

Great Choral Music



Friday 9 December 2011 at 7.00 pm
Symphony Hall

Tuesday 13 December 2011 at 7.00 pm
Town Hall



Handel: **Messiah** (Full version)

Paula Greenwood *soprano*
William Purefoy *counter tenor*
Thomas Hobbs *tenor*
David Soar *bass*

Thomas Trotter *harpsichord*
Roger Judd *organ*

City of Birmingham Choir

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: Adrian Lucas

There will be one interval of twenty minutes between parts 1 and 2 and a brief pause between parts 2 and 3.

The public will be admitted to Symphony Hall, Town Hall and the Convention Centre subject to terms and conditions of the licensing requirements and fire regulations.

Handel's Messiah

What better way can there be to celebrate Christmas than through the enduring energy and optimism of Handel's great oratorio *Messiah*?

Christmas is a time of great joy and happiness for many people. The celebrations of today take hold of the country with a fervour and energy out of all proportion to the origins of the feast and, for many, without a hint of the true Christian spirit.

The composer himself was close to despair in his life with a string of short-lived musical successes and many financial disasters. He was literally awash with debt and could see no clear way forward. How the world of music was to be changed by this opportune association between Handel and the librettist Charles Jennens! For Handel, this was indeed the chance of a lifetime, though he would not know it for some time.

As we listen to the words of the prophets and apostles again and share in such wonderful music, let us put that energy and optimism into our lives and the lives of those around us in the hope that this Christmas will be a start for a better future.

Adrian Lucas

Conductor

Conductor



Adrian Lucas *Conductor*

Adrian Lucas has been conductor of the City of Birmingham Choir since 2002. He follows in the footsteps of Christopher Robinson and Sir David Willcocks, who were each at one time Master of the Choristers at Worcester Cathedral, a post Adrian has held since 1996.

An Organ Scholar at St John's College, Cambridge under Dr George Guest, Adrian has since pursued a primary career in cathedral music, holding posts at Salisbury, Norwich, and Portsmouth before moving to the West Midlands. His work at Worcester has been focused around the daily liturgy of the Cathedral

and developing the work of the Cathedral Choir through a series of successful recordings, broadcasts and international tours

Since 1996 Adrian has also been the Artistic Director to the Worcester Three Choirs Festival, one of the oldest music festivals in the world and dating back at least to the early 18th and probably as far as the middle 17th century. Initially formed around the work of the three Cathedral Choirs of Worcester, Gloucester and Hereford, it has expanded into a week-long event, rotating between the three Cathedral cities each year, with international artists, professional performers and world-class orchestras. The highly successful programme for 2011 included a 9/11 tribute concert with John Adams' *On the Transmigration of Souls* and a rare performance of Elgar's *Caractacus*.

Adrian continues to perform as a solo organist and has many CDs to his name. Recitals have included a large number of Cathedral venues around England, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as King's College in Cambridge. 2007 saw recitals in Magdeburg and Halberstadt in Germany and 2008 saw a five-week tour

in the USA, taking in such major venues as Boston, Indianapolis, Ann Arbor and Houston. Since the completion of the new instrument in Worcester he has added a CD of the Julius Reubke *Sonata on the 94th Psalm* and Louis Vierne's mighty *First Symphony* to a growing list of recordings.

Adrian Lucas is widely respected as a conductor and has worked with orchestras including the Philharmonia, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the CBSO and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. In March 2010 he was guest conductor for Classic FM's LIVE event at the Royal Albert Hall in a programme which featured the Elgar *Cello Concerto* with Julian Lloyd Webber as soloist.

At the end of 2011, Adrian will be leaving his post at the Cathedral to expand upon his freelance musical work, as well as expanding his recording business (www.acclaimproductions.co.uk) which offers a high-class service ranging from solo recitals and demonstration disks right up to full-blown orchestral concerts.

Messiah

Messiah

George Frideric Handel (1685 – 1759)



Handel first visited England in 1710. He later settled here permanently and by the time he adopted British nationality, in 1726, he was famous throughout much of Europe. However, during the 1730s he made the mistake of continuing to compose Italian operas. But this was London, not the Italy of his youth; opera was expensive to stage and audiences preferred theatre because tickets were cheaper and performances were in English. A whole series of indifferent operas ended with *Imeneo* which had two performances in 1740, and *Deidamia* (1741) which folded after three. Thus torpedoed, Handel's career as a composer of opera was over so completely that no serious company

staged any of his works again until the twentieth century.

