

Tonight's Performers

Conductor	Simon Williams
Jesus	Christopher Dixon
Evangelist	Joseph Cornwell
Soprano	Rachel Nicholls
Mezzo Soprano	Catherine King
Orchestral Director and Keyboard I	Kah-Ming Ng
Keyboard II	Bernard Barker
<i>Choir members taking solo parts</i>	
High Priest and Pilate	Michael Cayton
Peter and Second Priest	David Gray
Judas	Richard Watson
First Priest	Lorna K. Dawson
Pilate's Wife	Liz Hines
Maid I	Rachel Heywood
Maid II	Claire Grant

St Matthew Passion

Part 1

<i>Chorus I and II</i>	Come ye daughters, share my weeping
The Last Supper	
<i>Recitativo</i>	Now on the first day of unleavened bread
<i>Chorus I</i>	Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee
<i>Recitativo and Chorus I</i>	He said, go to such a man in the city (St. Matthew, 26: 17-22)
<i>Choral</i>	Tis I, whose sin hath bound thee
<i>Recitativo</i>	He answered them and said (St. Matthew, 26: 23-29)
<i>Recitativo</i>	Although our eyes with tears o'erflow
<i>Aria</i>	Jesus, Saviour, I am thine
Jesus' despair on the Mount of Olives	
<i>Recitativo</i>	And when they had sung a hymn of praise together (St. Matthew, 26: 30-32)



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HARROW CHORAL SOCIETY

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Pinner View, North Harrow.



Choral Receive me, my Redeemer
Recitativo Peter then gave him an answer, and said unto him
(*St. Matthew, 26: 33-35*)

Choral Here would I stand beside thee
Recitativo Then cometh Jesus with them unto a garden
(*St. Matthew, 26: 36-38*)

Recitativo and Chorus II O grief! How throbs His heavy laden breast

Aria and Chorus II I would beside my Lord

Prayer on Mount of Olives

Recitativo And He went yet farther (*St. Matthew, 26: 39*)

Recitativo The Saviour low before His Father bending

Aria Gladly would I leave him never

Recitativo And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping
(*St. Matthew, 26: 40-42*)

Choral O Father, let thy will be done

Arrest of Jesus

Recitativo And He came again and found them sleeping
(*St. Matthew, 26: 43-50*)

Aria and Chorus II Behold, my Saviour is taken

Chorus I and II Have lightnings and thunders forgotten their fury?

Recitativo And behold, one of the disciples (*St. Matthew, 26: 51-56*)

Choral O man, thy heavy sin lament

Interval (15 minutes)

Part 2

Aria and Chorus II Ah, now is my Saviour gone

Jesus' interrogation by the High Priests

Recitativo And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away
(*St. Matthew, 26: 56-60a*)

Recitativo and Chorus And the High Priest answered

Recitativo and Chorus And then with one accord did they spit on him
(*St. Matthew, 26: 63b-68*)

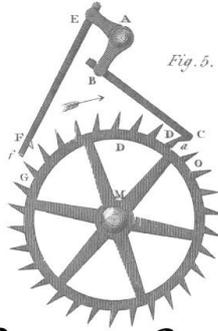
Choral O Lord, who dares to smite thee

Peter's Denial

Recitativo Simon Peter sat outside in the court

Chorus II and Recitativo Surely thou also art one of them (*St. Matthew, 26: 69-75*)

