

I NVITATIONE presents
a concert of choral classics

Musical Director: Rachel Mathieson

Saturday 27th April 2019, 7.30pm
in the Church of All Saints, Great Driffield
Retiring collection in aid of church funds



Programme

- H. Purcell** Remember not, Lord, our offences
- J. S. Bach** Herr, gehe nicht ins Gericht, from Cantata BWV 105
Liebster Gott, erbarme dich, from Cantata BWV 179
- G. F. Handel** Selection of movements from *Messiah*
He shall feed his flock (Soloist: Lucy Bates)
Surely He hath borne our griefs
And with His stripes we are healed
All we like sheep have gone astray
All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn
He trusted in God
Hallelujah



INTERVAL

- C. V. Stanford** The Blue bird
- E. Elgar** As torrents in summer, from the cantata *King Olaf* (op. 30)
The Shower *and* The Fountain (op. 71)
My love dwelt in a northern land (op.18, no.3)
- J. Haydn** Selection of movements from *The Creation*
The Heavens are telling the glory of God
With verdure clad (Soloist: Lucy Bates)
Achieved is the glorious work
- A. Sullivan** The Long day closes

H. Purcell (1659-1695)

Remember not, Lord, our offences

Henry Purcell was employed for most of his life as a singer and organist in the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey. 'Remember not Lord, our offences' is, at first glance, a fairly simple motet, but is an example of Purcell's mastery as a composer. The atmosphere is established with the first word, climaxes with a desperate cry for mercy, and ends, as it began, with a quiet prayer for salvation.

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

Herr, gehe nicht ins Gericht (opening chorus from Cantata 105)

The Lutheran tradition of music is widely thought to have peaked in J. S. Bach, a composer who, like his most distinguished predecessors, capitalised on all the musical styles available to him, whether from Protestant or Catholic traditions. Within the Lutheran liturgy, certain readings from the Bible were prescribed for every event during the church year, and the cantatas reflected these readings. After Bach's death, his cantatas fell into obscurity and were little known until the Bach-Gesellschaft began to publish his complete works in 1851.

Cantata BWV 105 is perhaps one of Bach's masterpieces. It dates from 1723, Bach's first year in Leipzig, and is a meditation on Christian faith and redemption, the work serving as a reminder that salvation is everlasting. The opening chorus, which we perform here, is grand and imposing, demonstrating the technical complexity the composer achieves in its instrumental and vocal canons, but also the emotional and textual punch packed within the word setting - for example, the imploring repetition of "Herr" ("Lord") which passes through the voices.

Herr, gehe nicht ins Gericht mit deinem Knecht.
Denn vor dir wird kein Lebendiger gerecht.

Lord, do not pass judgement on your servant.
For, before you, no living creature is just.

Psalm 143:2

Liebster Gott, erbarme dich (aria from Cantata 179)

This cantata also dates from 1723. It was written for a combination of strings with two oboes da caccia. The aria, the fifth movement of the cantata, is performed this evening in an arrangement Rachel has made for our particular ensemble (in the absence of these period instruments), in which the oboe da caccia parts are played by the violins. The two obbligato instruments weave around each other and around the soprano solo in tight, overlapping lines, tense with suspensions and dissonances, expressing the anguish of the words which are a cry for forgiveness. The whole aria is permeated with downward movement, in almost slow motion, illustrating contrition ("Beloved God, have mercy"), and reaching its most profound depths in the central section with the line "Ich versink' in tiefen Schlamm" – "I sink into deep slime". This is Bach at his most beautiful and direct.

Liebster Gott, erbarme dich,
Lass mir Trost und Gnad erscheinen.
Meine Sünden kränken mich als ein Eiter in Gebeinen.
Hilf mir, Jesu, Gottes Lamm.
Ich versink' im tiefen Schlamm.

Beloved God, have mercy,
Let your comfort and grace appear to me.
My sins afflict me like an infection in my bones.
Help me Jesus, Lamb of God.
I drown in deep slime.

G. F. Handel (1685-1759)

Excerpts from 'Messiah', an oratorio

The "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's oratorio, 'Messiah', surely comprises four of the most famous minutes of classical music known to western ears. King George II famously stood up in approval on hearing it, a tradition which has continued to this day. Thus has 'Messiah' passed into our cultural heritage, and is performed regularly by choral societies across the country year after year.

'Messiah' was originally conceived to be performed in London in Passion Week, but actually received its premier in a charitable performance in Dublin at Neal's Music Hall on 13th April, 1742. It was well received there, where performances were given in aid of local charities.

This evening we perform a selection of movements, including the beautiful aria 'He shall feed His flock' and the beloved chorus 'Hallelujah'. In between these, we present a dramatic sequence of movements from the central, and possibly the most vivid, part of the oratorio.

Aria 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.