At this low point, in the summer of 1741, the arrival of Jennens' libretto for *Messiah* was matched by an invitation from the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to visit Dublin, with a view to performing new work in aid of charity. Always ready to give his services generously and inspired by the libretto, Handel's enthusiasm revived and he set to work with gusto. He often composed quickly but even so, the fact that he began *Messiah* on 22nd August and completed it just over three weeks later, on 14th September, remains one of the musical world's most astonishing achievements.

Handel travelled to Ireland in November, spending the winter in Dublin giving concerts in aid of various charities. The announcement that his series of concerts in the 'New Musick-hall' would culminate in "Mr Handel's new Grand Oratorio, call'd the MESSIAH" ('Faulkner's Dublin Journal', 27th March 1742) generated an atmosphere of excited anticipation.

Admission to the final rehearsal, on 9th April, was free to those who had bought a ticket for the first performance. The 'Dublin Newsletter' reported, "Mr Handel's new sacred Oratorio ... far surpasses anything of that Nature which has been performed in this or any other Kingdom", a remarkable review for a mere rehearsal! In an attempt to satisfy some of the extra demand for tickets at the first performance, on 13th April, ladies were urged to come without hoops in their dresses and the gentlemen to come without swords. The extra space thus created increased

the capacity of the hall from 600 to 700. Handel conducted from the harpsichord and, along with all the soloists, gave his services free. The soprano, tenor and bass solo parts were each shared by two people, while the contralto shared her part with two counter tenors. A collection raised £400, to be shared by three charities. The all-male chorus consisted of men and boys from the choirs of both the city's cathedrals. An identical review, probably written by the Secretary of Mercer's Hospital (the main charity to benefit), appeared in all three Dublin papers:-

"Words are wanting to express the exquisite Delight it afforded to the admiring crowded Audience. The Sublime, the Grand, the Tender, adapted to the most elevated, majestick and moving Words, conspired to transport and charm the ravished Heart and Ear."

The instant success of the work in Ireland was not matched in England. There was opposition to the staging of a sacred work in a theatre and the first few London performances – all in theatres – were received indifferently. Only in 1750 did a breakthrough occur. Handel decided to give *Messiah* as a benefit concert for the Foundling Hospital, having had a new organ installed in the hospital chapel at his own expense. In this 'more suitable' setting *Messiah* was received enthusiastically and within a few years choirs throughout the country were adding it to their repertoire.

The work is scored economically, with no wasted notes. Above all, the shape of the music and the sense of the words fit each other perfectly from the moment the tenor opens with the soothing

sound of “Comfort ye, my people”. The instrumental writing is for an augmented string orchestra, with harpsichord and organ continuo. The effect of most other instruments is enhanced because they are used sparingly. Oboes and bassoons add delicate, light colouring only; trumpets are first heard, off stage, in “Glory to God”; the timpani remain silent until the “Hallelujah Chorus”. “The trumpet shall sound” provides the only prominent instrumental solo.

Since Handel’s time the popularity of *Messiah* has remained undiminished. It has been given by countless professional and amateur musicians, all of whom need considerable stamina and commitment to complete the performance effectively. It has been subject to the whims of fashion, like the monster renditions, with huge choirs and orchestras, popular in Victorian times. It has survived this and the more recent vogue for minimalist performances with period instruments and a handful of singers. It has even survived the egos of some soloists, eager to stamp their own mark on it by embellishing their vocal lines unnecessarily.

There is no such thing as an ‘authentic’ performance of *Messiah*, yet the work survives changing tastes, fashions and mutilations because it speaks to us directly of God and His love for us. Even today, when God rarely features in the thoughts of many people, this is a message that still gets through.

Part One

PROPHECY OF THE MESSIAH AND ITS FULFILMENT

Handel and Jennens disagreed frequently, yet they retained a respect for each other and remained friends. *Messiah* is their greatest joint achievement. The Bible is the source of the entire libretto, much of it from the Old Testament, including its more obscure corners, such as the books of Haggai and Zechariah. Jennens’ choice of text provided a sure foundation on which Handel was able to build.