Steven Rolph M.B.H.I Horologist



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<i>Aria</i>	Have mercy, Lord, on me	
<i>Choral</i>	Lamb of God, I fall before thee	
Judas in the Temple		
<i>Recitativo and Chorus</i>	Now when the morning came	
<i>Recitativo</i>	And he cast the silver pieces down	<i>(St. Matthew, 27: 1-6)</i>
<i>Aria</i>	Give me back my Saviour	
Jesus before Pilate		
<i>Recitativo</i>	And they took counsel together	<i>(St. Matthew, 27: 7-14)</i>
<i>Choral</i>	Commit thy way to Jesus	
<i>Recitativo and Chorus</i>	Now at that feast	<i>(St. Matthew, 27: 15-22)</i>
<i>Choral</i>	O wond'rous love	
<i>Recitativo</i>	The Governor answered	<i>(St. Matthew, 27: 23a)</i>
<i>Recitativo</i>	To all men Jesus good hath done	
<i>Aria</i>	For love my Saviour now is dying	
<i>Recitativo and Chorus</i>	But they all cried out the more	<i>(St. Matthew, 27: 23b-26)</i>
Scourging of Jesus		
<i>Recitativo</i>	All gracious God	
<i>Aria</i>	If my weeping and my wailing	
<i>Recitativo and Chorus</i>	And then did the soldiers	<i>(St. Matthew, 27: 27-30)</i>
<i>Choral</i>	O sacred head, surrounded by crown of piercing thorn!	
<i>Recitativo</i>	And after they had mocked him	<i>(St. Matthew, 27: 31-32)</i>
The Crucifixion		
<i>Recitativo and Chorus</i>	When they were come unto a place	
<i>Recitativo</i>	The robbers also, which had been crucified	<i>(St. Matthew, 27: 33-44)</i>
<i>Recitativo</i>	Ah, Golgotha!	
<i>Recitativo and Chorus I</i>	Now from the sixth hour onward	<i>(St. Matthew, 27: 45-50)</i>
<i>Choral</i>	Be near me, Lord, when dying	
<i>Recitativo and Chorus</i>	And then, behold, the veil of the temple	
Descent from the Cross		
<i>Recitativo</i>	At evening, hour of calm and rest	
<i>Aria</i>	Make thee clean from sin, my heart	
Burial		
<i>Recitativo and Chorus</i>	And Joseph took the body	<i>(St. Matthew, 27: 59-66)</i>
<i>Recitativo and Chorus</i>	And now the Lord to rest is laid	
<i>Chorus</i>	We bow our heads	

Programme Notes

Protestant music in Germany in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was influenced not only by developments in music itself, but by changing attitudes towards Lutheran orthodoxy. One of the challenges came from Pietism, which placed emphasis on the Scriptural word and in not merely believing in Christ but also living a Christ-like life. Pietism may have had little influence over orthodox Lutheran church services but it encouraged subjective thought and an intensification of personal faith. These values in turn were challenged by the *Aufklärung* or Enlightenment, which proclaimed a combination of belief and reason as the source of divine revelation.

At the same time Lutheran church music was becoming increasingly receptive to the virtuosity in singing and playing cultivated both in opera and other spheres of secular musical entertainment. Composers recognised in these newly developing expressive devices a fresh means of affectingly celebrating the faith by vivid elucidation of the text. Bach, in his great Passion, as his son Carl Philipp Emanuel termed it, followed a pattern which had gradually evolved in Lutheran Germany during the seventeenth century in which the story is interrupted by reflective arias, ariosos and choruses. These are set in the musical styles of the time as opposed to stricter disciplines adopted by earlier composers such as Schütz in his *Passion Historiae*.

Bach almost certainly performed his *St Matthew Passion* in Leipzig's Thomaskirche on 11th April (Good Friday) 1727, though he may well have been planning the work at least two years earlier. However, the first definite date we have of a performance was two years later on 15th April 1729 in the Thomaskirche. Thereafter it was heard on at least one more occasion during Bach's life. The libretto was

provided by Bach's frequent collaborator in the Leipzig church cantatas, Christian Friedrich Henrici, better known by his pseudonym, Picander. There is evidence to show, however, that Bach himself had a hand in shaping the text in its final form. Picander's libretto has no great literary distinction but its often overtly emotional style, underlining the evangelical significance of St. Matthew's Gospel, served Bach's purposes extremely well; and, of course, both composer and librettist would have paid close attention to the content of the Good Friday sermon, delivered between the first and second parts of the Passion music.

