

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

Saturday 14th November 1998 at 7.30pm
STRAVINSKY - SYMPHONY OF PSALMS
BACH - MAGNIFICAT

Saturday 5th December 1998 at 7.00pm
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

Nantwich Choral Society is supported by
Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council
Nantwich Town Council
The National Federation of Music Societies
The Harding Trust

Nantwich Choral Society is a registered charity
No. 516572

HANDEL SEMELE



SATURDAY 9th MAY 1998

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

Nantwich Choral Society

NANTWICH SINFONIA
(Leader: Joanne Quigley)

SEMELE - Tina Jones (*soprano*)

JUNO - Annette Wood (*mezzo soprano*)

JUPITER - Richard Roddis (*tenor*)

CADMUS/SOMNUS - Richard Paul (*bass*)

IRIS - Katie Harvey (*mezzo soprano*)

Andrew Mildinhall (*Harpsichord*)

Conducted by
Patrick Larley

NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF MUSIC SOCIETIES



ACT I

Overture		
Recitative	Bass	Behold, auspicious flames arise
Chorus		Lucky omens
Recitative and	} Soprano	(Ah me! what refuge
Air		(O Jove, in pity
Chorus		Avert these omens, all ye powers
Recitative	Bass	Again auspicious flames arise
Chorus		Cease, cease your vows
Recitative	Bass	Wing'd with our fears
Chorus		Hail, Cadmus, hail
Air and	} Soprano	(Endless pleasure, endless love
Chorus		(Endless pleasure, endless love

ACT II

Sinfonia		
Recitative	Contralto and Soprano	Awake, Saturnia
Air	Contralto	Hence, Iris, hence away
Air	Soprano	O Sleep, why dost thou leave me
Recitative	Tenor	You are mortal
Chorus		Now love, that everlasting boy
Recitative	Tenor and Soprano	By my command
Air	Tenor	Where'er you walk
Chorus		Bless the glad earth with heavenly lays

- INTERVAL -

ACT III

Introduction		
Recitative	Contralto (and Soprano)	Somnus, awake
Air	Bass	Leave me, loathsome light
Recitative	(Soprano and) Contralto	Dull god, canst thou attend
Air	Bass	More sweet is that name
Recitative	Contralto	My will obey
Recitative	Contralto and Soprano	Thus shaped like Ino
Recitative	Contralto	Be wise, as you are beautiful
Air	Soprano	Thus let my thanks be paid
Recitative	Contralto and Soprano	Rich odours fill the fragrant air
Air	Tenor	Lay your doubts and fears aside
Recitative	Tenor	Oh, Semele
Chorus		How engaging, how endearing
Air	Soprano	I ever am granting
Recitative	Tenor and Soprano	Speak your desire
Recitative	Soprano and Tenor	You'll grant what I require
Air	Tenor	Ah! take heed what you press
Air	Soprano	No, no, I'll take no less
Recitative	Tenor	Ah! whither is she gone
Recitative	Soprano	Ah me! too late I now repent
Chorus		Oh, terror and astonishment
Recitative	Tenor	Apollo comes
Chorus		Happy, happy shall we be

SEMELE by G F Handel (1685 - 1756)

Handel's SEMELE is best described as a secular oratorio although the libretto was originally written as an opera by William Congreve in 1707. The work, however, was considered unsuitable for the stage, on account of the undramatic conclusion, and lay unused until Handel worked up the poem, as an oratorio completing the whole work in just over four weeks - between June 3rd and July 4th 1743. The first performance took place on February 10th 1744, the programme bearing the somewhat unusual title:

**The Story of Semele. As it is Perform'd at the Theatre-Royal in Covent Garden.
Alter'd from the Semele of Mr William Congreve.
Set to Musick by Mr George Frederick Handel.
Price One Shilling.**

Act 1

Scene: The Temple of Juno

Semele, daughter of Cadmus, King of Thebes, is engaged to be married to a prince of Boeotia. As the wedding sacrifice is made before the statues of Jupiter and Juno, the King and Queen of the gods, Juno's statue bows - she is pleased with the match. The bride-to-be, however, is not so pleased and asks Jupiter (who loves Semele) to help rescue her from this plight. Cadmus watches in amazement as his daughter is snatched up by a mighty eagle (Jupiter in disguise) and carried up into the heavens. The chorus of Priests persuade Cadmus that, although he may have lost a daughter, he has gained favour with the King of the Gods and therefore to cease his mourning and be glad. (Hail, Cadmus, hail!). Meanwhile Semele is in divine bliss above with her lover, Jupiter. (Endless pleasure, endless love).

Act 2

Scene 1: A Pleasant Country

Juno, Jupiter's heavenly consort, is not too pleased with the state of affairs and seeks revenge upon the cursed Semele. Iris, a messenger of the Gods, tells her that Semele is guarded by two dragons at the gate of her paradise and therefore is quite safe from any harm. They decide to look for Somnus, the God of Sleep, and ask him to help by casting sleep upon these dragons.

Scene 2: An apartment in the Palace of Semele

Semele awakes and rises (Oh, sleep, why dost thou leave me). She and Jupiter are enjoying divine bliss together - he sings to her "Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade". The Chorus of Loves and Zephyrs and Nymphs and Swains sing of love - (Bless the glad earth with heavenly lays).

