

Southend Bach Choir

Presents

Bach
St John Passion

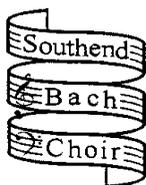
with

The Essex Concert Orchestra

Saturday 8th April 2017

7:30 pm

St Michael's Church
Leigh Road, Leigh on Sea



Programme



The Southend Bach Choir

Musical Director - Colin Edwards

St John Passion

The tradition of reciting the story of Christ's Passion is an ancient one which, over the centuries, developed from the comparatively simple declamation of the text by a priest to a more expressive, more elaborate and ultimately more integrated musical and spiritual experience involving an array of performers.

Bach's setting of the St John Passion (first heard on Good Friday 1724 at the St Nicholas Church in Leipzig) delivers the text of the Gospel narrative primarily through the Evangelist whose musical line sensitively conveys by its inflection the pathos of events. The arias and occasional choruses allow both the soloists and choir to move outside the action to reflect upon the significance of the text. The crowd scenes, depicted by the choir, frequently and vividly bring to life the emotional turmoil of the moment whilst the chorales, familiar hymn tunes to the Leipzig congregation, draw the individual into the drama by allowing personal reflection. Although it is not clear whether the congregation in Leipzig sang the chorales members of the audience are invited to do so this evening.

Bach took up his post as Kantor at the Thomasschule in Leipzig in May 1723. The expectations were high and amongst his many responsibilities (one of which required him to teach Latin) was the demand that he compose music for four Lutheran churches in the city, including those of St Thomas and St Nicholas. For the first performance of the work in St Nicholas' church, Bach was able to bring along the choir of St Thomas'. The service itself would have lasted the whole afternoon with a sermon (probably of about one hour's duration) between the two parts. Apparently there are no records of the congregation's response but the revisions made by Bach for later performances suggest that the Town Council (!) pressurised him to make changes. Eventually Bach restored some of the amendments he had made.

Although the tragedy and suffering of the Crucifixion are portrayed with a graphic and dramatic intensity, Bach's setting of the Passion according to St John ultimately proclaims hope and salvation.

Our Guest Soloists

Lucy Elston (*Soprano*) - Lucy is an MMus student at TLCMD. She holds the Kathleen Roberts Scholarship and studies under the tutelage of Alison Wells and Helen Yorke. At Trinity, Lucy was a finalist of both the Roy Pleasance and the Lillian Ash French Song competitions.

Lucy is a soloist for Essex Unitarian Church under the direction of Peter Crockford. In Oratorio, Lucy recently sang the soprano solos from Haydn's Nelson Mass for Sidmouth Choral Society. She also collaborates with London People's Orchestra. Other professional engagements include The Jane Austen Festival at the Holburne Museum and Forty Hall's Dawn Chorus Events.

Roles include Mrs Gobineau in Clockwork Opera's production of The Medium and Cathleen in Riders to the Sea at the Maldon Festival. Also, Blanche in Poulenc's Dialogues des Carmélites, and Pamina from Die Zauberflöte (for Postgraduate Opera Scenes).

Lucy has recently founded a company, Opera in the Meantime, and will be directing Puccini's Suor Angelica in July.

Bethany Horak-Hallett (*Mezzo Soprano*) - Described as both 'promising' and 'fresh' (Bachtrack), mezzo soprano Bethany Horak-Hallett is currently studying towards a Masters in Performance at Trinity Laban with the generous support of the Noble Award, taught by Alison Wells and coached by Kelvin Lim. Having completed an academic Masters in Music from at Leeds University in 2012, Bethany has since been working as a freelance singer both nationally and internationally.

Since moving to London, Bethany has taken on a number of exciting musical projects, including various soloist projects, soprano and alto engagements with Voces8, London Contemporary Orchestra, Erebus Ensemble, Sansara, St Paul's Cathedral Consort, The Delphian Singers, performances with the Tallis Scholars, and soprano member of the coveted Genesis Sixteen Choral Scholarship under the direction of Harry Christophers.

Recently, Bethany has been selected to take part in masterclasses with Brigitte Fassbaender as part of the Wigmore Hall artistic series, Mary Bevan as part of the Milton Abbey International Music Festival, and Ruby Philogene as part of the Trinity Laban masterclass series.

Solo roles have included Lucia (The Rape of Lucretia), Giovanna (Giovanna d'Arco), Mimi (La bohème), Dido, Sorceress, Second Witch, Belinda (Dido and Aeneas), Peaseblossom (A Midsummer Night's Dream), The Woman (Riders to the Sea), projects with Opera North, Brighton Early Music Festival, Collision Opera, Surrey Opera, Hashtag Opera, Picalilli Opera, Milton Abbey International Music Festival, and many other fringe companies. Roles performed in scenes include Orfeo (Orfeo ed Euridice), Cherubino (Le Nozze di Figaro), Hänsel (Hänsel und Gretel).