The *St Matthew Passion* is a sacred musical drama on an unprecedented scale, designed as an integral part of the Good Friday Vespers in the strict Lutheran stronghold of Leipzig. The idea was not new, however, since Oratorio Passions, whose ingredients included Gospel narrative, hymns and an instrumental element, had been performed in north and central Germany since the 1640s, at least, though not in Leipzig until somewhat later. Bach's two surviving Passions – the *St John Passion*, BWV 245, had first been performed at Leipzig's Nicolaikirche in 1724 – occupy a position at the summit of the form,

not only because of the incomparably great stature of the music itself but also on account of the masterly way in which Bach

achieved an interrelationship of contrasting forms; these taken together add up to a veritable compendium of sacred and secular techniques of the time. For Bach and the citizens of Leipzig these Passions would have provided the musical peak of the church year.

At their most fundamental, the disparate elements of the *St Matthew Passion* can be placed under distinct headings. First there is the biblical narrative element in which the Evangelist, accompanied by recitative semplice, and Christ, accompanied in all but

one passage – that which occurs immediately before his death – by sustained strings forming a “halo” around him, according to older tradition, play the central roles. Then, at the heart of the work are the lyrical, contemplative pieces in the form of arias, and sometimes ariosos, which reflect on the events of the Gospel narrative and which are, to some extent, a response to Pietistic devotional attitudes. Thirdly, there is an element, at once meditative and communal, provided by the chorales, the traditional hymn-tunes of Bach’s time with which congregations would certainly have been familiar through the Leipzig and Dresden hymnbooks in use in eighteenth century Leipzig. Lastly there are the choruses which occupy a position somewhat akin to those in ancient Greek drama, commenting on the events which take place and often emphasising their significance with startling dramatic force. Such an instance is provided by the full tutti outburst in Part Two, *Wahrlich, dieser ist Gottes Sohn gewesen* (Truly this was the Son of God), a climactic, almost overwhelming reaffirmation of the Christian faith. The importance which Bach himself attached to the scriptural word is indeed, beyond question, but further weight is lent to this issue by the fact that throughout his own fair copy it is inscribed in red ink. “Even he who only casually glances through this manuscript”, observed the German scholar, Friedrich Smend, “must time and again be impressed by the unique way in which this text is emphasised. Obviously Bach is interested in nothing but the Word of Scripture”.

Bach’s standpoint from the composition of his Passions and his sacred cantatas was Lutheran but it was also receptive to Pietist influences as well as those of the German Enlightenment. The more we take into account the interaction of such influences upon orthodox Lutheran theology the more clearly we will be able to understand the true nature and colossal scale of Bach’s achievement. The forces which he

required to perform the *St Matthew Passion* are greater than those which he assembled for almost any other of his compositions: two choruses, two orchestras, each with its own continuo organ, a group of soprano voices to sing the *cantus firmus* of the opening movement and an ensemble of soloists. With resources such as these, Bach, with genius and masterly intuition was able to emphasise the dialogue character of Picander’s text and to create a cohesive drama of profound and sustained intensity.

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Christopher Dixon

Jesus

Born in Beverley, Christopher was a choral scholar at Clare College, Cambridge where he read Modern and Medieval Languages. He subsequently sang with St. John's College Choir under Christopher Robinson.

Christopher studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Mark Wildman, Antony Saunders and Audrey Hyland, and then at the National Opera Studio. He was generously supported by The Countess of Munster Trust and the Derek Butler Trust. Opera roles at the RAM included Don Giovanni (with Sir Colin Davis), Falstaff, Il Conte (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and Nick Shadow (*The Rake's Progress*). Whilst at the RAM, he won numerous competitions and prizes, and was placed 4th in the National Mozart Competition 2000.

In 2007 Christopher made his Glyndebourne Festival debut as the First Apparition and The Assassin in Verdi's *Macbeth*. He also made his BBC Proms debut as the First Apparition. He has also understudied The Vicar (*Albert Herring*) for Glyndebourne Touring Opera.