- INTERVAL -

ACT 3

Scene 1: Somnus' dark cave

Juno and Iris wake Somnus, who complains (Leave me, loathsome light). Juno charms Somnus, who agrees to put the dragons to sleep.

Scene 2: Semele's apartment

The jealous Juno, disguised as Semele's beloved sister Iro, tells Semele to persuade Jupiter to

appear to her, not in his mortal form, but as a God. Aside, she adds - as he appears in Juno's arms! Jupiter is not keen to do this as he knows the consequences - as does Juno, of course. But after saying he will grant her anything he feels trapped in his promise and reluctantly agrees. He tries his softest lightning and his mildest thunderbolt but to no avail - Semele is consumed by fire and dies. Apollo appears with the good news that although Semele is dead, from her union with Jupiter a new God will be born - Bacchus. And so sorrow is turned to joy in the final party of revelry and happiness. (Happy! Happy shall we be).

Tina Jones - Soprano

Tina has studied voice with Barbara Rowbotham at Lancaster University and then as a postgraduate with Honor Sheppard at the RNCM in Manchester. Since leaving Manchester in 1991 she has concentrated on recital and oratorio solo work and has performed with many choral societies throughout the country. As a member of the Britten Singers, the Manchester based professional chamber choir, she has recorded for radio, television and CD and taken part in many concerts and festivals including the "Proms". Tina is also an accomplished flautist and has appeared in a duo, as a singer and flautist, accompanied by Patrick Larley on the Harpischord.

She lives in Wrexham, North Wales, where she teaches flute and singing whilst continuing her own studies with Honor Sheppard.

Annette Wood - Mezzo Soprano

Annette completed her music degree at Lancaster University where she studied singing with Barbara Rowbotham and won the Director of Music's Prize. After graduation, Annette was awarded an entrance exhibition to study at the Royal Academy of Music with Kenneth Bowen. She has taken part in numerous masterclasses with artists such as Robert Tear, Benjamin Luxon and Roger Vignoles. Annette has appeared as soloist with many choral societies throughout the country performing a wide and varied repertoire which in addition to the standard choral works, includes Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle, Mozart's Coronation Mass, Elgar's The Music Makers and the world premiere of William Llewellyn's On Earth in Concert Sing. Annette's versatility comes to the fore in her solo recital work with programmes ranging from early music through to the present day and her vocal work is further enhanced through extensive ensemble work within a vocal quartet and her varied work alongside other instrumentalists. Annette presently studies with Pamela Cook and receives coaching from Paul Hamburger.

Richard Roddis - Tenor

Richard is well known in the Midlands for his Oratorio solo work and has sung for numerous Choral Societies throughout the country. As a member of Capella Nova and the Britten Singers - formerly the BBC Northern Singers - he has made several CD recordings and BBC broadcasts and has also toured in France, the Far East and Australia. He is a member of the vocal ensemble 'Bustles and Beaux' and the voice and harp duo, 'Zennor'. As a choral conductor Richard has broadcast on Radio 3 with the Exeter University Singers, his own chamber choir The Richard Roddis Singers and, as director of the Sinfonia Chorale in Nottingham, he recently gave the East Midlands premiere of Benjamin Britten's 'The Company of Heaven'. He also conducts the Loughborough University Choir and is Musical Director of Charnwood Opera. Recent repertoire includes 'Messiah', 'St Matthew Passion' (Evangelist), Britten's 'St Nicholas', 'Dies Natalis' by Finzi and the first modern performance of 'The Prophecy of Elisha' by Gianpaolo Colonna (d.1695).

Richard Paul - Bass

Richard studied at the Trinity College of Music where he won several prizes for the interpretation of English Song. He has appeared as a soloist with choral societies in many parts of the country but particularly in London and the South East, including the Queen Elizabeth Hall and St. John's Smith Square. His varied career to date has encompassed many different styles of vocal music from oratorio to music hall and he sings with 'Bustles and Beaux' a vocal ensemble specialising in Victorian and Edwardian entertainment. He now combines a busy schedule as a teacher of singing and voice production, from his home near Lichfield, with performing and occasional television walk-on work.

Patrick Larley - Conductor

This is Nantwich Choral Society's first concert under their new Musical Director Patrick Larley. Patrick is a versatile freelance musician who combines teaching and composing with a busy recital career as a singer, harpsichordist, organist and conductor. After study at the RNCM Patrick's professional career began as a Lay Vicar Choral in Wells Cathedral Choir where he also taught piano and organ at Wells Cathedral Music School. Subsequently he has held the posts of Sub Organist at St. Asaph Cathedral; Organist and Master of Choristers at St. James' Choir School, Great Grimsby; and Director of Music at Ellesmere College, Shropshire. He has broadcast regularly and toured with the BBC Northern Singers and appeared in many of the major British music festivals including Aldeburgh, Chester, York, Paisley and the Proms. Patrick also directs his own small vocal ensemble Chudleigh's Cumpanie and is founder and director of the early music group - The Gallery Players.

Among Patrick's many exciting plans for NCS is the composition of a new work for the choir - as part of the Millennium celebrations. **The Millennium Mass** - a setting of the mass interspersed with four new poems (especially commissioned for this work) will receive its premiere in May 2000.