# CIRENCESTER C H O R A L SOCIETY

**Conductor: Carleton Etherington** 



Annunciation - Peter Paul Rubens

J S Bach Ascension Oratorio

C P E Bach

Magnificat

Hannah Grove soprano
Ben Sawyer alto
Nick Drew tenor
James Geidt bass

Corinium Camerata Andrew Court leader

David Whitehead harpsichord & organ

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2014, 7:30 pm Cirencester Parish Church

## **PROGRAMME**

### Part I

# Sinfonia to Cantata No 29 (BWV 29)

J S Bach

(Organ and Orchestra)

(1685-1750)

Cantata No 29 Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir dates from 1731. The sinfonia is an arrangement of the prelude from Bach's Partita for Violin No 3 (BWV 1006), with the organ playing the original violin part. Bach subsequently used the music from the chorus movement of this cantata in the Gratias agimus tibi and Dona nobis pacem sections of his Mass in B minor.

# Jesu, joy of man's desiring

J S Bach

(Chorale from Cantata No 147 'Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben')

(1685-1750)

This well-known chorale was composed by Bach in 1723, his first year in Leipzig. It is one of several additions that he made to an earlier version of the cantata written in Weimar in 1716. Poet Laureate Robert Bridges wrote the familiar English words. These are not a direct translation of Bach's German but both texts were inspired by the stanzas set by Martin Jahn in 1661 to an earlier hymn composed by Johann Schop, the melody of which Bach harmonised and orchestrated for the cantata.

## **Ascension Oratorio** (*Himmelfahrts-Oratorium*, BWV 11)

I S Bach

(New Novello Choral Edition by Neil Jenkins, English translation) See main text for description and full text.

(1685-1750)

1. Chorus: Praise the Lord Chorus

2. Recitative: And then Jesus lifted His hands Tenor (Evangelist)

Bass solo 3. Recitativo: Ah, Jesus! 4. Aria: Ah, stay awhile my dearest treasure Alto solo

5. Recitative: And before their eyes He arose Tenor (Evangelist)

Chorus

6. Chorale: Thou mighty King

7. Recitative: And while they looked up Tenor (Evangelist) & Bass

Alto solo 8. Recitativo: O Lord! return without delay

9. Recitative: And after they had given thanks Tenor (Evangelist)

10. Aria: Lord, look down Soprano solo

11. Chorale: When comes the time appointed Chorus

### INTERVAL (20 minutes)

(Refreshments available in the North and South aisles. If you didn't purchase a drinks ticket when you bought your programme, please pay at the bar before collecting your drink.)

# Magnificat in D (Wq. 215, H772)

Celebrating the 300th anniversary of the composer's birth See main text for description and full text..

C P E Bach (1714-1788)

Magnificat Chorus
 Quia respexit Soprano solo
 Quia fecit mihi magna Tenor solo
 Et misericordia Chorus
 Fecit potentiam Bass solo

7. Suscepit Israel Alto solo 8. Gloria Patri Chorus 9. Sicut erat Chorus



Raymond Fenton 1941 – 2014

Tonight's concert is dedicated to the memory of Raymond Fenton, a loyal and long-serving member of Cirencester Choral Society who died after a short illness in March this year. Raymond contributed enormously to the Society with his musical bass voice, as our reserve conductor in the event of our regular conductor's absence and as the Society's webmaster. His generosity extended to opening the doors of Atkyns Manor both for garden parties and for informal out of-season singing, and leading pre-season warm-up sessions on August Tuesdays, all freely given in a spirit of fun and friendship.

Raymond's contribution to our Society was just one of many that he made to the musical life of the area. As organist of All Hallows, South Cerney and a leading light in the Cirencester Early Music Festival he was known to many. No-one who knew him could fail to be touched by his kindness and good humour; as one Choral Society member said, 'His was the smile on the face of the Choral Society'. With his passing we have lost a much valued musical talent and a much loved friend. We extend our sympathy to all his family members, many of whom are with us here this evening.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH was appointed Kantor of St Thomas's, Leipzig in 1723, a post he held until his death in 1750. Here he was responsible for all the musical composition and performance aspects of both Lutheran churches in the city, the Thomaskirche and Nickolaikirche.



Given the workload of producing new cantatas for each Sunday service, it was almost inevitable and necessary that Bach would turn to reworking and combining the arias and choruses from previously written cantatas for performance at the annual church festival services. The Christmas Oratorio and Easter Oratorio of 1733-4 were constructed in this way and were followed in 1735 by the Ascension Oratorio. Like the two preceding oratorios, the outer movements are written in the celebratory key of D major, and the orchestration decidedly festive with trumpets and timpani.