Other roles include Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly* for Clonter Opera), Masetto (*Don Giovanni* for Opernhaus Kiel, Germany), Tarquinius for BYO's millennium production of *The Rape of Lucretia*, and Morales (*Carmen* for Mid-Wales Opera). Future plans include the understudies of Sid (*Albert Herring*) and Father Delaura (*Love and Other Demons*), both for Glyndebourne Festival 2008.

Christopher is a regular contributor on the British concert platform, and has performed both Handel's *Messiah* and Mozart's *Requiem* in the Royal Albert Hall. He is a regular visitor to Cardiff's St. David's Hall, where he returns later this month for Brahms' *Eine Deutsches Requiem*.



Joseph Cornwall

Evangelist

After studying music at York University and singing at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Joseph began his career with The Consort of Musicke and the Taverner Consort. Singing under conductors such as William Christie, Harry Christophers, Eric Ericson, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Robert King, Paul McCreech, Hervé Niquet and Andrew Parrott, his international engagements have taken him throughout Europe and to North America and the Far East.

Operatic rôles have included Snout in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Teatro di San Carlo, Naples, Mitridate in *Il Pompeo Magno* at the Varazdin Festival, Croatia, Polimone in *Il Tito* for the Opéra du Rhin, Il Conte in *Le nozze di Dorina* at the Musikfestspiele Potsdam Sanssouci and the Bayreuth Baroque Festival, Lurcanio in *Ariodante* for St Gallen Opera, Pilade in *Oreste* for the English Bach Festival, Monteverdi in *Orfeo* for the Boston Early Music Festival, in Rio de Janeiro and for Oslo Summer Opera, and Eumete in *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival (a production now available on DVD)

Joseph's recordings include *St Matthew Passion* with the Drottningholm Baroque Ensemble, *Boyce Peleus & Thetis* with Opera Restor'd, *Campra Requiem* and *King Arthur* with Le Concert Spirituel, *Messiah* and the Monteverdi *Vespers 1610* with the Taverner Consort, *Acis & Galatea* (GRAMOPHONE Baroque Vocal CD of 2000), Monteverdi *Vespers 1610* and Mozart *Mass in C Minor* with Les Arts Florissants, Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle* with Jos van Immerseel (BBC Radio 3 Building a Library Choice), *Fairest Isle* with the Parley of Instruments and, most recently released, the Monteverdi *Vespers 1610* with the Gabrieli Consort & Players and *Arsilda, Regina di Ponto* with Modo Antiquo.



Rachel Nicholls

Soprano

Born in Bedford, Rachel read French and Linguistic Science at the University of York, furthering her studies at the Royal College of Music where she won the President's Rose Bowl for the Most Outstanding Student of the Year, the Cuthbert Smith Prize, the Lies Askonas Prize and the Van Someren Godfrey Prize for English Song. Winner of the Second Prize at the Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Competition, she made her début at London's Royal Opera as Flowermaiden *Parsifal*, returning as Pepik *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Echo *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Prilepa *The Queen of Spades* and Jessie *Mahagonny Songspiel* at the Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte, Montepulciano.

Rachel made her international concert début in *Messiah* under the direction of Sir David Willcocks in Halle. Other concert appearances include performances with the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Hanover Band, the London Mozart Players, and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. She has worked with many conductors including Sir Colin Davis, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Valery Gergiev, Richard Hickox, Sir Simon Rattle and Masaaki Suzuki. Her broadcasts include *Sally Flashmob - The Opera*, Schoenberg *Quartet No. 2* with the Quatuor Parisii and "In Tune" for the BBC, and her recordings include *B Minor Mass* (BIS), *Metella Silla* (Somm), *Hummel Mass in D Minor* (Chandos), and Paul Spicer's *Easter Oratorio* (Birmingham Bach Choir).

Her current engagements include *Joan For You* for Music Theatre Wales, Mrs Martin *La Cantatrice Chauve* at the Tête-à-Tête Opera Festival, *Elettra Idomeneo* for New Sussex Opera, the *B Minor Mass* and *Messiah* with Bach Collegium Japan, and Dvorak *Stabat Mater* with the BBC Concert Orchestra.