Come unto Him, all ye that labour, come unto Him all ye 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. (*Isaiah 40:11; Matthew 11:28-29*)

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*)

Chorus And with His stripes we are healed. (*Isaiah 53:5*)

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*)

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

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

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*)



INTERVAL of 20 minutes ~ Refreshments are available



C. V. Stanford (1853-1924)

The Blue bird (op. 119, no. 3)

Charles Villiers Stanford was a fine composer, but has been largely eclipsed by his contemporaries, Vaughan Williams and Holst. A pupil of Brahms, he was one of the founding professors of the Royal College of Music. He was sceptical about modernism, and his composition was based largely on classical principles.

The Blue bird is probably Stanford's most famous secular work. The rest of the eight settings in the Op. 119 collection are no longer well known. In it, the solo soprano soars like the bluebird itself over the top of the chorus. Also blue, in the words by Mary Coleridge, are the sky and the lake, and perhaps the very mood of the song could be described as blue, especially as it ends unresolved, as though the bird is still flying, leaving a feeling of yearning.

E. Elgar (1857-1934)

My love dwelt in a northern land (op.18, no.3)

The Shower *and* The Fountain (op. 71)

As torrents in summer, from the cantata *King Olaf* (op. 30)

Elgar's reputation, like that of other great composers, is built on a fraction of his output, most of it large-scale, predominantly orchestral, works. His miniatures, chamber works and songs are less well known. Of the roughly 100 songs Elgar wrote, half are touching, tender and attractive part-songs. Most are unaccompanied. It seems Elgar often composed them almost as a relaxing break from working on larger-scale compositions, and quite often when on holiday or motoring out in the country.

'My love dwelt in a northern land' is one of the earliest, composed in 1889, shortly after Elgar's marriage to Alice. For a long time, it seemed as though Andrew Lang (1844-1912) would refuse permission for his poem to be used by Elgar for the setting; Alice even wrote a set of words in case permission was not granted. Eventually, however, Lang did relent, but "with a very bad grace", according to Elgar himself.

In 1914, as the Elgars explored by car the area to the north of their new London home in Hampstead, Elgar produced a flurry of new choral work, both sacred and secular, including the op. 71 pair of songs 'The Shower' and 'The Fountain'. The words are by the 17th century Welsh rural mystic, Henry Vaughan. Elgar gave the songs subtitles recalling the places he visited at the time of their composition: 'At Mill Hill' ('The Shower') and 'At Totteridge' ('The Fountain').

The beautiful, simple chorus 'As torrents in summer' comes from the final scene of the cantata 'Scenes from The Saga of King Olaf', from 1896. With text by the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), the cantata presents the saga of King Olaf, a Norse crusader in his own country. It was performed regularly in the years following its composition but has subsequently been largely neglected, overshadowed by his later and more famous oratorios. However, Elgar's mature style is clearly evident, as the unassuming unaccompanied song we hear this evening is developed into the final orchestral climax of the work.

J. Haydn (1732-1809)

Excerpts from 'The Creation'

The Heavens are telling

With verdure clad

Achieved is the glorious work

Haydn's music seems inexhaustibly inventive and compelling. It fuses exuberance, originality, classical elegance and intellectual power. Most of his life was devoted to composing instrumental music, both chamber and orchestral; his choral masterpieces - including the 'Nelson' Mass, as well as 'The Creation' and 'The Seasons' - come from his later years, after he composed his final symphony in 1795.

Having been overwhelmed by a Handel festival he attended in Westminster Abbey, Haydn resolved to write an oratorio himself, and set to work on a score. 'The Creation' was completed in 1798, when Haydn was 66, and received its first public performance in 1799. In common with opera, 'The Creation' has named characters and is divided into acts and scenes, consisting of sequences of choruses, recitatives and arias.

The text of 'The Heavens are telling' is based on Psalm 19: 1-3. The chorus closes Part I of the oratorio, and represents the end of the fourth day of Creation. The chorus is in C major, with celebratory choral passages. The three soloists represent the archangels Gabriel (soprano), Uriel (tenor) and Raphael (bass), with the chorus fulfilling an important role portraying angels glorifying their maker. The end of the movement forms a long coda, which increases in intensity as Haydn piles up the textual and musical material, almost as if he does not wish to bring the movement to a close.

Haydn himself was particularly fond of Gabriel's aria, 'With verdure clad', which is probably the best-known aria of 'The Creation'. It celebrates the creation of plants on the third day. Delight is expressed through the lilting Siciliana rhythm and pastoral setting. Decorated melodies in the violins and woodwind are entwined with the soprano line, which shoots skywards like the majestic forests described in the text.

'Achieved is the glorious work' is the final chorus of Part II, and is a celebration of the sixth day, taking its text from Genesis 2: 1-3. Its energy is infectious, and its fugal complexity befits the grandeur of the now accomplished feat of Creation.

