Arcane*, with music by Paul Clark. Further stage appearances include Demas *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Sadler's Wells/Hickox), Sailor *Dido and Aeneas* (Chatelet/McCreesh), Herakles *The Birds*, Tempter *The Martyrdom of St Magnus* (both for The Opera Group), title role *Darwin's Dream* (RAH), King *Eight Songs for a Mad King* (South Bank). He created the Ivory Carver in Judith Bingham's *The Ivory Tree* (St Edmundsbury Cathedral).

Robert has recorded Judas *The Apostles* with Canterbury Choral Society and the Philharmonia Orchestra. He is also featured on Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* with the Southern Sinfonia and the Rodolfus Choir, and the Dufay Collective's *The Play of Daniel*. His recording of Cornelius' *Die Drei Könige* (The Three Kings) with the choir Polyphony is a favourite on both Classic FM and BBC Radio 3 whenever Christmas approaches. A skilled arranger of vocal music in many genres, he is published by Novello & Co. Ltd.

Ruth Holton (soprano)

Ruth Holton studied music at Clare College Cambridge where she was a choral exhibitioner. Her early recordings of Bach's *St John Passion* and cantatas established her as a leading baroque soloist. Her concert and recording schedule has included the major oratorios of Bach, Handel, Purcell and others. She has recorded all the Bach cantatas with the Holland Boys Choir under Peter Leusink. She has worked with the Orchestra of the Age of the Enlightenment, Amsterdam Baroque, Fretwork and the RIAS choir in Berlin.



The clarity of Ruth's voice makes her a popular choice for contemporary music, and she has been involved in premieres of works by Steve Reich, Peter Salem, David Briggs, Guy Woolfenden and many others.

In 2014 she toured Germany, England and America with the fortepianists Malcolm Bilson and Zvi Meniker in a series of recitals marking CPE Bach's 300th anniversary. She sang the Verdi *Requiem* and Bach's *B minor Mass* in Worcester Cathedral.

This season she has sung Monteverdi *Vespers* in Hull, Ravel's *Kaddish* in London, and later this year will be giving a recital of Strauss *Four Last Songs* and works by Robert Scott.

Ruth is the organist and Director of Music at All Saints West Dulwich and runs the community choir *SING4ALL*. Her recent performances include the Bach cantata *Mein Herz schwimmt in Blut* and this year she directed a liturgical rendition of Bach's *St John Passion*.

Clare McCaldin (Mezzo-soprano)

Clare McCaldin initially trained as a linguist and had careers in advertising and arts administration before becoming a professional singer. Since then she has built a diverse career spanning the opera stage and concert platform, and has sung at the Salzburg Easter Festival, the Royal Opera, the BBC Proms and the Edinburgh International Festival.

Clare is a great advocate of new music and has performed work by Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Cecilia McDowell, Brian Irvine, Alexander I'Estrange, Michael Zev Gordon and created roles and scenes for Opera North, Royal Opera, WNO and Aldeburgh. She appeared in Errollyn Wallen's *Cautionary Tales* at the 2014 Latitude Festival and in Stephen McNeff's *Prometheus Drowned*, on tour for Nova Music Opera. Clare's company McCaldin Arts continues to tour her solo shows, *Haydn's London Ladies* and *Vivienne* as well as commissioning and researching new collaborative projects.



In 2015 she is appearing as singer Margaret Ritchie in a new play, *Like a Chemist from Canada*. Inspired by the real-life events surrounding Shostakovich's visit to Oxford University in 1958 to collect an honorary degree, the play performs in London and Oxford.

Madrigali dell'Estate, a CD of works written for her by Stephen McNeff was awarded four stars by BBC Music Magazine. Her recording of Hugh Wood's *Laurie Lee Songs* with Iain Burnside for NMC will be available from April 2015 and *Notes from the Asylum*, her second solo CD with Champs Hill Records, will be released in the autumn.

On behalf of the Haydn Society of Great Britain, Clare fund-raised and oversaw the installation of the first commemorative blue plaque to Joseph Haydn in London, unveiled in Soho in March 2015.

Greg Tassel (tenor)



Photo Antonia Couling

Greg Tassel was a chorister at Durham Cathedral. He later read music at Exeter University and studied singing at the Royal Academy of Music under Ryland Davies. He appeared in the finals of the London Bach and London Handel Competitions (where he was described by Hilary Finch in the Times as 'personable and musically intelligent'). From 2008-10 he was a young artist for Retrospect Ensemble under Matthew Halls at the Wigmore Hall and on tour in Israel with Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*.