While the provenance of the movements used in the Christmas and Easter Oratorios has been well established, there is more debate about the origin of those that make up the *Ascension Oratorio*. The joyful opening chorus may have been based on a 1732 Cantata, for which only the libretto survives, while experts believe that the alto and soprano arias (movements 4 & 10) are from a lost *Wedding Cantata* of

1725. The alto aria is familiar as it later reappears in less elaborate form as the Agnus Dei in the *B Minor Mass*. As in the Passions, the Evangelist tells the biblical story, in this case form St Luke's and St Mark's Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. The two chorales are based on texts from the Lutheran church that would have been well-known to the congregations.

The edition of the *Ascension Oratorio* performed tonight is the English text setting in the New Novello Choral Edition by Neil Jenkins. Jenkins has newly translated the original German text, based on the King James Bible.

The Ascension Oratorio is much less often heard than those for Christmas and Easter, probably because the festival of Ascension is not aligned with secular holidays. Followers of the BBC Proms, though, will have heard it performed last August by Sir John Eliot Gardiner and his Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists. In his radio interview ahead of the live performance, this lifetime scholar, admirer and performer of Bach's work described the Ascension Oratorio as "Bach at his absolute best".

While it is realistic to assume that our chorus will not quite reach the standards of the Monteverdi Choir, we hope you will nevertheless be inspired by this 'Best of Bach'!



Thomaskirche, Leipzig, ca 1918

Carl PHILIPP EMANUEL BACH was born in Weimar in 1714, the second surviving son of Johann Sebastian and his first wife Maria Barbara. His musical training was largely the preserve of his father at the



Thomasschule in Leipzig, but only after securing the insurance of a law degree did CPE's professional career as a musician begin. In 1738 he entered the service of Crown Prince

Frederick of Prussia, two years his senior and a keen flautist. CPE had already built a fine reputation as a keyboard player with a string of sonatas to his name and soon found his place among the court musicians of Berlin and Potsdam, cities that were to be his home for the next 30 years.

Given his musical upbringing it would be surprising if his maturing musical style had not borne some of the hallmarks of the baroque age. His father's influence is unmistakable, yet his music exhibits a dynamism characteristic of the evolving classical period. The influence of his musical contemporaries - Haydn included - and of the artists and literary figures in whose circles he moved at court undoubtedly helped fashion a unique style that was pivotal in the transition from the baroque to the classical era.

These influences are very evident in CPE's setting of the *Magnificat* written in 1749, a rare and early foray into choral composition at a time when his energies were largely consumed in a prodigious outpouring of works for

clavier. But then, in 1768, he succeeded his godfather Georg Philipp Telemann as Director of Music in Hamburg essentially the same role that his father had held in Leipzig - and it was here that his choral output began to blossom. Meeting the musical needs of the services at five churches in the city, he was to compose three oratorios, 21 settings of the Passion and some 70 cantatas, litanies, motets and other liturgical pieces in his later years. The Magnificat, though, with its stylistic variety and the extraordinary (and exhausting!) double-fugue finale, is still seen as one of his finest works.

The occasion for which the Magnificat was written is not certain. There is circumstantial evidence that it may have been an audition piece to support his candidacy as the successor to his father as Kantor at Leipzig. Whatever the origin, it is evident that he thought highly of the piece himself. In the 1770s he expanded the orchestration to include trumpets and timpani and wrote a new, shorter version of the Et misericordia movement for chorus. It is this later 'Hamburg' version, from 1779, that we perform tonight, and which CPE chose as one of his own. works, alongside movements from Messiah and the B Minor Mass, for a charity concert he conducted in 1786.

CPE Bach's reputation stood high among the musical giants of the late 18th century – Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Known as 'the great Bach', Mozart famously said of him "He is the father, we are the children". His music subsequently fell into neglect and we have the scholars of recent decades to thank for rediscovering his works and elevating his standing once more.

# JESU, JOY OF MAN'S DESIRING

Jesu, joy of man's desiring, Holy wisdom, Love most bright, Drawn by Thee, our souls aspiring, soar to uncreated light. Word of God our flesh that fashion'd with the fire of life impassion'd. Striving still to Truth unknown, Soaring, dying round Thy throne.