For his part, Handel ensured that his music serves the text, thereby giving the whole work a transparent beauty in which the interest of the listener is maintained throughout. Part One is characterised by restraint. The chorus in particular is kept on a tight rein so as to maximise its impact later in the work. “And the Glory of the Lord shall be revealed”, but not fully and not just yet. “For unto us a Child is born” offers a clearer glimpse of that glory, while “Glory to God” itself subsides in a soft cushion of light as the angels retreat from sight. A serene duet for alto and soprano, “He shall feed His flock” is followed by the chorus which closes Part One, “His yoke is easy”, written with a light touch and a promise of more substance to follow.

Prophecy of God’s salvation of humankind

Overture

Recitative (Tenor)

Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness: prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (Isaiah 40:1-3)

Aria (Tenor)

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight and the rough places plain. (Isaiah 40:4)

Chorus

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. (Isaiah 40:5)

Prophecy of Messiah’s coming and consequent judgment

Recitative (Bass)

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Yet once a little while and I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come. (Haggai 2:6-7)

The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. (Malachi 3:1)

Aria (Bass)

But who may abide the day of his coming and who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire. (Malachi 3:2)

Chorus

And he shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering of righteousness. (Malachi 3:3)

Prophecy of Messiah's incarnation and revelation to humankind

Recitative (Alto)

Behold! a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us. (Isaiah 7:14; Matt. 1:23)

Aria (Alto and Chorus)

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain: O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid: say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! (Isaiah 40:9).

Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. (Isaiah 60:1)

Recitative (Bass)

For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee, and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. (Isaiah 60:2-3)

Aria (Bass)

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. (Isaiah 9:2)

Chorus

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

Announcement of Messiah's Nativity

Pastoral Symphony

Recitative (Soprano)

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

And lo! the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.

And the Angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy,

which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:8-11)

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: (Luke 2:13)

Chorus

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, goodwill toward men. (Luke 2:14)

Messiah's Healing Ministry

Aria (Soprano)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto thee! He is the righteous Saviour, and he shall speak peace unto the heathen. (Zechariah 9:9-10)

Recitative (Alto)

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. (Isaiah 35:5-6)

Aria (Alto and Soprano)

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. (Isaiah 40:11)

Come unto him, all ye that labour and 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.
(Matt. 11:28-29)

Chorus

His yoke is easy and his burden is light.
(Matt. 11:30)

INTERVAL

Part Two

FROM PASSION TO TRIUMPH

The mood darkens with the events leading up to the Crucifixion. The utter despair of the alto aria “He was despised” is followed by three choruses at the end of which we realise, in the ‘adagio’ conclusion, that the Lord has indeed laid on Him the iniquity of us all. The tenor soloist provides a link into a fourth chorus, “He trusted in God”, one of the most powerful in the work, a fugue which captures the mood of the people as they jeer and mock Christ.

The simple soprano aria “But thou didst not leave his soul in hell”, announcing Christ’s Resurrection, lifts the gloom and points the way to the “Hallelujah Chorus”. Between these two are some of the most musically satisfying pieces in *Messiah*; the elegant perfection of “How beautiful are the feet”, the raging torrent of “Why do the nations?” and the righteous anger felt in “Thou shalt break them”. The “Hallelujah Chorus” itself brings Part Two to a glorious conclusion.

Messiah’s Passion

Chorus

Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away
the sin of the world. (John 1:29)

Aria (Alto)

He was despised and rejected of men; a
man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.
(Isaiah 53:3)

He gave his back to the smiters, and his
cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.
He hid not his face from shame and spitting.
(Isaiah 50:6)

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)

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 (Tenor)

All they that see him, laugh him to scorn;
they shoot out their lips, and shake their
heads saying: (Psalm 22:7)

Chorus

He trusted in God that he would deliver him;
let him deliver him, if he delight in him.
(Psalm 22:8; Matt. 27:43)

Recitative (Tenor)

Thy rebuke hath broken his heart; he is full
of heaviness. He looked for some to have
pity on him, but there was no man, neither
found he any to comfort him. (Psalm 69:20)

Aria (Soprano)

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like
unto his sorrow. (Lamentations 1:12)

Crucifixion, descent into hell and resurrection

Recitative (Tenor)

He was cut off from the land of the living; for
the transgression of thy people was he
stricken. (Isaiah 53:8).

