

❏ ***Nantwich Choral Society*** ❏

**FORTHCOMING CONCERTS**

*Saturday 5th December 1998 at 7.30pm*

**HANDEL - MESSIAH**

*Saturday 19th December 1998 at 7.30pm*

**CAROLS FOR  
CHOIR AND AUDIENCE**

*Saturday 8th May 1999 at 7.30pm*

**MONTEVERDI - 1610 VESPERS WITH THE  
ORCHESTRA OF THE GOLDEN AGE AND HIS  
MAJESTY'S SACKBUTS AND CORNETS**

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❏ ***Nantwich Choral Society*** ❏

**J S BACH**

*Magnificat in D*

**BACH/STRAVINSKY**

*Choral Variation*

*on Von Himmel Hoch*

**STRAVINSKY**

*Symphony of Psalms*



**SATURDAY 14th NOVEMBER 1998**

**The Parish Church of St. Mary  
Nantwich at 7.30pm**

# *Nantwich Choral Society*

NANTWICH SINFONIA  
(Leader: Jane Noffek)

Stephanie Neal (*soprano*)

Timothy Massa (*Alto*)

Neil Sharp (*tenor*)

Adrian Blakeley (*bass*)

Conducted by  
Patrick Larley

NATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF MUSIC SOCIETIES



## J S BACH *Magnificat in D*

In 1723 J S Bach became Kantor and Director of Music at Leipzig. He composed the setting of the *Magnificat*, the first of his major choral works, to be performed at Christmas Day Vespers in St Nicholas' Church, one of the two churches under his directorship - the other being the more famous St. Thomaskirche. This original setting was in the unusual key of E flat major but it was revised around 1728-30 and appeared in the later version in D major, a far more friendly key for the trumpeters! Also, with the choristers of two churches at his disposal, he wrote the work in five parts (S.S.A.T.B.) emulating the sections of the string orchestra.

The text of the *Magnificat* gives Bach plenty of scope for dramatic expression and word-painting which he exploits to the full. The cascading downward scale in the tenor aria 'He hath put down the mighty' soon sets out the mood of this movement only to rise again in coloratura style, as in Handel's 'Every valley' at 'et exsultavit'; 'For He that is mighty' is given to the powerful bass soloist, whilst the soprano's 'lowliness of his hand-maiden' is accompanied by the oboe d'amore. The final unharmonised bass-note in the alto aria is an inspired touch to suggest 'sent empty away'.

In this performance each movement is introduced by a plainsong introduction.

*Magnificat anima mea Dominum - My Soul doth magnify the Lord (Chorus)*

*Et exsultavit - And my spirit rejoices*

*Quia respexit humilitatem - For He hath regarded the lowliness (Soprano solo)*

*Omnes generationes - All generations (Chorus)*

*Quia fecit mihi magna - For He that is mighty (Bass solo)*

*Et misericordia - And his mercy (Alto and Tenor solo)*

*Fecit potentiam - He hath shewed strength (Chorus)*

*Deposuit potentes - He hath put down the mighty (Tenor solo)*

*Esurientes implevit bonis - He hath filled the hungry with good things (Alto solo)*

*Suscepit Israel - His servant Israel, He hath holpen (Soprano I & II and Alto trio)*

*Sicut locutus est - As He promised to our forefathers (Chorus)*

*Gloria Patri - Glory to the Father (Chorus)*

~ INTERVAL ~

## J S BACH/ORCHESTRA STRAVINSKY *Canonic Variations on 'Vom Himmel Hoch'*

In 1747 Bach wrote his Five Canonic Variations on the Christmas Chorale 'Vom Himmel Hoch' for his admission to the Society of Musical Science in Leipzig. It was yet another example of his genius and mastery of contrapuntal forms and in this respect can stand alongside the more well-known 'Art of Fugue' and 'Musical Offering'. Stravinsky's setting for an ensemble of instruments and chorus, begun in New York on 29th December 1955

and finished about six weeks later in Hollywood, is much more than just an orchestration of Bach's text. He transposes the 2nd, 3rd and 4th variation in a desire for more contrast and to make it more suited to the actual instruments employed. Stravinsky also opens the work with an orchestration of the chorale itself taken from Bach's Christmas Oratorio.

## IGOR STRAVINSKY

### *Symphony of Psalms*

Emerging from the works of the 1920's - Stravinsky's, so called, neo-classical period, the *Symphony of Psalms*, composed in 1930, recaptures the vibrant intensity of his earlier works, yet also anticipates the austere spirituality of the *Mass* and other later works. It also comes in the light of his return to the church after he had lapsed from it in 1910.

The text comes from three psalms, making a dramatic sequence of prayer, testimony, and praise. The music matches this sequence with the three movements - Prelude, Fugue and Symphonic Allegro, and not only enhances each part of the text, but also puts the prayer and the praise into a relation that has been described by the following analogy: *The Symphony is like a cathedral, with Portal, Nave and Quire.*

#### 1. Prayer - Prelude - Psalm 39 v. 13, 14, 15.

Hear my prayer, O Lord and my supplication.  
Incline thine ears: Do not keep silent.  
For I am a stranger and a sojourner.  
O spare me:  
O spare me, that I may recover strength:  
before I go hence and be no more seen.

#### 2. Testimony - Fugue - Psalm 40 v. 1-4.

I waited patiently for the Lord and he inclined unto me and heard my cry.  
He brought me up out of an horrible pit: out of the mire and clay.  
He set me up upon a rock and established my goings.  
And he hath put a new song in my mouth: a thanksgiving to the Lord.  
Many shall see it and fear: and shall put their trust in the Lord.

