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MENDELSSOHN

ELIJAH



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Elijah – Gareth Brynmor John
Janice Watson, Miranda Westcott, Dean Power

SATURDAY 12 MARCH 2022, 7.30PM

TWICKENHAM CHORAL

FUTURE CONCERTS AND EVENTS IN OUR CENTENARY YEAR 2022

Friday 13 May, 7pm

Gala Concert and Champagne Reception for Twickenham Choral Guests at St Mary's Church, Twickenham

Renaissance and Restoration English anthems
Roxanna Panufnik: *Wild Musick*, a setting of words from Alexander Pope's 'Ode to Musick',
on St Cecilia's Day', a new commission

Saturday 2 July, 7.30pm

All Saints Church, Kingston upon Thames

Mozart: C minor Mass

Soloists: Sophie Bevan, Elizabeth Watts,

Nathan Vale, Peter Lidbetter

Iain Farrington: *Jazz Cantata - Then Sing We All*, a new commission

Brandenburg Sinfonia

Saturday 19 December, 7.30pm

Holy Trinity Church, Twickenham Green

J.S. Bach: B minor Mass

Soloists: Alexandra Kidgell, Carris Jones, Matthew Long, Robert Davies

Brandenburg Sinfonia



As well as numerous choir members, past and present, we are grateful to all the grant-making bodies, sponsors and businesses who are supporting us for our Centenary Year by grants, sponsorship, advertising and donations.

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Programme designed by Tom Kean, the cover based on Eric Fraser's illustration for the choir, first used in 1984.



FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809 - 1847)

ELIJAH, OP. 70

Mendelssohn was born into a wealthy and cultured Berlin family. His grandfather, Moses Mendelssohn, was a renowned philosopher and his father, Abraham, was a highly successful banker. His forebears were Jewish, but when he was seven years old his parents had him baptised as a Christian, not so much out of religious zeal as from a desire to allow him to partake more fully of German culture and to gain greater social acceptance. Although they raised Felix as a Lutheran and he remained devoted to the church throughout his life, he was never fully accepted as a Christian by his contemporaries, and never fully cut off from his Judaic heritage.

Felix was a precociously gifted child, so much so that the finest musicians of the day hailed him as a second Mozart. This comparison was by no means without foundation. By the time he had reached his mid-teens Mendelssohn had composed many mature works, including twelve string symphonies; at seventeen, he wrote such outstanding works as the *Octet for Strings* and the *Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and was already extraordinarily popular as a composer.

Mendelssohn's exceptional gifts were not confined to composition: he went on to become a brilliant pianist and organist, a fine string player and an inspirational conductor, fashioning the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra into one of the premiere ensembles of Europe. The 20-year-old composer made another outstanding contribution to music when he mounted a revival of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in Berlin in 1829. The first public performance of the *Passion* since Bach's death, it was an event which, probably more than any other, provided the impetus for the 19th century rediscovery of Bach. Mendelssohn was also a great admirer of the music of Handel and Haydn, whose oratorios he conducted in Leipzig.

With such a background, it was, perhaps, not surprising that Mendelssohn wished to compose an oratorio: *St Paul*, premiered at the Lower Rhine Festival in 1836, was an immediate success, the first successful oratorio since the days of Handel and Haydn, and led Mendelssohn to consider a suitable subject for a new oratorio.

The subject of Elijah was dear to his heart, so in 1838 he enlisted the help of his old friend, Pastor Julius Schubring, in drafting a libretto. Schubring felt that the oratorio should be in the nature of a sermon in music, stressing the moral and uplifting aspects of the Old Testament texts, and that any degree of dramatic realism was inappropriate in a sacred work. This was at variance with Mendelssohn's own, very definite ideas about a piece about which he wrote 'I would fain see the dramatic element more prominent as well as more exuberant and defined....(T)he dramatic element should predominate.' As a result of their disagreements, the project was dropped.

In the first half of the 19th century there was a great upsurge of choral activity in Western Europe. Concert halls were built, choral societies were established and composers were quick to exploit the market thus provided. It was an age when big was beautiful – choirs numbering 200 or more voices became common – so one of the most popular forms of music for public performance was the oratorio. This was exemplified in the Birmingham Festival that Mendelssohn had attended in 1837 to conduct *St Paul*, and in 1840 when his *Hymn of Praise* was performed; both occasions enjoyed great success.