As well as performing, Bethany is passionate about music education, and works alongside ensembles and organisations such as Voces8 and Brighton Early Music Festival as part of their outreach programmes.

Guy Elliott (*Tenor*) - Guy Elliott is a young tenor based in London where he studies at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance with Sophie Grimmer and Anna Tilbrook. He is generously funded by the Joanhina Trust and a Help Musicians UK Fleming Award.

Guy is an experienced concert soloist having performed much from the standard oratorio repertory with recent highlights including the annual Scratch Messiah (Handel) at the Royal Albert Hall with the English Festival Orchestra, several performances of the Evangelist in St. John Passion (Bach) and Requiem (Mozart) at the historic Leith Hill Festival. He has also performed experimental works, most notably Stimmung (Stockhausen) at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. On the operatic stage, Guy has covered the roles of Telemachus (Ulysses' Homecoming/Monteverdi) and Mercurio (La Calisto/Cavalli) for English Touring Opera, developed the Role of Twink (Boys of Paradise/ Salorien) for WorkshOPERA and performed Ferrando (Cosi Fan Tutte/Mozart) and Aeneas (Dido and Aeneas/ Purcell) for Durham Dales Festival Opera. At Trinity Laban, he performed two roles for the college opera; Belshazzar (Belshazzar/Handel) and Lysander (A Midsummer Night's Dream/Britten) for which he was described in review as 'seemingly custom-designed, articulating and projecting with perfect clarity.'

In addition to ordinary performance work Guy has a passion for arts education. He has worked closely with the education department of English Touring Opera on roles including Olly in Waxwings, an opera for children with SEN which toured the UK and performed at Philharmonie Luxembourg and Orpheus in One Step Forward, a school collaboration. Guy has also worked with the education department of the London Philharmonic Orchestra with a concert exploring On Wenlock Edge (Vaughan Williams) for A Level students.

Current and upcoming projects include an anniversary concert of *Stimmung* (Stockhausen) at Barbican Hall with Singcircle and Gregory Rose and Longborough Festival Opera's Young Artist Programme. Guy is looking forward to starting postgraduate study at the Royal College of Music in September where he will be supported by a full scholarship.

James Butler (*Tenor*) - James Butler is a tenor based in London, where he studies at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, with Lynton Atkinson and Anna Tilbrook. He is the current recipient of the Kathleen Roberts Vocal Scholarship, having been previously supported by the Dora Ashton, and Trinity College London Scholarships.

As a soloist James has an interest in oratorio and concert singing and regularly performs with a variety of ensembles in London and around the UK. His recent performances include; *Serenade to Music* (Vaughan Williams) with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, which was broadcast live on BBC Radio 3, *Le Reinement de St. Pierre* (Charpentier) for Greenwich International Early Music Festival, *Farewell to Arms* (Finzi) with Trinity Laban Sinfonia and numerous performances of *Messiah* (Handel), *St John Passion* and *Mass in B Minor* (Bach) with ensembles including the Southern Sinfonia and *Sine Nomine*.

On the stage, James has a particular interest in early to classical opera, he has performed the roles of Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte* / Mozart) for Hampstead Garden Opera, and *Acis* (*Acis and Galatea* / Handel) for Puzzle Piece Opera). In scenes James has performed extract of *Podestà* (*La Finta Giardiniera* / Mozart).

James developed his love for singing from an early age, first as a chorister at Tewkesbury Abbey, and later as a music scholar at Downside Abbey. Before embarking on Undergraduate study James was a choral Scholar at Wells Cathedral, where he was able to develop his passion for solo singing alongside his choral commitments.

As well as his solo performance work, James is a Lay Clerk at Holy Trinity Church, Dartford where he also teaches Singing and Piano at the Church School.

James' future projects include more regular oratorio work, the role of Mayor (Albert Herring / Britten) for Trinity Laban Opera Scenes and a series of English Song recitals.

Thomas McKenna (*Bass-Baritone*) - Tom McKenna graduated in June 2016 with a distinction in PGdip vocal studies at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance under the tuition of the Head of the Vocal Department Dr Linda Hirst and Helen Yorke, he also earned his First Class Honours in BMus vocal studies from Trinity Laban under the tuition of Bass, David Thomas in 2014. Tom has been selected to perform in Masterclasses with Christian Gerhaher at the Wigmore Hall and Matthew Rose at Trinity Laban.