Aria (Soprano)

But thou didst not leave his soul in hell; nor
didst thou suffer thy Holy One to see
corruption. (Psalm 16.10; Acts 2:31)

Ascension

Chorus

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift
up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of
Glory shall come in.
Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong
and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.
Who is this King of Glory?
The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of Glory.
(Psalm 24:7-10)

Recitative (Tenor)

Unto which of the angels said he at any time: Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. (Hebrews 1:5)

Chorus

Let all the angels of God worship him. (Hebrews 1:6)

Aria (Alto)

Thou art gone up on high; thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men: yea, even for thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.
(Psalm 68:18)

Whitsun, preaching of the Gospel to the world

Chorus

The Lord gave the word; great was the company of the preachers. (Psalms 68:11)

Aria (Soprano)

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world. (Romans 10:15,18)

World's rejection of Christianity

Aria (Bass)

Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed.
(Psalms 2:1,2)

Chorus

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us. (Psalm 2:3)

Divine destruction of enemies of religion; Christianity's eternal triumph

Recitative (Tenor)

He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in derision. (Psalm 2:4)

Aria (Tenor)

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. (Psalm 2:9)

Chorus

Hallelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. (Rev. 19:6)

The Kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. (Rev. 11:15) King of kings, and Lord of lords.
Hallelujah! (Rev. 19:16)

Part Three

MESSIAH'S ROLE IN LIFE AFTER DEATH

"I know that my Redeemer liveth" is a beautifully calm affirmation that God has kept His promise to us through the Resurrection of Christ. Handel is depicted working on this aria on his memorial in Westminster Abbey.

"The trumpet shall sound", in which the bass has a powerful dialogue with the solo trumpet, is ushered in by an exquisite recitative. Its opening phrase, "Behold, I tell you a mystery", is tiny yet perfectly formed, like a diamond glinting in the sun.

The climax of the work, "Worthy is the Lamb", has the same key (D major) and style as the "Hallelujah Chorus". It is, in effect, two choruses, linked by an unresolved chord, after which the basses begin to sing 'Amen'. Handel takes this final word by the scruff of the neck, spinning, weaving and expanding it into a mighty fugue which lasts for over four minutes. Just as the momentum seems to be building into something unstoppable, he introduces one last surprise as the sound is abruptly reduced to nothing but the violins. The voices return and a prolonged surge of energy by the whole chorus and orchestra brings this masterpiece to an end.

Faith in personal resurrection and redemption

Aria (Soprano)

I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. (Job 19:25-26)

For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep. (1 Cor. 15:20)

Chorus

Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (1 Cor. 15:21-22)

General resurrection

Recitative (Bass)

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. (1 Cor. 15:51-52)

Aria (Bass)

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (1 Cor. 15:52-53)

Death and sin superseded; Messiah's intercession at last judgement

Recitative (Alto)

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory! (1 Cor. 15:54)

Duet (Alto and Tenor)

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. (1 Cor. 15:55-56)

Chorus

But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 15:57)

Aria (Soprano)

If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us. (Romans 8:31, 33, 34)

Adoration of Messiah by blessed in heaven

Chorus

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Blessing, and honour, glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.

Amen (Rev. 5:12-14)

Programme notes have been written by John Boynton

(Some notes were sourced from "Handel and his world" by H C Robbins Landon.)

The subheadings used are based on a structure provided by Jennens for the London performance of *Messiah* in 1743, with headings not just for the three parts of the oratorio, but also for each new section.

Soloists

Paula Greenwood *Soprano*



Paula graduated with an M.Mus. from the DIT Conservatory of Music (Dublin) in 2004 under the tutelage of Edith Forrest and Trudi Carberry. Paula is a multiple prizewinner in the Siemens Feis Ceoil competitions in Dublin, winning the Geoghegan Memorial Cup for opera, the Pearl Atock Trophy, the Percy Whitehead Cup, the Young Cup, the Veronica Dunne Cup and the John McCormack Bursary. She was awarded the Blyth-Buesst Opera Prize and A.M. Parker Prize in the Royal Academy of Music, London, where she studied with Ingrid Surgenor and Elizabeth Ritchie, graduating with a PGDip, LRAM and DipRAM in 2007, going on to study on scholarship with renowned tenor Dennis O'Neill at the Cardiff International Academy of Voice.