Mendelssohn visited England many times where he was received with adulation, fêted by the press, and became a great favourite of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. When the directors of the Birmingham Festival commissioned him to compose and conduct a new oratorio in 1846, the 38-year-old composer had long been the most celebrated musician in Europe. He wrote back accepting the new commission, adding, 'Since some time I have begun an oratorio and hope I shall be able to bring it out for the first time at your Festival; but it is still a mere beginning and I cannot yet give you any promise as to my finishing it in time.'



Birmingham Town Hall

The commission from the Birmingham Festival afforded Mendelssohn the opportunity to return to *Elijah*, which he did with renewed enthusiasm. This time, he mostly compiled the libretto himself although still calling upon Pastor Schubring's assistance in selecting suitable texts. Mendelssohn spoke English fluently, but nevertheless engaged his English friend William Bartholomew to prepare the English translation that would be set. He worked feverishly on the score to ensure that it was completed in time.

The first performance, conducted by Mendelssohn himself, took place on the 26 August 1846 before an audience of two thousand, who had packed into Birmingham Town Hall for the eagerly-awaited event. It was an unprecedented success. No fewer than four choruses and four arias were encored, and the applause evidently bordered on the hysterical. Mendelssohn recounted the experience in a letter to his brother. 'No work of mine went so admirably the first time of execution or was received with such enthusiasm by both the musicians and the audience.' The music correspondent of *The Times* was even more effusive: 'The last note of *Elijah* was drowned in a long-continued unanimous volley of plaudits, vociferous, and deafening,' he reported. 'Never was there a more complete triumph; never a more thorough and speedy recognition of a great work of art.' It was without doubt the crowning glory of Mendelssohn's spectacularly successful career – but tragically it was to prove his last major triumph. A lifetime of overwork now brought rapidly failing health, and when his beloved sister Fanny unexpectedly died, he never recovered from the shock. He died on 4 November 1847.

Structurally, *Elijah* is clearly influenced by the choral masterpieces of Bach and Handel, but its highly dramatic style, at times almost operatic, constitutes a significant step forward from its Baroque predecessors. *Elijah* has many other outstanding qualities: the imaginative orchestration, the spontaneity and energy of the counterpoint, the variety which Mendelssohn brings to the recitatives to ensure that they always maintain the dramatic impetus, and the sheer beauty of many of the arias and choruses. Above all, there is no mistaking the work's striking impact, epitomised by the vivid characterisation of Elijah himself.

Ever since Handel's *Messiah* had first captivated audiences in 1742, the oratorio form had occupied a pre-eminent position in the concert halls of England. After its resounding first performance, *Elijah* immediately established itself as second only to *Messiah* in the public's affections. It received countless performances in the years just after its composition and this enormous popularity continued scarcely unabated throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. Some measure of this may be judged by the fact that it was performed at the Three Choirs Festival every year from 1847 to 1930 – and was chosen to be the first piece given by Twickenham Musical Society (as Twickenham Choral was called then) in March 1922.

During the austere period straight after World War 2 there was a reaction against Mendelssohn's music. To what extent this was an after-effect of the rampant German anti-Semitism is difficult to determine, but the view in the musical establishment was that his life had been too easy and that consequently his music, with its classical elegance and often understated emotion, was superficial and inferior. With changes in the musical climate, and also because of its previous over-exposure, *Elijah* took a dip in popularity. However, recent years have seen a more balanced attitude to Mendelssohn: we can now see objectively that Mendelssohn's *Elijah* takes its place as a great oratorio, alongside those of Haydn and Handel.

Programme note by Adrian Mumford



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SYNOPSIS

PART ONE

The oratorio commences in an unusual but highly dramatic manner as the principal soloist, Elijah (baritone), announces in an introductory recitative his warning to the Israelites that, because of their infidelity to God, they will not have any rain, 'but according to my word'. This powerful beginning has within it a musical reference to the very end of the work, for Mendelssohn uses a series of diminished fifth intervals at the words, 'there shall not be dew or rain' that we will hear again in the choral basses' final 'Amen' at the very end. That, however, is all in the future as Mendelssohn now proceeds with the expected overture, a dark, relentless fugato in D minor. At its climactic end, the chorus of Israelites enters dramatically with the heartfelt plea: 'Help, Lord! Wilt thou quite destroy us?'