In early 2016 he played Noye in *Noye's Fludde* by Benjamin Britten with Streatham & Clapham High School and performed as a Soloist in Gerald Finzi's *Let us Garlands Bring* conducted by Nic Pendlebury as part of *Shapeshifter* season; he also took part in the Easter workshop with BYO under the direction of Elaine Kidd and David Gowland.

He was also a finalist in the Elizabeth Schumann Lieder competition at Trinity and competed in the Rosenblatt Recital Singing Prize where he was highly commended. Tom was cast as Sarge in Stephen McNeff's *Banished*, which was written for Trinity Laban, where he created the role for the premiere.

He was highly praised for his portrayal of Sarge in several publications including *Opera Magazine*. During the summer months he sang as a chorus member for *Opéra de Baugé* as part of their summer season in *La Perichole* by Offenbach and *L'incoronazione di Poppea* by

Monteverdi, he will be returning next summer to sing in Lucia di Lammermoor by Donizetti, La Cenerentola by Rossini and La clemenza di Tito by Mozart as a chorus member. Recent engagements included Bass soloist in Mozart's Requiem with the Chipping Campden festival chorus and Baritone soloist in Vaughn Williams' Fantasia on Christmas Carols with North Camden Chorus.

Roger Humphrey (Organ) - studied Organ, Piano, and conducting at the Royal College of Music, where he gained a degree of Bachelor of Music and was awarded his master of Arts degree at City of London University in 1993. He has held positions of Director of Music at Southend School for Boys, and lecturer in Performing Arts at South East Essex College. Roger is conductor of the Southend Choral Society, Director of Music at Holy Trinity Church, Southchurch, and accompanist to the Southend Bach Choir. He is also founder of the Southend Girls Choir, and a Director of the Southend Summer School for Performing Arts. Roger was appointed Director of the Southend Boys Choir in 1996 by the Southend Borough Council. In January 2000 Roger was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts for services to Music and the Arts.

THE ESSEX CONCERT ORCHESTRA

Director: Malcolm Hiscock

Leader this evening: Lorraine Kelly

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Email: boxoffice@essexconcertorchestra.org.uk

Web: www.essexconcertorchestra.org.uk

The Essex Concert Orchestra is a not-for-profit organisation whose objective is to bring varied orchestral music to a wider audience in an endearing and informative manner, whilst providing talented individuals with the opportunity to study and perform repertoire outside the confines of professional musicianship. It is also seen as a high calibre semi-professional orchestral body, which is available for hire or commissioning at relatively low cost by charities, trusts or other musical organisations. The Orchestra's total membership includes some eighty top musicians from the Essex area. These individuals include professional performers, students at prominent London and Essex music colleges, and music teachers. The Orchestra is a member of the Southend-on-Sea Arts Council and acknowledges the support given by Making Music (formerly known as The National Federation of Music Societies).

Violins: Lorraine Kelly (Leader)

Thomas Andreaa

Kay Geradine

Caron Hiscock

Bryony Rees

Naomi Smee

Karen Surridge

Sam Willsmore

Violas: Hilary Cheek

Andrew Melder

Gil Payne

Fiona Watson

Cellos: Tim Handel

Rebecca Cox

Jane Dench

Jonathan Pickford

Oboes: Alison Brown

Jane Harding

Basses: Tom Marshall

Harrison Dolphin

Bassoon: Lucy White

Programme

Our soloists

Lucy Elston
Guy Elliott (Evangelist)
Tom McKenna (Jesus)

Bethany Horak-Hallett
James Butler
Alexander Welsh (Pilate)
Peter Walker (Peter)
Derek Groom (Officer)
Roger Humphrey (Organ)

The audience is invited to participate in our performance by singing the Chorales
(see music and words insert)

Prologue (1)
Christ Is Betrayed (2-7)
Peter's Sword (8-9)
Christ Is Bound and Led To Annas (10-13)
Christ's Examination Before Annas (14-15)
Peter's Denial (16-20)

INTERVAL

The Sinless Sufferer (21)
Christ Is Arraigned Before Pilate (22-27)
Barabbas (28-29)
Christ Is Scourged (30-36)
Christ Is Delivered To The Jews (37-40)
The King Of The Jews (41-46)
Golgotha (47-48)
The Crucifixion (49-56)
It Is Finished (57-60)
The Rending Of The Veil (61-63)
Christ's Pierced Side (64-65)
The Descent From The Cross (66)
At The Sepulchre (67-68)

Please join the choir for light refreshments in the Church Hall at the Interval.