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CANTORUM CHOIR
& ORCHESTRA

Inspiring Voices — Giving Pleasure
Cookham's Chamber Choir

Handel
MESSIAH

MUSICAL DIRECTOR — ELISABETH TOYE

Saturday 24th March
7:30 pm

Holy Trinity Church
Cookham

CANTORUM CHOIR

Cantorum Choir is a lively, committed choir of approximately forty mixed voices. We are based in Cookham, Berkshire, and draw our membership from a wide sector of the Thames Valley. Founded nearly thirty years ago, the choir has built up a reputation as one of the leading chamber choirs in the area, mixing high standards with a warm and friendly social life. We have undertaken several European tours and appeared a number of times on television and in films, notably in the first of the *Inspector Morse* adaptations. Earlier this year, we appeared with the Brit Award-winning singing group Blake. Currently, we give four or five concerts per year, at least one of them orchestral.

Sopranos

Catherine Arnold, Dawn Dearing
Rachel Harrison, Julie Hughes
Sandy Johnstone, Kirsty Kinge
Julia Millard, Hilary Monaghan
Valerie Snapes, Marianne Stork
Eleanor Vale, Joanna Yates

Tenors

William Branston, Philip Martineau
Malcolm Stork, John Timewell

Altos

Bridget Bentley, Jami Castell
Sarah Evans, Anne Glover
Jo Rodgers, Chiu Sung
Anna Trocmé Latter, Gill Tucker

Basses

Derek Beaven, John Buck
Arthur Creswell, Mike Creswell
Gordon Donkin, David Hazeldine,
Charles Luxford, Paul Seddon

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Elisabeth Toye (Musical Director)

Elisabeth is a graduate of Birmingham University and the Royal Academy of Music. She has built a busy and successful career as a professional soprano, vocal coach, and choral trainer. She has for some years been working with Berkshire Maestros (The Young Musicians' Trust) and is currently Director of Berkshire Young Voices and Director of the Royal Borough Children's Choir. In addition, Elisabeth has tutored for the National Youth Choir of Wales and, in 2008, worked alongside the Director of The National Youth Choirs of Great Britain.

Katherine Walker (Soprano)

Katherine studied at the Royal Academy after completing a Music degree at Exeter. She regularly performs as a soloist in oratorio and as a recitalist. Katherine is also part of the vibrant upper voices trio 'Vox Angelica' and of 'Consortium', with whom she has recorded Brahms choral works for the Hyperion label and performed a new oratorio *Re:Creation* by David Perkins. On leaving the Academy, Katherine was a member of the Live Music Now! scheme and the charity 'Music in Hospitals'. She also teaches singing at Guildford High School for Girls and leads children's choirs for the music education publishing company 'Out of the Ark'.

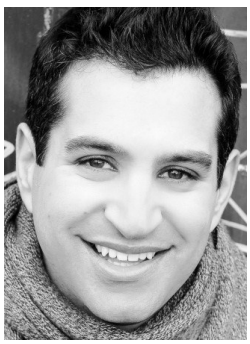
Sioned Gwen Davies (Mezzo Soprano)

Sioned is originally from Colwyn Bay, North Wales. She has an MMus degree and is about to complete her studies on the prestigious Opera Course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, after which she will be joining the chorus of Glyndebourne Festival Opera. She already has prolific experience both in opera and oratorio; she has performed before the Prince of Wales at Caerphilly Castle and taken the Alto solos for *Messiah* in Sweden. This June, Sioned will be one of four finalists at The Young Welsh Singer of the Year competition at St.David's Hall, Cardiff, where the winner will go on to represent Wales in Cardiff Singer of the World.

Joe Morgan (Tenor)

Born and raised in Swansea, Joe graduated from the Guildhall in 2008. His debut with Welsh National Youth Opera was as Vanderdendur in Bernstein's *Candide*, and he has since taken roles with companies such as The Merry Opera Company, Opera In Space, Unexpected Opera, and at Garsington and Bearwood. Joe has a strong track record in oratorio, and this season won the Wynford Evans Memorial Prize at the Young Welsh Singer of the Year Competition. Future engagements include Alfredo in Verdi's La Traviata with Merry Opera and Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore* with Pop Up Opera.

Leandros Taliotis (Baritone)



Leandros studied at Cambridge and gained a scholarship to the Royal College of Music. A busy concert schedule has included engagements in Belgium, Holland, Germany, Japan, France, Greece, The Seychelles and throughout the United Kingdom. Highlights include the European premiere of Christos Hatzis *Everlasting Light* at the Megaron in Athens and the Queen Elizabeth Hall, the world premiere of Will Todd in *A Song of Creation*, Pilatus *St John Passion* at the Barbican and *Carmina Burana* in Antwerp and Ghent.. His performances as Lockit (Britten's arrangement of *The Beggar's Opera*) and Tarquinius (Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*) received particular critical acclaim in the musical press.