After the overture there follows a series of highly charged movements in which the Israelites call upon the Lord for help, and bewail the drought which is causing such great distress. Obadiah (tenor) entreats them to be faithful to God in the aria 'If with all your hearts'. But in the ensuing chorus they express their fear of God the avenger, even though they know that 'His mercies on thousands fall'.

Meanwhile Elijah flees into the desert at the bidding of an Angel (mezzo), where he drinks from Cherith's brooks and ravens bring him food. A beautiful eight-part chorus describes the ministering and protective angels. Next Elijah intercedes with God on behalf of the dying son of a Widow (soprano). The boy recovers, and Elijah and the widow join in duet to praise God. Their cry is taken up by the chorus, who sings of God's goodness in 'Blessed are the men that fear him'.

Elijah then returns to Israel and confronts the ungodly King Ahab, but Ahab (tenor) leads the people against him. Elijah challenges the priests of Baal to prepare a sacrifice and to call down fire from heaven to consume it. This they endeavour to do, and the people cry to Baal in choruses of increasing desperation, but to no avail.

Elijah then calls the people to him and in the tender aria 'Lord God of Abraham' prays to God to show them some great deed that they might once again believe in him. His plea is reinforced by a hymn-like chorus urging the believer and righteous person to trust in God. The people cry out in fearful amazement as they see fire descending to consume the sacrifice. They declare their belief that the Lord is God, and they then cry out for retribution against the false priests of Baal. This scene ends with Elijah's triumphant and spectacular aria 'Is not his word like a fire?', a powerful declaration of God's eternal wrath with the wicked.

Obadiah now pleads with Elijah to intercede with God to send rain and end the drought. Elijah and the people pray for relief, and Elijah sends a Youth (soprano) to go to a high place and look towards the sea. Eventually the youth returns to say that clouds are approaching. The rain arrives and Part One ends with a great outburst of rejoicing in the chorus 'Thanks be to God', as the parched land is bathed in the longed-for rain.

Introduction : Elijah

As God the Lord of Israel liveth

Overture

1. Chorus: The People

Help, Lord! Wilt Thou quite destroy us!

2. Duet with Chorus

Lord, bow Thine ear to our prayer!

3. Recitative: Obadiah

Ye people, rend your hearts and not your garments

4. Aria: Obadiah

If with all your hearts ye truly seek Me

5. Chorus: The People

Yet doth the Lord see it not

6. Recitative: Angel

Elijah! Get thee hence, Elijah!

7. Chorus

For He shall give his angels charge over thee

7a. Recitative: Angel

Now Cherith's brook is dried up, Elijah

8. Recitative: The Widow, Elijah

What have I to do with thee, O man of God?

9. Chorus

Blessed are the men who fear Him

10. Recitative & Chorus: Elijah, Ahab, the People

As God the Lord of Sabaoth liveth

11. Chorus: Prophets of Baal

Baal, we cry to thee

12. Recitative & Chorus, Elijah, Prophets of Baal

Call him louder, for he is a god!

13. Recitative & Chorus, Elijah, Prophets of Baal

Call him louder! He heareth not

14. Aria: Elijah

Lord God of Abraham



15. Chorus

Cast thy burden upon the Lord

16. Recitative & Chorus: Elijah and the People

O Thou, who makest Thine angels spirits

17. Aria: Elijah

Is not His word like a fire

18. Aria: Mezzo

Woe unto them who forsake Him

19A. Recitative: Obadiah

O man of God, help thy people!

19B. Recitative & Chorus: Elijah, Youth, the People

O Lord, Thou hast overthrown Thine enemies

20. Chorus: The People

Thanks be to God!



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PART TWO

In an aria for soprano, the Israelites are called upon to remember God's promises and to have no fear, whatever happens to other people. The chorus takes up the sentiment in 'Be not afraid', a spectacular section that is one of the oratorio's greatest glories. But Ahab's foreign Queen Jezebel (mezzo) stirs up the Israelites by false accusations against Elijah, and they, in their fickleness, call for his death. Obadiah warns him to escape, and he retires to the wilderness where in the powerfully moving aria 'It is enough' he longs for death. While he sleeps, angels comfort him; here Mendelssohn provides a jewel of his craft: the matchless three-part female chorus 'Lift thine eyes'.