#### 3. Praise - Symphonic Allegro - Psalm 150.

Alleluia  
O praise God in his holiness: Praise him in the firmament of his power.  
Praise him in his mighty acts: Praise him according to his excellent greatness.  
Praise him with the sound of the trumpet:  
Alleluia, Praise ye the Lord.  
Praise him with the timbrel and the dance: . . . and organs.  
Praise him upon the loud cymbals: and upon the high sounding cymbals.  
Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.  
Alleluia.  
Praise ye the Lord.

#### STEPHANIE NEAL

Stephanie is a graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music. During her final year at the college, she became a regular member of the BBC Northern Singers, now the Britten Singers. She has toured extensively with the group, both in this country and abroad, including such destinations as Poland, Thailand, Hong Kong and Australia.

Under its auspices she has also taken part in the Promenade Concerts and in several leading British Festivals.

During her career Stephanie has sung the Soprano role in most of the major oratorio works, with Choral Societies in many parts of the country. Amongst eminent conductors, with whom she has worked, Stephanie includes Sir George Solti, Richard Hickox and Sir Charles Groves. Currently she is a member of the staff of Bolton School where she teaches Music and English.

#### TIMOTHY MASSA

Timothy was born in London and began his vocal career as a treble in the West End Production of *Evita*. He began training as a Counter Tenor at the age of 17 and studied as a post graduate at the Royal Northern College of Music. He currently studies with Villa Blom. Career highlights include recitals of contemporary music in the Purcell Room and Queen Elizabeth Hall with the Harmonie Band, for which he received high critical acclaim; he was soloist in the St Martin-in-the-Fields 1997 Christmas *Messiah* and has sung with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society. He has become a regular soloist with the baroque ensemble Florilegium, with whom he has toured Europe, giving performances of Bach's *St John Passion*, *Christmas Oratorio*, and the *Magnificat*. Timothy's repertoire includes many of the Handel oratorios, Purcell Odes, Vivaldi *Gloria* and *Stabat Mater* and the Monteverdi *Vespers* of 1610 and 1640. Twentieth Century repertoire includes Britten *Rejoice in the Lamb* Orff *Carmina Burana* and Bernstein *Chichester Psalms*.

#### NEIL SHARP

Neil was born in Essex. He was a Choral Scholar at Corpus Christ College, Cambridge, where he studied medical sciences before transferring to Edinburgh to qualify and practice as a doctor. He subsequently left medicine to pursue a career in music as a singer, musical director and violinist.

On the operatic stage, Neil has performed with Scottish Opera, Opera Ireland and Opera North, with whom he is currently contracted. His roles on stage include; the Narrator (Britten *Rape of Lucretia*) Lukslinger (Britten - *Paul Bunyan*); the Celebrant (Bernstein *Mass*) and Danilo (*The Merry Widow*).

As a recitalist and oratorio soloist, Neil has performed throughout the country and abroad. His repertoire includes Bach's *St. John Passion*, *Christmas Oratorio* and *B Minor Mass*, *Messiah*, *The Creation*, *The Seasons*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Mendelssohn *St Paul*, Elgar *The Light of Life*, Finzi *Dies Natalis* and Britten *St Nicolas*.

Neil broadcasts regularly for the BBC as a soloist with and member of The Daily Service Singers.

#### ADRIAN BLAKELEY

Adrian studied singing at Huddersfield University and has been engaged regularly as a soloist throughout the country in oratorio ever since. For ten years he was the Senior Bass Lay Clerk in Manchester Cathedral Choir and is currently a member of the BBC Daily Service Singers, where he has recently undertaken live solo performances.

Over the years, Adrian has been involved in concerts with Nigel Ogden (presenter of the BBC Radio 2's *The Organist Entertains*). This has afforded him the opportunity to gain a repertoire of lighter music. Adrians recordings have featured on Nigel's programme.

In recent years, Adrian has featured on CD's with Nigel Ogden. Next year, CD recordings are planned of Stainer's *Crucifixion* and Maunder's *Olivet to Calvary*.

#### PATRICK LARLEY

Patrick is the Musical Director of Nantwich Choral Society and also conducts Stone and Ludlow Choral Societies. He is a freelance harpsichordist, organist, singer and composer and as a conductor has worked extensively with choirs and orchestras. As a member of the BBC Northern Singers, Patrick has broadcast regularly on Radio 3 and taken part in many of the leading music festivals in the UK. He is also founder and director of his own vocal ensemble, *Chudleigh's Cumpanie* and the early music group, *The Gallery Players*.

An important aspect of Patrick's musical career has been his work with young singers. He was Director of Music at St James' Choir School in Great Grimsby, Conductor of Howell's School Girls' Choir and Director of the Chapel Choir at Ellesmere College. He founded the Maelor Young Voices and has recently launched the new Nantwich Youth Choir - affiliated to Nantwich Choral Society.

Patrick now spends a great deal of his time composing and arranging. His recent compositions include *Appearing, Shining, Distant or Near* - a setting of the great Hymn to Aten and *Stone Circles* - an oratorio celebrating the 30th anniversary of Stone Choral Society. In 1997 he composed *On the Edge of Glory* for St Columba's Church in Chester which received its first performance at the 1400th anniversary celebrations of the death of St Columba on June 13th 1997 - performed by Chudleigh's Cumpanie. Future commissions are *Psalm 150* for the 150th anniversary of Flint Parish Church, an organ piece *The Farmington Suite*, for the dedication of the new organ in Farmington Church in Gloucestershire. A *Mass for the Millennium*, commissioned by NCS will be a full-scale setting of the mass in Latin for chorus, semichorus, soprano and bass soloists and orchestra. The movements will be interspersed with settings of four poems written especially for this work by local poets. The *Mass for the Millennium* will receive its world premiere on Saturday 6th May 2000 in St Mary's Parish Church, Nantwich.