# ASCENSION ORATORIO®

- 1. Praise the Lord in every nation; bless and honour Him for ever, and his excellence proclaim. Hear the sound of jubilation as we join in song together, and exalt His glorious name.
- 2. And then Jesus lifted His hands on high, and gave unto them His blessing.
  And it befell that as He blessed them all He ascended to Heaven.
- 3. Ah, Jesus! Has the hour then drawn so near? Ah, is the time already here that Thou must leave us for the skies? Behold now, see the bitter tears that are falling from these grieving eyes. As this sad day appears give comfort to my empty heart. Ah, nevermore depart!
- 4. Ah, stay awhile, my dearest treasure, and leave me not, I humbly pray.

  To say farewell, and to see you leaving adds such pain to my bitter grieving, that I can do no more than beg of you to stay. Else were this world bereft of pleasure.
- 5. And before their eyes He arose and ascended to heaven; and a cloud came down and hid him from their vision, as He sat at the right hand of the Father.

- 6. Thou mighty King of earth and sky, and Lord of all creation, to whom the hosts of angels fly: receive Mankind's oblation.
  Princes and rulers own Thy sway, and at Thy feet their honours lay.
  The earth and sky and ocean acclaim Thee with devotion.
- 7. And while they looked up steadfastly into heaven, behold two men suddenly stood before them in white apparel, saying unto them:

"Ye people of Galilea, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come again, as ye have seen Him go, when he ascended".

- 8. O Lord! Return without delay and banish all my bitter fears; else were each dull and dreary day no more than Death's dark vale of tears.
- 9. And after they had given thanks they departed together out of the mountain which is called 'Mount of Olives', and which is lying near Jerusalem, and only a Sabbathday journey thence.

  And they came back and testified what they had seen with joy and wonder.
- 10. Lord look down, and with a blessing guard this soul in your embrace.
  Lord your words are so caressing that I can feel here below something of that heav'n'ly glow which shall flood my inmost being when I see you face to face.
- 11. When comes the time appointed, when comes the happy hour that we shall see the anointed in majesty and power? O say, when comes the day that we, dear Lord, shall meet you, and we, dear Lord, shall greet you? Come! Bear my soul away!
- © 2007 Novello & Company Ltd

### **MAGNIFICAT**

- 1. Magnificat anima mea Dominum et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.
- 2. Qui respexit humilitatem ancillae suae Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.
- 3. Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est et sanctum nomen ejus.
- 4. Et misericordia ejus in progenies timentibus eum.
- 5. Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: Dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.
- Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles.
   Esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit inanes.
- 7. Suscepit Israel puerum suum: recordatus misericordiae suae. Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semeni ejus in secula.
- 8. Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.
- 9. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper et in secula seculorum. Amen.

(English text, as set in the Book of Common Prayer, 1662)

My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour.

For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden. For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations.

He hath showed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel: as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed forever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.



Hannah Grove (soprano) grew up in a musical family, taking a keen interest in classical music from an early age. After gaining a Choral Scholarship to Oriel College, Oxford, she began singing professionally in the UK and abroad with a number of groups including the Sarum Consort and Ex Cathedra, and now sings principally as a soprano soloist.



Oratorio performances include Messiah with the City of Birmingham Choir, Charpentier's Te Deum and Handel's Dixit Dominus with the Academy of Ancient Music, Faure's Requiem with the choral societies of Bristol and Gloucester at the Colston Hall, Bach's St Matthew Passion with the Glevum Consort and Corelli Orchestra, Purcell's Come Ye Sons of Art at Birmingham Town Hall, and Scarlatti's St Cecilia Mass in Worcester Cathedral.

She is increasingly in demand as a soloist with period chamber ensembles, and recent recitals have included the world premiere of a Three Choirs Festival commission, Ian King's *A Worcestershire Song Cycle*.

Future engagements include Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* at Symphony Hall, and Donizetti's *Ave Maria* at this year's Three Choirs Festival in Worcester.

Hannah gained her LRSM in singing performance in 2004 and continues her studies with soprano Bronwen Mills. When not singing, she is kept busy bringing up her small son, and has recently discovered a love for Baroque Dance which she is learning with Philippa Waite.

**Ben Sawyer** (*countertenor*) started life as a countertenor in the choirs of Kingston Parish Church and Tiffin School. He now enjoys a busy schedule singing around the world in choirs, both as a soloist and as a founder member of the award-winning male voice *a cappella* group 'The Songmen'.

With The Songmen, Ben has toured America, China and much of Europe and performs regularly in the UK. He is also the group's composer-in-residence and has had a number of his compositions and arrangements played on national radio. Ben has been a lay clerk at Birmingham and Gloucester Cathedrals and currently sings with Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum.