When Elijah awakes, he is bidden to go to Mount Horeb. He is tired and despondent at the faithlessness of the Israelites, God's chosen people, but in the aria 'O Rest in the Lord' the Angel consoles and strengthens him. Thus Elijah goes to Horeb (Mount Sinai, the holy mountain where Moses received the Ten Commandments) and stands before the Lord. In the ensuing chorus, after a mighty storm, an earthquake and a fire, the Lord at last appears to Elijah in a 'still, small voice', commanding him to return to the Israelites, for there are still among them people of faith, 'knees that have not bowed to Baal'. So Elijah returns, and the wonderful works he performs and his ascent into heaven in a fiery chariot are vividly depicted in the glowing chorus 'Then did Elijah the prophet break forth like a fire'.

Before the oratorio draws to a joyful conclusion with the great chorus of praise, 'Lord, our Creator, how excellent thy name is in all the nations', we hear another jewel of Mendelssohn's craft, the tenor aria 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in their heavenly Father's realm'.

21. Aria: Soprano

Hear ye, Israel

22. Chorus: The People

'Be not afraid,' saith God the Lord

23. Recitative and Chorus: Elijah, Jezebel, the People

The Lord hath exalted thee

24. Chorus: The People

Woe to him! he shall perish

25. Recitative: Obadiah, Elijah

Man of God, now let my words

26. Aria: Elijah

It is enough! O Lord, now take away my life

27. Recitative: Tenor

See, now he sleepeth

28. Trio: Angels

Lift thine eyes to the mountains

30. Recitative: Elijah, Angel

Arise, Elijah

31. Aria: Angel

O rest in the Lord

33. Recitative: Elijah, Angel

Night falleth round me

34. Chorus

Behold, God the Lord passed by!

35. Recitative & Chorus: Mezzo, Seraphim

Above Him stood the Seraphim, and one cried to another: Holy, holy, holy

36. Chorus & Recitative: Elijah

Go, return upon thy way!

37. Aria: Elijah

For the mountains shall depart

38. Chorus

Then did Elijah the prophet break forth like a fire

39. Aria: Tenor

Then shall the righteous shine forth

42. Chorus

And then shall your light break forth

Synopsis supplied through Making Music

Nos 29, 32, 40 and 41 are omitted in this performance.



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Photo: Alex MacNaughton

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A word about the stained glass: the glass was designed by the Danish nobleman Baron Arild Rosenkrantz, who had learnt the art whilst working with Tiffany in New York. His designs for Cadogan Hall were said to exhibit 'artistic simplicity of patterning and to provide efficiency of lighting and economy consistent with dignity'. There are no allegorical images and only one window has text. Although the Celtic knot motifs are simple and the use of colour restrained, the dramatic effect of the restored glass was a pleasant surprise during the refurbishment process.

Adapted from words by Calvin Bruce of Paul Davis and Partners

GARETH BRYNMOR JOHN (ELIJAH)



Photo: Pablo Strong

Winner of the Kathleen Ferrier Award, baritone Gareth Brynmor John studied at Cambridge, the Royal Academy of Music where he won the Patrons' Award, and the National Opera Studio where he was supported by the Royal Opera House.

He made his debut with Welsh National Opera singing Schaunard (*La Bohème*) in 2017 and has since returned for various roles. Recent and future engagements include covering and singing the roles of Eugene Onegin and Andrei *War and Peace*, Papageno *Die Zauberflöte*, Robert *Les Vêpres Siciliennes*, Sharpless *Madama Butterfly* all for Welsh National Opera, Servilio *Lucio Papirio Dittatore* at the Buxton Festival, Donner *Das Rheingold* for Grimeborn Opera and Ashmeron *The Indian Queen* with Opéra de Lille under Emmanuelle Haïm. Concert performances include *Elijah* at Birmingham Town Hall; *Carmina*

Burana with the Bach Choir at the Royal Festival Hall, and at the Barbican; Handel *Messiah* and Fauré *Requiem* at the Royal Albert Hall, Elgar *The Dream of Gerontius* with the Leeds Philharmonic Chorus, Brahms *Requiem* with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Vaughan Williams *Mystical Songs* with the Aalborg Symfonieorkester, Stanford *Missa Via Victrix* with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Elgar *The Kingdom* with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and at Ely Cathedral, various concerts with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Mozart *Requiem* with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra.