Catherine King

Mezzo-Soprano

Catherine King is acknowledged as one of the most versatile mezzo-sopranos of her generation, with a huge repertoire ranging from music of the Middle Ages to contemporary works by Tansy Davies and John Woolrich.

She has performed with many of the UK's leading ensembles and orchestras including the Academy of Ancient Music, the CBSO, the English Chamber Orchestra, Florilegium, Fretwork, Gabrieli Consort and Players, the Hallé, London Baroque, and the Taverner Consort. She also makes regular appearances at the Aldeburgh, Bruges Early Music, Edinburgh, Lufthansa and Three Choirs Festivals. International engagements have included the *Christmas Oratorio* with the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra, *Messiah* with the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra and *The Fairy Queen* for the Coro della Radio Svizzera.

Catherine's recordings include Bach *Arias* with the Norwegian Baroque Orchestra, the award winning *Airs de cour*, Vizzana *Componimenti musicali* and Verdelot *The Complete Madrigal Book of 1536* (Linn), and Mudarra – *Songs and Solos* (ASV) and Tomkins – *Above the Starrs* (Harmonia Mundi). Her recording, *Forgotten Arias of a Venetian Master - Arie Serie* by Galuppi, was selected as a GRAMOPHONE Editor's Choice CD, and is now available on Avie.

Operatic engagements have included *Alisa Lucia di Lammermoor* for Iford Arts, *Vitige Flavio* with the Early Opera Company, *Ernesto Il mondo della luna* for Opera Della Luna, and *Filipyevna Eugene Onegin* for Longborough Festival Opera. Highlights of 2007 / 2008 include tours with the Israel Camerata singing J. S. Bach's *Cantata 169* and Respighi's *Il tramonto* and with the New London Consort singing J. S. Bach's *Easter Oratorio* and Vivaldi *Gloria*.



Simon Williams
Conductor

Simon Williams was appointed Music Director of Harrow Choral Society in 1992. He has led the choir on concert tours in Europe, and recorded a CD of Christmas carols. A firm believer in mixing well-known music with less familiar repertoire, he has helped HCS (and other choirs) commission and give first performances of *Crucifixion* and *Look Stranger at this Island*, both by Bryan Kelly, *Cantata Caledonia* by Lorna K Dawson, *Exodus* by Jonathan Ayerst, and *Cry Out on Time* by Antony le Fleming as well as conducting them in works such as Bach's *St John Passion*, *A Sea Symphony* by Vaughan Williams and the *Requiem* settings by Brahms and Verdi. He has won a Performing Rights Society award for enterprise in programming, and a BT/NFMS Innovation Award for his part in establishing 'Singing for Starters', Harrow Choral Society's highly successful training choir.

Simon read music at Durham University, where he was organ scholar of St Chad's College and conductor of the University Chamber Choir. A post-graduate year followed at the Royal College of Music, where he studied organ, piano and conducting, and gained the Fellowship Diploma of the Royal College of Organists. He now works as Head of Education and Outreach for the Royal College of Organists, running programmes to recruit, train and support organists and choral directors. As Organist and Director of Music at St George's Church, Hanover Square, he has broadcast frequently with their professional choir on BBC Radio 3 and 4, and works closely with the London Handel Festival, conducting a highly popular annual performance of *Messiah*. Simon teaches for St Giles International Organ School. He still finds time to give recitals in cathedrals, churches and concert halls in the UK and abroad and in 2007 became President of Enfield & District Organists' Association.

Charivari

Agréable

Charivari Agréable
Orchestra

Charivari Agréable is recognized as 'one of the classiest baroque bands' (The Observer), and 'certainly one of the most original and versatile groups on the Early Music scene today' (Hexachord), whose musical 'intuitions are always captivating' (Goldberg). They represent 'a new and very exciting phase of the early music revival, one that enriches the existing repertory and can bring us ever closer to the spirit of the original music' (Gramophone).