A. Sullivan (1842-1900)

The Long day closes

Sir Arthur Sullivan is best known for his series of 14 operatic collaborations with the dramatist W. S. Gilbert. He was frustrated by this fact, always wanting to be taken more seriously as a composer, and his works include 23 operas, 13 major orchestral works, eight choral works and oratorios, two ballets, incidental music to several plays, numerous hymns and other church pieces.

'The long day closes' dates from 1868, and is Sullivan's best-known part song. The words were written by writer and music critic, Henry Fothergill. Part songs such as this were required by the growing number of choral societies appearing during the Victorian era, and have been enjoyed ever since, including by the choir of *Invitatione*. This work's rich harmonic palette, sonorous scoring and contemplative reflection also made it suitable as an expression of mourning and grief; it was often sung at the funeral of D'Oyly Carte Opera singers. It is one of our favourite English choral songs, and we felt it made a fitting conclusion to this programme.



Violin	Adhel Cadle	Jessica Leathley	Sophie Nichols	Alex Simpson
Viola	Helen Booth	Katie Whitehead		
Cello	Chris Pollock	Harriet Read	Sue Sidwell	
Flute	Kate Lutley	Oboe	Martin Lutley	
Clarinet	Emma Dawber	Ian Franklin		
Bassoon	Mandy Whitehead	Horn	Miho Fletcher	
Trumpet	Ken Fergusson	Timpani	Alice Shelbourne	

The Chamber Choir of *INVITATIONE*

Chris Bates	Lucy Bates	Simon Davey	Joyce Davidson
Emma Dawber	Lucy Duckworth	William Duckworth	Stacey Fergusson
Mike Harding	Roger Hoare	Elizabeth Mathieson	Joseph Mathieson
Mary Mead	Georgina Myers	Lily Myers	Luca Myers
Kathleen Nield	Patrick Plunkett	Ian Reid	Alice Rose

Invitatione was established in 2011 by a group of local musicians and music teachers. We aim to provide high quality live music in local venues, seeking avenues for creative ways of presenting classical music to a wider audience; to create enjoyable and varied performing experiences for our players and singers; and to promote a life-long love of music and music making, and an appreciation of the emotional and social benefits which this can provide. Our members have ranged from those as young as 11 to those in their retirement. This mix of ages and range of experience amongst members enables the youngest and the least experienced of our group to enjoy the support of others and to tackle challenging repertoire with confidence. Working and developing alongside one another, the experience for all of us is one of exploration and discovery.

We have performed large- and small-scale concerts in churches in Hull, Beverley and Driffield, raising money for charities and good causes. Highlights include a concert for Amnesty International which raised over £2,000 (January 2012); the semi-staged 'Messiah' performed in the Church of All Saints, Great Driffield, and then in Hull Minster (Easter 2018); a collaboration with East Riding Theatre using the words of, and music inspired by, Shakespeare (June 2013); and thrilling performances in Beverley Minster of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony (2013), his Tenth Symphony (2015), Strauss's 'Four Last Songs' and Bernstein's 'Chichester Psalms' (2014), the Requiems of Brahms, Duruflé and Mozart; Dvorak's Seventh and Eighth Symphonies (2016); and Kurt Weill's Windband Suite from 'The Threepenny Opera' (2017). We also relish the opportunity to sing unaccompanied repertoire from the Tudor and early Baroque periods, and some of our favourite performances have explored vocal and chamber works by Gesualdo, Byrd and Purcell.

If you are interested in being part of *Invitatione*, or booking us for an event, please email info@invitatione.org.

Musical Director: Rachel Mathieson

Rachel graduated with a first class BMus in 2007 and a PhD in Music in 2016 from the University of Hull. She also has a BA in Modern Languages and a DPhil in Education from the University of Oxford. For over a decade, up to 2018, she taught music privately and in schools in the local area. She particularly enjoys music performance coaching, with individuals and groups. Since March 2017, she has been a Research Fellow in the School of Education at the University of Leeds, as part of a project investigating post-16 maths education, funded by the Nuffield Foundation.

A pianist, singer and conductor, Rachel has performed with many local groups and societies. She has been piano soloist in Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue' and the Schumann Piano Concerto with the Hessle Sinfonia, and has been a guest conductor of a number of choirs and orchestras. When time permits, Rachel enjoys playing the cello with the Hessle Sinfonia.

Rachel can be contacted at md@invitatione.org or via Facebook.

Acknowledgements

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Thank you to the many singers and players who give their time to participate in our projects, and to the Rev. Stuart Grant and others at Driffield for their assistance in putting on this evening's event.

Forthcoming *Invitatione* event

Saturday 19th October, 7.30, St. Alban's Church, Hall Road, Hull
Programme to be confirmed

To join our mailing list in order to receive information about events, please email info@invitatione.org, or visit www.invitatione.org or our Facebook page for further details.