PART ONE

1		Sinfonia (Overture)
2	Recit.	Comfort ye my people
3	Air	Ev'ry valley shall be exalted
4	Chorus	And the glory of the Lord
5	Recit.	Thus saith the Lord
6	Air	But who may abide the day of his coming?
7	Chorus	And he shall purify
8	Recit.	Behold, a virgin shall conceive
9	Air and Chorus	O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion
10	Recit.	For behold, darkness shall cover the earth
11	Air	The people that walked in darkness
12	Chorus	For unto us a child is born
13		Pifa (Pastoral Symphony)
14	(a) Recit.	There were shepherds abiding in the field
	(b) Recit.	And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them
15	Recit.	And the angel said unto them
16	Recit.	And suddenly there was with the angel
17	Chorus	Glory to God
18	Air	Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion
19	Recit.	Then shall the eyes of the blind
20	Air	He shall feed his flock
21	Chorus	His yoke is easy, and his burthen is light

PART TWO

22	Chorus	Behold the Lamb of God
23	Air	He was despised

24	Chorus	Surely he hath borne our griefs
25	Chorus	And with his stripes we are healed
26	Chorus	All we like sheep have gone astray
27	Recit.	All they that see him laugh him to scorn
28	Chorus	He trusted in God
29	Recit.	Thy rebuke has broken his heart
30	Air	Behold, and see if there be any sorrow
31	Recit.	He was cut off out of the land of the living
32	Air	But thou didst not leave his soul in hell
33	Chorus	Lift up your heads, O ye gates

INTERVAL

34	Chorus	The Lord gave the word
35	Air	How beautiful are the feet
36	Air	Why do the nations so furiously rage together
37	Chorus	Let us break their bonds asunder
38	Recit.	He that dwelleth in heaven
39	Air	Thou shalt break them
40	Chorus	Hallelujah

PART THREE

41	Air	I know that my redeemer liveth
42	Chorus	Since by man came death
43	Recit.	Behold, I tell you a mystery
44	Air	The trumpet shall sound
45	Chorus	Worthy is the lamb that was slain
46	Chorus	Blessing and honour, glory and power
47	Chorus	Amen

THE CANTORUM ORCHESTRA

Violin

Katie Sharp, Ayako Yamazaki
Maddie Bentley, Michiko Negami
Victoria Stapleton

Viola

Rebekah Brown, Robert Behrman

Cello

Alice Hoskins, Lauren Steele

Bass

Li Boberg

Trumpet

Paul Speed, Kevin Ransom

Timpani

Ben Gale

Continuo Jozef Janik

George Frideric Handel was born on 23rd February, 1685 (the same year as J.S. Bach) in Halle in Germany. He became a skilled keyboard player and also acquired sufficient proficiency on the violin to be appointed Violinist and Harpsichordist at the Hamburg Opera House at the age of seventeen. His first operas had already been composed when he was attracted to Rome in 1706, and it was in Italy that his music acquired the light and thrilling character that defines all his subsequent work.

Handel came to London in 1710 to oversee the production of his opera *Rinaldo* (1711). Its huge success established him in London, where he remained for most of the rest of his life, becoming a citizen in 1727. Handel composed a stream of successful 'Italian' operas, until, during the 1730s, the popularity of the form waned and costs proved increasingly prohibitive. The notion of the 'oratorio', which he had encountered in Italy, brought operatic style to biblical material without the expense of costumes or staging and so offered a way forward; to the extent that, after *Israel in Egypt* and *Saul* in 1739, Handel focused almost all his energies on this type of composition, producing over a dozen more before his death in 1759.

Messiah, the pinnacle of his oratorio output, came early in the sequence, however. It was written in 1741 and first performed in Dublin in 1742. A myth of direct divine inspiration has grown up from the fact that the score was completed in only 24 days, but the more prosaic truth is that Handel was used to working at pace and was also used to recycling elements of his own material. Nevertheless, the achievement really does have a miraculous quality about it, for, within a few years, *Messiah* was established as the best loved and most admired composition in English music — a status it has never lost.

Intended for Lent and Easter and designed for only a small choir and orchestra, *Messiah* remains defiantly operatic. In every way, the music attempts to reflect and 'paint' the biblical texts of the libretto assembled by Handel's friend and previous collaborator Charles Jennens, whose religious project this oratorio really is. The entire work aims to tell a theological, as opposed to a temporal, story. Part 1 foretells and declares the birth of the Messiah: 'For unto us a child is born'. Part 2 interprets the Crucifixion and Resurrection, ending with the famous 'Hallelujah' chorus. Part 3 meditates joyfully on the hope of universal salvation: 'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.'

Future Cantorum Concerts

Date: Saturday 23rd June 2012
Event: Summer Concert
Venue: Holy Trinity Church, Cookham SL6 9SP

Date: Saturday 13th October 2012
Event: Autumn Concert
Venue: All Saints' Church, Marlow SL7 2AA

Date: December 2012
Event: Christmas Carol Concert
Venue: To be confirmed

Cantorum Choir acknowledges the kind support of The Clare Foundation
www.theclarefoundation.org

Grateful thanks are due to:

- Our rehearsal pianists: Jozef Janik & Jo Hutchins
- The Stationery Depot, Cookham Rise Parade
- All others who have helped in the production of this concert

And thanks to you, our audience, for your continued support

If you would like to become a friend or a patron of Cantorum Choir, then please email us: info@cantorumchoir.org.uk. If you or your organization would like to consider sponsoring Cantorum Choir in some way, then please call 01628 475158 to discuss the various options. You can also follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/cantorumchoir.