Gareth is part of the Songsmiths, and sings in the London English Song Festival. He has given recitals at St John's Smith Square, Wigmore Hall, Barber Institute, King's Place, King's Lynn Festival, North Norfolk Music Festival, Ludlow Festival of Song, Haddo Festival, Wallace Collection, Bath International Festival, Buxton Festival and at the Oxford Lieder and Leeds Lieder Festivals as well as giving joint recitals with Roderick Williams at the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool and for Music in the Round, Sheffield. He has recently recorded a disc of song entitled 'The Children's Hour' for the Champs Hill record label which was released in the spring of 2021.



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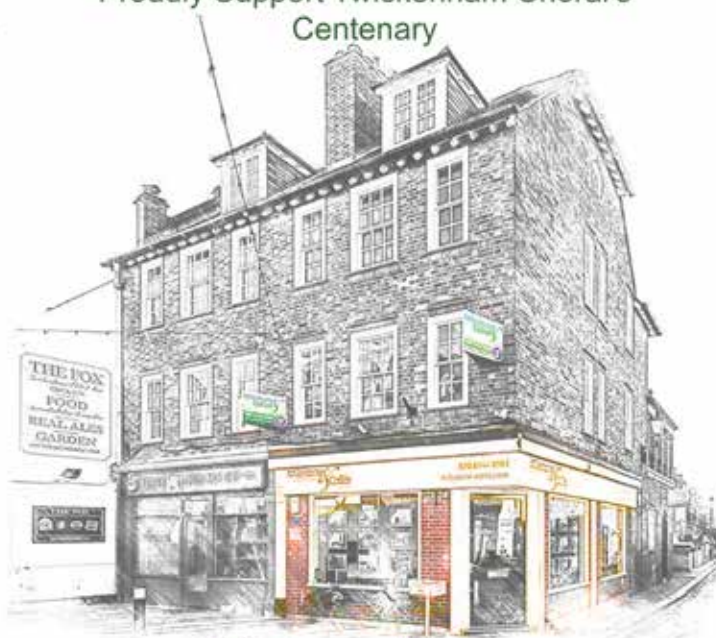
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JANICE WATSON (WIDOW AND ANGEL)

A flautist originally, Janice Watson began taking singing seriously at the instigation of tenor Phillip Langridge, studying first with Johanna Peters at the Guildhall in London, later with Renata Scottò. There followed a period at the Ravel Institute in Ciboure, culminating in a concert performance of *Scheherazade* with Michel Plasson and the Toulouse Symphony Orchestra. Then at the age of 23 she won the Kathleen Ferrier Award and the Royal Over-Seas League Competition, which launched her into the upper levels of the singing profession.

Janice has performed in most of the major opera houses of the world and she has been a regular guest with both English National Opera and Welsh National Opera.

Conductors she has worked with include Riccardo Chailly, Edward Gardner, Sir Charles MacKerras, Sir Bernard Haitink, Neeme Järvi, Trevor Pinnock, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Franz Welser-Möst, Daniele Gatti, Robin Ticciati, David Atherton, David Parry, David Hill, Richard Hickox, Frans Brüggen, Gustavo Dudamel, Antonio Pappano, André Previn, Kurt Masur, Sir Mark Elder, Donald Runnicles, Martyn Brabbins, Vassily Sinaisky and Sir Andrew Davis.

Roles include: Countess *Nozze di Figaro*, Ellen Orford, Arabella, Daphne, Ariadne, Marschallin, Salome, Musetta, Katja Kabanova, Jenůfa, Blanche and Stella *Streetcar named Desire*, Alice Ford, Leonore, Elisabetta *Don Carlos*, Elsa *Lohengrin*, Elisabeth *Tannhäuser*, Sieglinde, Isolde, Kundry, Madame Lidoine *Dialogues des Carmélites*, and Hecuba *King Priam*.