Opera engagements include Albert in *Albert Herring* (Co-Opera Co and Surrey Opera) and Badger in *Fantastic Mr Fox* for English Touring Opera. Greg has appeared in

numerous operas designed for children with Special Needs, most notably the critically acclaimed *The Midnight Moon* which was performed at the Philharmonie in Luxembourg in June/July 2011.

More than anything else however Greg is in great demand in the UK and abroad for oratorio and recitals. He has sung the Bach *St John Passion* in Krakow, Poland with the Krakow Academy of Music, *Messiah* for the London Handel Festival and *St John Passion* Evangelist for Sittingbourne Choral, and Haydn's *Creation* in Ely Cathedral for Cambridge Choral. Greg's appearances include the London Handel Festival with London Early Opera under Bridget Cunningham, Britten's *Les illuminations* for Suffolk Philharmonia under Leslie Olive, Finzi's *Dies Natalis* in Tunbridge Wells, Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* at the Purcell Room with the Isis Ensemble and again at the Roman River Festival and a Valentine's Day recital for Sutton Valence Music Society with pianist Jonathan Wikeley. Recitals in 2013 included *Dichterliebe* at the Finchcocks Festival and Britten's *Songs from the Chinese* with guitarist Chris Bundhan at various festivals.

Two recordings were released last year: his debut album of English Songs by Dibdin, Stanford and Elgar with pianist Gary Branch, and London Early Opera's album "Handel at Vauxhall".

Greg teaches singing at St Martin-in-the-Fields and Ibstock Place School, Surrey.

James Birchall (Bass-Baritone)



James Birchall began his musical education as a chorister at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle and later studied at St John's College, Cambridge, the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama.

He has sung many of the major oratorio roles, notably Handel's *Messiah* and Beethoven's *Choral Symphony*, both with the CBSO in Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in the Royal Festival Hall with the Bach Choir and in Symphony Hall with Ex Cathedra, *St John Passion* with the London Mozart Players in St Paul's Cathedral and *Christmas Oratorio* and *Messiah* in Kristiansund, Norway. He has also performed *Messiah* in Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford Cathedrals and in the Usher Hall, Edinburgh, *St John Passion* in Chichester Cathedral with the Hanover Band and Charles Wood's *St Mark Passion* in Cambridge for BBC Radio 3, which he subsequently recorded.

In 2010 he made his solo debut at the BBC Proms, performing Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music*, and has twice appeared as a soloist at the Three Choirs Festival, performing *Serenade to Music* and Purcell's *Hail Bright Cecilia*.

On the opera stage, James has sung Superintendent Budd *Albert Herring*, Harasta *Cunning Little Vixen*, Dolokhov *War and Peace* and Earl Stanhope in Rory Boyle's *Kasper Hauser* (RSAMD), Messenger *Belshazzar* at the Theatre du Capitole, Toulouse, Morales (cover) *Carmen* for Raymond Gubbay Ltd at the Royal Albert Hall and the O2 Arena, London, and Masetto/Commendatore *Don Giovanni* for Opera della Luna at the Iford Festival.

His other roles include Mephistopheles *Faust*, Zuniga *Carmen* and Swallow *Peter Grimes*. Recent/forthcoming engagements include Noye *Noye's Fludde* in the Thaxted Festival, *Messiah* in The Usher Hall and in Poland and Norway, *Christmas Oratorio* at King's Place and Gloucester Cathedral, *Mass in B Minor* at Cadogan Hall and Brahms' *German Requiem* and Mendelssohn's *St Paul* at Eton College.

James lives in Hertfordshire with his wife, soprano Christina Birchall-Sampson, and their young daughter.

Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society

Including members of the Royal Holloway Choir (as a ripieno choir),
Mayfield Festival Choir and others

Sopranos

Elaine Abbs	Elena Gente	Kim Keeler	Pat Prior
Jo Bartram	Bella Goggin	Elena Lewis-Grey	Helena Read
Diana Blower	Susan Horne	Joanna Mace	Glenda Revell
Sylvia Byers	Katie Horner	Helen MacNab	Ann Spillman
Heather Champion	Rosemary Hughes	Anne Metherell	Sue Townsend
Jill Dunstall	Evelien Hurst-Buist	Louise Packham	Catherine Whitlock
Sophie Esdaile	Kim Jinks	Michele Palmer	
Emma Francis	Eve Johnson	Eileen Phillips	

Altos

Margaret Butcher	Celia Grew	Margie O'Neil	Lydia Szczgielska
Pauline Coxshall	Rebecca Harris	Ginny Osborne	Jane Selley
Imelda Eve	Judith Henderson	Valerie Palmer	Jenny Selway
Jean Finch	Heather Herrin	Gillian Penny	Yvonne Spencer
Joanna Finlay	Sheila Jones	Melissa Richards	Jane Steele
Peggy Flood	Sylvia Klatt	Catherine Rigby	Susan Taylor
Liz Ford	Charlotte Marks	Hannah Rigby	Muriel Thatcher
Janet Gambell	Shirley Morgan	Ros Robertson	Norma Timmermans
Ruth Gray	Magali Nicole	Alison Scoble	Jane Walters

Tenors

Peter Elliot	Gareth Looker	Olivia Seaman	Michael Spencer
David Gook	Peter Mace	John Simmons	Paul Spencer
Richard Hansen	Panos Ntourtoulis	Alan Spencer	Neil Townsend
Guy Huntrods	Peter Rosling		

Basses

Gerald Chew	David Ham	Michael Meade	John T Spary
Pat Connolly	Nicholas Humphrey	David Miller	Clive M Steward
Alastair Dodds	Trevor Hurrell	Chris Reece	Len Trevillion
Roy Dunstall	Jonnie Jones	Eric H Scott	Martin Williams
Gavin Grant	David Lyall	Michael Selway	David Wright

The London Handel Orchestra Leader – Adrian Butterfield



The London Handel Orchestra, which is made up of some of London's finest professional baroque players, is led by Adrian Butterfield and has an excellent reputation for historically informed performance. In 1981 the Orchestra made its debut at the London Handel Festival, founded by Denys Darlow. Laurence Cummings took over as Musical Director in 2002. The Orchestra performs throughout the festival at venues which this year include Handel's church, St George's, Hanover Square, the Royal College of Music, the Foundling Museum and the Queen Elizabeth Hall. In 1999 the principals of the Orchestra formed the London Handel Players to explore the great wealth of chamber music repertoire composed by Handel and his contemporaries. They performed at the Celebration Concert for the opening of Handel House Museum and at Southside House for the Jubilee String of Pearls celebratory events. The orchestra operates

under the auspices of The London Handel Society, which was established to promote the music of Handel and his contemporaries and in particular his little heard works, many of which have been brought to a wider public in the last twenty years.



Adrian Butterfield is a violinist, director and conductor who specialises in performing music from 1600-1900 on period instruments. A former chorister of St Paul's Cathedral and a graduate of Trinity College Cambridge, he is Musical Director of the Tilford Bach Society and Associate Musical Director of the London Handel Festival.

Orchestra 1

Violin I Adrian Butterfield Jean Paterson	Flute Rachel Brown Guy Williams
Violin II William Thorp	Oboe, oboe da caccia & oboe d'amore James Eastaway Cait Walker
Viola Rachel Byrt	Bassoon Nathaniel Harrison
'Cello Melanie Woodcock	
Bass Peter Buckoke	

Orchestra 2

Violin I Bojan Cicic Theresa Caudle	Flute Eva Caballero Renate Sokolovska
Violin II Ellen O'Dell	Oboe, oboe d'amore & recorder Leo Duarte Karen Gibbard
Viola Elitsa Bogdanova	
Cello & viola da gamba Mark Caudle	
Bass Carina Cosgrave	Organ Alastair Ross

Forthcoming Events

112th Season

Sunday 15th November 2015 at 3pm in the Assembly Hall Theatre

RTWCS Chorus and orchestra

Mozart - Requiem

Plus

Mozart Piano concerto

with soloist Anthony Zerpa-Falcon



Sunday 13th December 2015 at 6.30 in Goudhurst Parish Church

Christmas Concert - with the Wadhurst Band

Programme to include a new work: 'Christmas Silence' by Eliza Barker.

Sunday 23rd April 2016 at 3pm in the Assembly Hall Theatre

Spring Concert - programme to be announced.