Paula's performances include *Currency* (Denis Roche, Diversions Festival) as well as Michael Gordon's *Van Gogh Opera* with the Crash Ensemble, productions of *Andrea Chenier* (Giordano), *Queen of Spades* (Tchaikovsky) and *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Gluck) with Opera Ireland. Paula sang the role of Barbarina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Lyric Opera in the National Concert Hall, Dublin as well as on tour with Opera Theatre Company in 2007. Extensive oratorio performances include Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, *St Nicholas Mass* and Mozart's *Coronation Mass*, Handel's *Messiah*, Vivaldi's *Gloria in D*, Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and Charpentier's *Te Deum*, Dvorak's *Mass in D major*, Malcolm Archer's *Requiem*, Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* and *Te Deum in C*. Paula's recent engagements include a gala concert for Irish Heritage at St John's, Smith Square in London, Brahms *Requiem* in

Brecon, Mozart *Mass in C* in Oxford, Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle* in Richelieu, Haydn *Stabat Mater* in Worcester Cathedral and *Sea Symphony* for the Three Choirs Festival. Paula sings regularly in the chorus of Welsh National Opera and upcoming engagements include a principal role in *Nine Stories High*, a community opera for WNO.

William Purefoy *Countertenor*



With a reputation consolidated by successful appearances in the UK with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Hanover Band, English Concert and The Sixteen, William Purefoy is also generating a strong international following, with recitals and operatic appearances in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, and his debut at Carnegie Hall in New York.

A graduate of Magdalen College Oxford and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, he was a finalist in the Kathleen Ferrier Awards and a winner of the NFMS Young Concert Artists Award. His international operatic engagements have included Ottone in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* for Theater Basel, Ptolemy in *Guilio Cesare* and Dr Nice in *Evening Hymn* for the Staatsoper Hannover, while highlights of his UK appearances include Sir Philip Sydney in Harle's *Angel Magick* (directed by David Pountney at the Royal Albert Hall for the BBC Proms), Apollo in Mozart's *Apollo and Hyacinth* for Opera Theatre Company, Ascanio in Mozart's *Ascanio in Alba*, and the Handel roles Athama in *Semele*, Lychas in *Hercules* and Arsace in *Partenope* for the Buxton Festival. In addition he appeared as Ernesto in *Il Mondo Della Luna* for Garsington Opera, while for Scottish Opera he sang Andronico in *Tamerlano* and Antonio in *Gesualdo*.

His many recordings to date have included Vaughan-Williams' *Mass in G Minor* (Hickox/Chandos), Boyce's *Ode for Saint Cecilia's Day* and *David's Lamentation Over Saul and Jonathan* (Hanover Band/ASV *Gaudeamus*), *Rosie Blood* (John Harle *Terror and*

Magnificence/Decca Argo) and the role of Spirit in *Dido and Aeneas* (Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment/Chandos).

He has given recitals at the Wigmore Hall, Barbican and Purcell Room as well as in Innsbruck and Graz.

Thomas Hobbs *Tenor*



Born in Exeter, Thomas Hobbs studied at the Royal College of Music under the tutelage of Neil Mackie, where he was awarded the RCM Peter Pears and Mason scholarships, and at the Royal Academy of Music under Ryland Davies, where he held a Kohn Bach Scholarship in addition to a full entrance scholarship. He was also awarded a Susan Chilcott Scholarship and has been made a Royal Philharmonic Society Young Artist. He

was named an Associate Artist of the Classical Opera Company from the 2010/11 season.

Thomas has performed and recorded with many leading ensembles including The Cardinal's Musick, The Tallis Scholars, I Fagiolini, The Sixteen, Polyphony, Ensemble Plus Ultra, Ex-Cathedra and the Dunedin Consort, with whom he has recorded Handel *Acis et Galatea* and Bach *B minor Mass* to critical acclaim. He was also a member of the prestigious Académie at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, where he performed in concert with Louis Langrée and the Camerata Salzburg.

Thomas's operatic roles include the title role in Albert Herring, Acis in Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Ramiro in *Cenerentola*, Conte in *Barber of Seville* and Fileno in Haydn *La fedeltà premiata*. A keen recitalist, highlights include Brett Dean *Winter Songs* at the Cheltenham Festival, Vaughan Williams *On Wenlock Edge* with the Edinburgh Quartet, Schubert *Die Schöne Müllerin* and Schumann *Liederkreis Op.39*, a recital of Mozart songs at London's Kings Place, and a recital of English song and German lieder for the Festival Accademia delle Crete Senesi in Tuscany.