Charivari Agréable (meaning 'pleasant tumult', from Saint-Lambert's 1707 treatise on accompaniment) was formed at the University of Oxford in 1993, and within the year became prize-winners of an international Early Music Network (UK) competition, made its debut at the Wigmore Hall, and recorded The group's recording of poignant German sacred cantatas for Holy Week entitled 'Sacred Songs of Sorrow' was voted The Best CD of the Year by International Record Review, while their transcriptions from the 'The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book' were selected for Classic FM's Christmas Choice and named Outstanding CD of the Month by BBC Music Magazine.

The ensemble regularly expands into Oxford's resident period-instrument orchestra, Charivari Agréable Simfonie. The orchestra has on-going collaborations with some forty vocal groups — choral societies and professional choirs alike — all over the UK, and has been conducted by many musicians of renown, including Sir Charles Mackerras. The ensemble has appeared at all prominent venues in London, including Buckingham Palace; recent and forthcoming engagements include major festivals in the UK, and tours to Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, The Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, South East Asia, Turkey, and the USA.



HARROW CHORAL SOCIETY

Harrow Choral Society

Choir

Harrow Choral Society was formed in 1937 as the St Alban's (North Harrow) Choral Society, and adopted its present title in 1960. The choir has since performed much of the standard choral repertoire, including major works of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Elgar and Vaughan Williams, as well as a wide range of more contemporary music.

The choir normally aims to give four concerts a season including a Christmas concert of carols with readings by a well-known personality, and occasionally performing in conjunction with other choirs. Although the majority of its concerts have taken place in Harrow, the choir has also sung elsewhere : notably in Promenade Concerts at the Royal Albert Hall and on several occasions here at the cathedral and Abbey church of St Alban. The latter include a previous collaboration with the Chiltern Choir in a performance of Brahms' Ein Deutsches Requiem in April 2005 and also, in May 2006, when Harrow Choral Society hosted the "Three Choirs of Harrow" concert in which the main work was Rachmaninov's The Bells.

Since 1994 the choir has undertaken a number of successful concert tours abroad, the most recent to Tuscany (2004) where they gave concerts in Montecatini, Volterra and San Gimignano and to Brittany (2007) giving performances of Hummel's Mass in D and Rutter's Requiem in Josselin, Dinan and in the cathedral in Nantes.

The choir currently numbers over 120 and extends a very warm welcome to new members. Contact Jill Mans on 020 8248 7625, or see our web site at www.harrowchoral.org.uk.



The Chiltern Choir

Choir

The Chiltern Choir, based in Chorleywood, was founded in 1968 as a small madrigal group under the umbrella of the local Community Arts Centre. Membership increased steadily until, in 1980, it broke away from the parent society and renamed itself as The Chiltern Choir.

The Chiltern Choir performs three, occasionally four, concerts each year which usually consist of one large scale work with orchestra and two or three on a rather smaller scale. Works performed are taken from a wide spectrum in the choral repertoire, from recognisably mainstream to the less familiar contemporary repertoire, and from the deeply serious to the more light-hearted.

The choir has sung under a number of distinguished conductors, including Peter Dodd (then Deputy Director BBC Radio 3), Stephen Jackson (later appointed Chorus Master of the BBC Symphony Chorus), today's conductor Simon Williams, and Mark Hindley (now in Edinburgh with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra Chorus). For the past four years the choir has been led by Michael Cayton (singing the parts of the High Priest and Pilate this evening) who is also director of music at St John's Wood Church.

The concert at St Alban's today will be the second that we have sung with Harrow Choral Society in the wonderful cathedral here. Joint concerts have also been performed in the past with a choir in Honfleur, France. The choir has visited Paris, Chartres Cathedral and Amsterdam, and has sung in Norwich Cathedral and St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin.

We welcome enquiries from potential new members of all voice parts but particularly Tenors and Basses. Contact our Secretary, Ana De'Ath on 01923 777351, or see our web site at www.chilternchoir.org.uk for further details.

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