Other Forthcoming Events around Tunbridge Wells

Mayfield Festival Choir (www.mayfieldfestivalchoir.org)

Sunday 10 May 2015 at 7.30 pm in St Dunstan's Church, Mayfield:

Youthful Viennese Masterpieces:

Mozart: Great Mass in C Minor and Schubert: Stabat Mater.

Director Jeremy Summerly with London Primavera Orchestra (leader Paul Manley)

Tonbridge Philharmonic Society (www.tonphil.org.uk)

Saturday 16 May 2015 at 7.30 pm in St Stephen's Church, Tonbridge.

Orchestral Concert: Nicolai - Overture Merry Wives of Windsor;

Dvořák - Symphonic Variations;

Tchaikovsky - Piano Concerto No 1 - Soloist: Alexander Ullman (winner of

Tunbridge Wells International Young Concert Artists (TWIYCA) competition 2012).

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The majority of arts based charities depend on voluntary financial support. Our singing members pay an annual subscription which roughly covers our overheads but the income from the sale of tickets is rarely enough to cover the cost of hiring the concert hall and paying for the orchestra and soloists.

Becoming a Friend or Patron helps us to close the gap and at the same time guarantees a preferential choice of a 'best seat in the house' for our Autumn, Christmas and Spring concerts. Friends and Patrons also receive periodic Newsletters, and are invited to attend choir members' social events.

Friends are currently asked to pay a minimum of £70 pa and receive all the benefits listed above. This amounts to only a few pounds more than the cost of the best seat price for all three concerts but in most cases also allows the Society to claim a Gift Aid refund from HM Revenue and Customs.

Patrons are those supporters who feel they would like to donate a little more than the basic Friends subscription. Silver Patrons are those who make a contribution between £100 and £200, whilst those contributing over £200 are classed as Gold Patrons. Gold Patrons receive two free tickets rather than one.

Unless they ask not to be included, the names of Friends and Patrons are listed in our concert programmes in recognition of their support to the society.

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RTWCS is a registered charity - no 273310.

More information

Anyone who would like more information or would like to become a Friend or Patron is asked to contact Gerald Chew by telephone (01892 527958) or by email to geraldchew@uwclub.net.

If you know or represent a company or organisation that may be interested in becoming a Sponsor, or willing to place an advertisement in a future programme, please contact our publicity officer Melissa Richards by email to publicity@rtwcs.org.uk.

Further information is on our website www.rtwcs.org.uk.

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We welcome enquiries from potential new members of the society, whether experienced or not. We do not hold auditions, and we always give newcomers the opportunity to join one or two rehearsals before deciding whether they wish to become a member.

If you wish to give us a try, please telephone our registrar (Jane Walters) on 01892 543158 or the general secretary (Trevor Hurrell) on 07770 823104.
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In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we record the death of RTWCS President.

An Appreciation of Roy Douglas (1907-2015)



ROY DOUGLAS became President of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society in the late 1980s and continued in that office until his death on March 23rd 2015. He took a great interest in all our activities and always attended our concerts as long as he was able. In 2007 we sang Haydn's Creation, his favourite choral work, in his presence in the Tunbridge Wells Assembly Hall, in honour of his 100th Birthday.

Roy was a most distinguished musician, both on his own account and in support of other great British composers, notably Ralph Vaughan Williams and William Walton. He was almost the only person who could decipher RVW's handwriting. On one occasion he asked whether a particular note was B natural or B flat, to which the answer was 'Yes'. Roy was left to exercise his own judgement. The full score of Walton's Belshazzar's Feast, published by OUP, was printed as a facsimile of Roy's beautifully handwritten manuscript copy. The ballet music, Les Sylphides, was devised and arranged by Roy from Chopin's piano music.

Roy was born in Tunbridge Wells and went to school here. Later he lived elsewhere in Kent and in London, returning to Tunbridge Wells in 1944. He became a well-known figure, riding round Tunbridge Wells on his motor-bike, until he was well into his 80s. He was never too proud to join in with local music-making. On many occasions he played timpani in the Choral Society's orchestra, and he also enjoyed taking part in local amateur dramatics.

In the last few years, when he was no longer able to attend concerts himself, he was very appreciative when members of the Choral Society went to his home to sing carols in celebration both of his birthday and of Christmas. Right up to his last day he enjoyed his daily whisky and his pipe, as well as the music that was his life. In addition to being President of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society, Roy was also President of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Symphony Orchestra. Very many local musicians, as well as the wider musical world, owe Roy a huge debt of gratitude.

Helen MacNab