In demand for his concert work, Thomas's recent performances include a staged version of Handel *Messiah* for Opéra National de Bordeaux, Britten *Nocturne* with Paul McCreech and the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, Handel *Messiah* with the Hanover Band, Haydn *Creation* with the Manchester Camerata, Evangelist *St John Passion* at Cadogan Hall and Lichfield Cathedral,

and Monteverdi *Vespers* at the Three Choirs Festival. Ensembles with whom Thomas works frequently include the Stuttgart Kammerchor and the Bach Akademie Stuttgart, and he is a regular performer with Philippe Herreweghe and his acclaimed ensemble Collegium Vocale Gent, with whom he has toured throughout Europe and the US as a soloist performing key works of the 16th -18th centuries.

During the last season Thomas toured with Collegium Vocale, and performed on tour in Europe with the Bach Akademie Stuttgart and the Freiburg Bachchor. Operatic roles included the *Janek Makropolous Case* (cover) for English National Opera and a critically acclaimed Telemachus *The Return of Ulysses* in a new production for ENO conducted by Jonathan Cohen. Thomas performed at London's Wigmore Hall and Kings Place with the Classical Opera Company and made his debut with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. Thomas's engagements in 2011/12 include his debut with the City of Birmingham Symphony and Royal Scottish National orchestras, Alessandro *Il re pastore* with the Classical Opera Company, Beethoven *Mass in C* with the Stuttgart Kammerchor, several tours with Collegium Vocale, notably Bach's *St Matthew Passion* for Easter 2012, Schubert Masses in Hamburg and Handel's *Joshua* with the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin.

David Soar Bass



David was born in Nottinghamshire and studied organ and singing at the Royal Academy of Music. After working as a freelance organist, singer and conductor, including the post of Director of Music at All Saints Parish Church, Kingston, he joined the Welsh National Opera company, where he performed a number of roles including Captain/ Zaretsky in *Eugene Onegin*, Doctor Grenvil in *La Traviata*, Bertrand in *Iolanta*. After studying at the National Opera Studio David

returned to WNO as an Associate Artist, where roles include Colline in *La Boheme*, Zuniga in *Carmen*, Bonze in *Madam Butterfly*, Brander in *The Damnation of Faust*, Bass in *The Seven Deadly Sins*, Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, Alidoro in *La Cenerentola*, The King in *Aida* and Lodovico in *Otello*. Other roles include Banquo in *Macbeth*, Zaccaria in *Nabucco*, Alvisè Badoero in *La Gioconda* for Opera Holland Park, and Donner in *Das Rheingold* for Lucerne Festival. In 2009 David was the first recipient of the Family Parry Bursary for an Associate Artist at WNO.

David's concert repertoire includes *Messiah*, *Creation*, *Elijah*, Mozart and Brahms *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Symphony no 9* and *Missa Solemnis*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* and *The Apostles*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, Stanford's *Songs of the Fleet*, Bach's *Mass in B minor*, *St John Passion*, *St Matthew Passion*, *Christmas Oratorio* and numerous cantatas including *Ich habe genug* for solo bass.

In the 08/09 season David sang the title role in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Colline in *La Boheme*, Surin in *Pique Dame* for Welsh National Opera, Alfonso in *Lucrezia Borgia* for the Buxton Festival, and Beethoven 9 with the RWCMD under Sir Charles Mackerras and with the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra.

In the 09/10 season David sang First Workman in *Wozzeck* with the London Philharmonia under Esa-Pekka Salonen, Handel's *Messiah* with the Academy of Ancient Music in Utrecht conducted by Richard Egarr, Escamillo in *Carmen*, the Doctor in *La Traviata*, Nightwatchman in *Die*

Meistersinger von Nürnberg, the Doctor in *Wozzeck* and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* for Welsh National Opera, where he was Principal Artist. David completed the season making his debut at the Salzburg Festival as Le Duc in *Romeo et Juliette*.

Engagements in the 10/11 season included the Old Monk in *Don Carlo* in Bilbao, Masetto in *Don Giovanni* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra conducted by Robin Ticciati, Quinault in *Adriana Lecouvreur* for his debut at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Ferrando in *Il Trovatore* for Welsh National Opera, Handel's *Messiah* with the English Concert conducted by Harry Bicket, the title role in *Belisario* with Chelsea Opera Group, and Masetto in *Don Giovanni* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera. David also recorded for a broadcast of Act 3 of *Rigoletto* (Sparafucile) with the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Engagements in the 11/12 season and beyond include Hymen/ Sleep/ Coridon/ Winter in *The Fairy Queen* and Mr Flint in *Billy Budd* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, the title role in *Le nozze di Figaro* and Colline in *La Boheme* for Welsh National Opera, Signor La Rocca in *Un giorno di regno* for Bilbao Opera, and his Metropolitan Opera debut in the 12/13 season.