©Sophie Lewis

Ben is gaining an enviable reputation as a dynamic choral conductor and vocal teacher. Having left his job as Head of Music at Tewkesbury School in August 2012, he has been in regular demand to lead workshops, start new choirs and conduct existing ones. He has been Chorus Master for Gloucestershire Music's Massed Chorus of 500 students which performed at the Royal Albert Hall in the 'Music For Youth' in November 2012. This led to him being a founder conductor of the new Gloucestershire Youth Choir. Ben was also Assistant Conductor for Cheltenham Festival's production of Benjamin Britten's community opera, Noye's Fludde, and regularly conducts Tewkesbury Voices and Hanley Voices. He recently became Musical Director of Tyndale Choral Society.

**Nick Drew** (tenor) first sang tenor in the award-winning Berkshire Youth Choir, before being awarded a Choral Scholarship in the Chapel Choir of Queen's College, Cambridge, where he read Modern and Medieval Languages. He then sang in the choir of St Mary the Virgin, Nottingham whilst completing his Masters Degree, and remains an annual fixture as Evangelist in their alternating Good Friday performances of Bach's St Matthew and St John Passions – the Nottingham Evening Post described his performance as "beautifully enunciated and full of emotional intensity".



Since moving to Birmingham in 2000, he has been in high demand as a recitalist, soloist and consort singer in the West Midlands region and beyond, and is a regular member of Ex Cathedra, Ensemble Sine Nomine and the Proteus Ensemble. He also sings regularly as a Deputy Lay Clerk in the Cathedral choirs of Birmingham (St Philip's), Worcester, Lichfield and Gloucester.

His wide repertoire as a soloist includes a broad range of sacred oratorio, including works by Bach, Haydn and Mozart, as well as light opera and chamber works.

Away from the concert platform, he works full-time as a fund-raiser for Worcester Cathedral, maintains a lively interest in politics and (increasingly distantly) follows the fortunes of Sheffield Wednesday Football Club.

James Geidt (bass) was born in Northampton. He was educated as a chorister at St John's College School, Cambridge, The King's School, Canterbury and Oxford Brookes University where he was in a unique position of reading Music whilst also singing in the choir of New College, Oxford under Edward Higginbottom. James is now in his second year as a layclerk at Gloucester Cathedral under Adrian Partington and is currently studying with Bronwen Mills.



At New College solo engagements included Faure's *Requiem*, Bach's *St John Passion* and *Magnificat* as well as featuring on numerous recordings with the choir. During his time in Oxford, James was also a prominent figure on the opera scene, appearing in productions of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* and Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* for New Chamber Opera.

Since graduating in 2012, James has gone on to sing with a variety of professional choirs in the UK including Chapelle du Roi and Ex Cathedra. James appears as a soloist on recordings of Britten Choral works and Charpentier *Music Sacrée* (both Novum). Recent concert appearances include Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Creation*, Pilate and the bass solos in Bach's *St John Passion* and *Requiem* settings by Brahms, Fauré and Mozart. James also features regularly as a soloist for the BBC National Chorus of Wales, appearing in performances of *Les Sécheresses* by Poulenc and a new recording of Arthur Sullivan's *The Beauty Stone*.

# **About the Choral Society**

A century and a half after its formation, Cirencester Choral Society is flourishing, with a membership of over 120. Although amateur singers, we strive to perform to the highest possible standards with



the resources available to us. Our success depends hugely on the dedication of the professionals we engage to train us. **Carleton Etherington** has been directing us since January 2005. Organist and Director of Music at



Tewkesbury Abbey, Carleton features on many CD recordings and often broadcasts on the BBC. Our accompanist **Jenny Rees** is a freelance musician and assembles the orchestral players for our concerts. They perform under the banner of the *Corinium* Camerata led Andrew Court.

We aim to support the careers of aspiring young instrumentalists by giving them opportunities to perform alongside fully professional orchestral players, and, unless the works require the services of experienced professional singers, we have in recent years engaged postgraduate students from London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama to perform as soloists in our concerts, giving them valuable experience as they embark on their professional singing careers. Through our activities we also look for opportunities to raise funds



for local charities. You can learn more about the Society at www.cirencester-choral-soc.org.uk.

### Recent concerts

In recent seasons we have enjoyed introducing our audiences to some neglected works and to music by lesser known composers. Our reviewers have encouraged us with their comments and we will continue in this vein in 2014-15. This is some of what they have said:





Parry, May 2013: "Carleton Etherington took us on a journey of discovery, giving some neglected, yet magnificent, music by an eminent son of Gloucestershire the kind of performance it really deserves."