Concert engagements include Handel's *Messiah* with the City of Birmingham Choir and with Britten Sinfonia, *Belshazzar's Feast* with the Hallé Orchestra, and the Brahms *Requiem* and Schoenberg's *Ode to Napoleon* with Welsh National Opera.

City of Birmingham Choir

The City of Birmingham Choir – independent for 90 years!



Since our inception in 1921 the City of Birmingham Choir has constantly thrilled and entertained audiences with our wide and often adventurous repertoire. Singing first in the historic Town Hall and, more recently, in the magnificent acoustics of Symphony Hall we have also enjoyed an enormously productive musical partnership with the city's internationally famous orchestra, the CBSO.

We are led by Adrian Lucas, Master of the Choristers at Worcester Cathedral, a partnership re-establishing a long tradition linking the Choir with the Cathedral.

Widely acclaimed for his conducting of choral and orchestral works at the Three Choirs Festival and elsewhere, Adrian brings a wealth of experience as one of the country's leading choral conductors.

We include most of the major choral works in our repertoire plus more challenging and newer compositions. The standard of our performances draws consistent praise from both critics and audience.

Over our long history we have worked with other orchestras such as the BBC Concert Orchestra and have had concerts broadcast on Radios 2 and 3. We joined the City of Birmingham Symphony Chorus and CBSO for the much-praised centenary performances of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*. We have also sung at the Three Choirs Festival and in addition have performed some of the more intimate choral repertoire in 'out of town' venues such as Tewkesbury Abbey.

Last season was a very busy one, with performances of Verdi's *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Choral Symphony*, Duruflé's *Requiem*, Bach's *Mass in B Minor* and Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* as well as our own regular *Messiah* performances.

The Choir is committed to supporting choral music making and has participated in Making Music's *Adopt-a-composer* scheme as well as running singing competitions and workshops for people of all ages. Currently we are helping to develop the next generation of choral performers with *Voice Factory* – an enterprising scheme providing vocal training for the Choir and encouraging the participation of young people in singing.

We are very proud to be one of the few independent organisations still promoting and financing our own season of major choral concerts with professional symphony orchestras and soloists.

Thank you for your continued support.

President: Hugh Carslake

Conductor: Adrian Lucas

Rehearsal accompanist:: Colin Baines

www.citychoir.org.uk

info@citychoir.org.uk

Supporting Great Choral Music

The City of Birmingham Choir is committed to continuing Birmingham's great choral tradition.

- Our aims include:
- Performing great Choral Music
 - Presenting new and infrequently performed works in our programmes
 - Encouraging young singers through a variety of projects
 - Scheduling complementary events to add value to our concerts

The Choir is a charitable organisation and is fully self-supporting. All Choir members and officers give their time freely. Our main sources of revenue are derived from ticket sales and partnerships with the individuals, Trusts and businesses that share our vision, and whose support we gratefully acknowledge.

President

Hugh Carslake

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Associate Membership and Patronage

You can support the work of the Choir by paying to become an Associate Member or Patron in return for discounts and other benefits. Patrons will be listed in our concert programmes. For more information please contact Frances Hooper at frances.hooper49@btinternet.com

Patrons for 2011/2012 are:

Mrs M Caten	Miss E W Evans
Mrs B Glanfield	Mrs I M Holder
Mr P Hooper	Mrs M E Price
Mrs S E Richmond	Mr A Woodward

Life Members

From time to time the Choir offers Life Membership to those who have given the choir exceptional service. Our current life members are:

John Ankcorn	Keith Archer
Margaret Caten	Alan Edwards
Margery Elliott	Ena Evans
Isabel Holder	Lyndon Jenkins
Michael Joby	Roy Massey
Eileen McGeachin	Hugh McGeachin
Betty Milne	Alan Parkes
Sheila Richmond	Edward Smith
Alan Woodward	