**Purcell, Dec 2012:** "At a time of year when one can perhaps get a surfeit of seasonal music, this was a refreshing concert that I was pleased to have attended. Well-done to the performers, and the many who worked behind the scenes to bring off this very worthwhile presentation of the music of a great composer."

Hummel, May 2012: "... That leaves Hummel, the least well known of the trio of composers, to take the plaudits for his B flat Mass as the 'take home' work of the evening ... Dancing with 120 people at the same time is a challenge the choir rose to regularly, producing delightful, lyrical music and enjoying the wonderful tunes."



### Our members

Soprano Dorothy Andrews Catherine Bagnall Diana Boulton Sybil Bride Pippa Burgon Sue Burton Pamela Clayton Janine Coleridge

Alison Crooks Anne Davies Sandra Dent Liz Fleming Alison Goodall Jenny Hall Andrea Hamilton Iulia Hasler Diana Heywood Judith Ivison Patsy Jackson

Alice Kilby Laura Kinloch Catherine Kirwin Valerie Lambert Beryl Le Bars Billie Llewelyn Mary Ludbrook

Sarah Jackson

Valerie Joyce

Diane Martin Margaret McIvor Jayne McLoughlin Jill Middleton Anne Mingins Jennifer Moody Margaret Mullin

Sue Nashe Shirley Nicholas Penny Phillips

Jennette Murphy

Jacqeline Shepherd

Jilly South

Wiggy Talbot Rice Anne Vickers Diane Welch Amanda Wheatley Aideen Wilding Jacqueline Wilson

Alto

Frances Angus Kate Barry Io Birkin Meg Blumsom Sophie Brown Sue Brayne Gemma Butcher Mary Clayton Fiona Cordiner Diana Crane Nicola Grinham

Ruth Hayman Debbie Hewitt Claire Hoad Ros Ivison Ingela Jacob Beryl King Sonia La Fontaine Jennifer Le Marinel Mary Macdonald

Dorothy Hartridge

Avril Malec Jennifer May

Liz McGlynn Therese Munro-Warwick Olivia Murray Alison Norris Lorna Page Ann Pole Sarah Powell

Ann Price Ginny Ravenscroft Jane Read

Margaret Reynolds Anne Smith

Chris Sutton Ghislaine Venn Pat Westall Adrienne Winter Gill Young

Tenor

Ian Abbott Chris Burton, Andy Crane Rob Crow Vic Gilks Peter Kilby John Liptrot John Pinnington Graham Shearn, Ann Simpson Robin Thompson Michael Winter

Bass

John Appleton Nicholas Arbuthnott, Geoffrey Beattie Digby Bew William Brereton Anthony Cole Bernard Crooks Richard Davies

Garth De Courcy-Ireland

Anthony Eyre Roger Heafield John Hicks Richard Kent **Bob Merrill** Richard Mullings Tim Page, John Rees Geoff Richards Bob Selby

David South Graeme Tonge Phil Tubbs Michael Ward

# Corinium Camerata

Flute - Jane Groves, Lucy Rees; Oboe - Andrew King, Rachel Moody;

Horn - Paul Tomlinson, Helen Merrett;

Trumpet - Richard Colquhoun, James Bennett, Paul Harris;

Timpani – Keith Price;

1st Violin - Andrew Court, Nicolette Brown, Sonia Nash, Sarah Ogden;

2<sup>nd</sup> Violin – Jonathan Trim, Jonathan York, Catherine Fowles, Richard Thompson;

Viola - Rachael Birkin, Kate Skeet; Cello - Juliet McCarthy, Kay Thomas;

Double Bass - John Law; Harpsichord - David Whitehead

# Cirencester Choral Society's forthcoming concerts

Sat 6th December 2014

Cirencester Parish Church

Cherubini

Requiem in C minor

Haydn

Trumpet Concerto

Te Deum

Insanae et vanae curae





Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2015 Cirencester Parish Church

**Puccini** *Messa di Gloria* 

**Rossini** Stahat Mater





Tickets go on sale one month before concert dates and are available from members, from the Cirencester Visitor Information Centre (Tel 01285 654180) or via the Society's website: <a href="https://www.cirencester-choral-soc.org.uk">www.cirencester-choral-soc.org.uk</a>

# The Society gratefully acknowledges:

- the generous support provided by *The Letter Press* in the printing of this programme;
- the Visitor Information Centre and The Corner Stone for providing box office facilities;
  - the Parish Church for making the venue available for concert performances;
    - our loyal audience, without whose following our future would be bleak!



Programme printed by