City of Birmingham Choir

Sopranos

Vicki Abson
Kate Adams
Pru Allington-Smith
Rebecca Attwood
Jenny Baines*
Jennifer Barker
Sophie Beck
Beryl Blood
Lara Bone
Claire Bowman
Emma Brereton
Penny Broad
Charlotte Brown
Elena Camisani
Kathryn Carter
Christina Cooper
Rosie Cross
Christy del Strother
Sheila Dobson
Christine Doncaster*
Johannah Dyer
Sylvia Emberson**
Anne Evans*
Jeanne Findleton**
Janet Fleming*
Annie Floyd
Lesley Gainford
Helen Grave
Naomi Green
Emma Griffiths
Janet Griffiths*
Penny Gutteridge
Georgina Hardy
Helen Hogg*
Gemma Hughes
Emily Hurst
Heather Jones
Hannah Kershaw
Ruth Low

Catherine Mason*
Margaret Massey
Annette McGrath*
Linda O'Neill
Caroline O'Gorman
Judith Ormston*
Ann Peach
Sophie Phillips
Alison Price
Ann Ramsay
Sophie Rawlinson
Ruth Revill*
Jane Reynolds
Sheila Richardson
Amanda Richmond
Catherine Scottow
Emma Shakeshaft
Lizzy Sharman
Rachel Simons
Lyn Snook
Annette Spinks
Helen Stammers**
Ruth Stead
Jill Taylor*
Pippa Taylor
Ruth Taylor
Becky Thomas
Pat Tottman
Susan Ward**
Alison Wheatland
Sally Whitehead
Sarah Williams
Hilary Wilson**
Vivienne Wood
Elizabeth Yeomans

Altos

Christine Bean
Catherine Benson*
Helen Blundell

Amy Bogaard
Alison Booth
Sally Bourner
Tricia Bowden*
Gill Brettell
Gillian Bullock
Celia Burton*
Rosemary Case*
Sonnica Chaing
Louise Chilton
Helen Chryssides
Susan Clarke
Miriam Constable*
Ceri Crosskey
Joyce Darby*
Lynne Davies
Maggie Davies
Marion Evans
Ruth Forecast
Jane Francis
Susan Franklin
Joan Glover*
Rebecca Glover
Katharine Harris
Hazel Hewison
Linda Hoag
Carole Holden
Frances Hooper
Patricia Howard
Val Juneman
Helen Lloyd
Lyn Lockley*
Bryony Martin
Joanna Mason
Sue Matthews
Carol Parrott
Dorothy Ryan
Gillian Savage**
Penny Searley
Janet Shaw

Margaret Sheward**
Teri Siggins
Caroline Stokes
Stella Thebridge*
Carol Thomson
Hilary Wetherell
Su Whale
Vicky Wilcher
Angela Wingate*

Tenors

Joe Bean
Andrew Blyth
Bob Casselden**
Roland Clark
Chris Cooke
David Corden
Michael Counsell
John Ellis
John Franklin
Michael Gainford
Stan Gamble
Toby Hester
Paul Humphrey
Colin Hutcheson
Melvyn Jones
Alan Morden
David Pannell
Ron Powell
Tony Ridgway
John Ward

Basses

Charles Allsopp
John Barber
John Barrett
David Baxendale*
John Boynton
John Carey
Roger Cerfontyne

Robert Crosskey
Alan Fletcher
Paul French*
Neil Fricker
Ted Froggatt
Les Gutteridge
Stuart Hill
Andrew Hogg
John Jones
Edward Lawrence
Mark Lawrence
Michael Lowe
Andrew Massey
Martin Mence
Andrew Murray
Felix Piazza
Michael Price*
Lyndon Reynolds**
Daniel Roberts
John Shakespeare
Stephen Shaw
Matthew Somerville
Duncan Speirs
Dan Squier
Philip Tew*
Michael Toolan
David Trevis-Smith*
Anthony Waite*
Gwyn Williams*
Martin Willis
Geoffrey Wyatt

* denotes Choir members who have served for 25 years or more
** denotes Choir members who have served for 40 years or more

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These and other members of the management groups give unpaid service to the choir

More about the Choir

Our printed programmes in the past have had a number of pages with information about the Choir and its activities. This information, and much more, is all available on our web pages. We hope you will visit our site regularly to keep up to date, and you can also contact us through Twitter and Facebook via links on our home page.

The following links may be useful if you want to look for any particular items.

For information about our future concerts including ticket buying :

www.citychoir.org.uk/concerts

If you are interested in finding out about joining the choir:

www.citychoir.org.uk/join

Voice Factory projects are described on our education page:

www.citychoir.org.uk/education

There are many ways in which you can support the Choir:

www.citychoir.org.uk/support

All the information is available by going to our home page:

www.citychoir.org.uk