Janice has also made many recordings. Her performance of Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes* for Chandos with Richard Hickox and LSO won her a Grammy, and she has received two further nominations. Other recordings include Elisabeth *Don Carlos* and *Jenůfa* for Chandos, *A Poisoned Kiss*, Britten *Owen Wingrave*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Dvořák *Stabat Mater*, Beethoven *Missa Solemnis* and *Ah! Perfido*, Poulenc *Gloria* and *Stabat Mater*, and Salamambo's aria from Bernard Herrmann's *Citizen Kane* with the Scottish National Orchestra. A recent recording of Delius *Mass of Life* and *Prelude and Idyll* for Naxos was recently CD of the week both on BBC Radio 3 and in *Gramophone* magazine.

Concert work includes the Britten *Spring Symphony* at the Tanglewood Festival in Boston, *Die Walküre* in Hong Kong, a concert tour of the Far East with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, many performances of the Britten *War Requiem*, Vaughan Williams *A Sea Symphony*, Mahler Symphonies, Strauss *Four Last Songs*, Walton's *Façade* (Janice has performed the speaking role in duet with Sir Andrew Davis), Rachmaninov's *The Bells*, Beethoven Masses, Mozart *Mass in C* and *Requiem*, and many Oratorios by Handel and Mendelssohn. She has sung many times at the Royal Albert Hall Proms and the Edinburgh Festival.



Photo: Lukasz Rajchert

MIRANDA WESTCOTT (ANGEL AND QUEEN JEZEBEL)



Photo: Neil Gillespie

Miranda Westcott read music at Birmingham University before attending the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She was awarded a full scholarship to Dennis O'Neill's Academy in Cardiff and was subsequently invited to perform in Jersey with Kiri Te Kanawa.

Miranda made her debut at the Royal Opera House as Second Bridesmaid in *Il nozze di Figaro* under Colin Davies, recently reprising under Sir Antonio Pappano. She has also sung Glasha in *Katya Kabanova* under Sir Charles Mackerras, with Janice Watson in the title role. She has covered roles at the Royal Opera House, Welsh National Opera and Garsington.

Other roles include Kate Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly* at the Royal Albert Hall; Rosswise in *Die Walküre* and Zweite Dame in *Die Zauberflöte* for Longborough Opera; Suzuki in *Madame Butterfly* for Opera Project; Smeaton in *Anna Bolena* Tower of London; Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro* for Surrey Opera, and Olga in *Eugene Onegin* at Richmond Theatre.

In concert, Miranda has appeared at the Wigmore Hall, The Sage Gateshead, Oxford Lieder Festival, English Haydn Festival, Crush Room series at Covent Garden and St John's Smith Square (where she loved singing Elgar's Angel in *The Dream of Gerontius* for Twickenham Choral).

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DEAN POWER (OBADIAH AND KING AHAB)

Irish tenor Dean Power was born in Clarecastle, Ireland, and studied in Dublin with Mary Brennan and répétiteur Mairead Hurley at the Royal Irish Academy of Music and D.I.T. Conservatory of Music and Drama. In 2020-21, Dean completed his final season as a member of the ensemble at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, where he was resident since graduating from the company's Opera Studio at the end of the 2011-12 season. After ten years as an ensemble member, Dean now continues to expand upon his already growing career as an international solo guest artist.

During his time at the Bayerische Staatsoper his roles have included Steuermann *Der fliegende Holländer*, Edmondo *Manon Lescaut*, Graf Elemer *Arabella*, Scaramuccio *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and Graf Albert *Die tote Stadt*, plus many more. More recently he made two notable role debuts as Rodrigo *Otello* and Spoletta *Tosca* as part of the Munich Opera Festival.



Photo: Fritz Bek

Dean's operatic engagements have also included Graf Elemer *Arabella* in his company debut at Opernhaus Zürich, Belmonte in a live-stream concert performance of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* with Irish National Opera at the National Opera House in Wexford, Acis in a concert performance of *Acis and Galatea* with Irish Baroque Orchestra, Maintop *Billy Budd* for the Glyndebourne Festival and Rustighello *Lucrezia Borgia* for Theater St Gallen.

In his 2021-22 season, Dean makes his debut at the Salzburger Festspiele in Puccini's *Il Trittico*, his house debut at Opéra de Lille as Snout *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in a new production by Laurent Pelly, returns to Bayerische Staatsoper to perform in children's opera *Max und die Superheld:innen*, and joins Irish National Opera both as Jaquino *Fidelio* and to create the role of Gary in the world premiere of the commissioned opera, *The First Child*. In concert he sings *Christmas Oratorio* at the Teatro Nacional de Sao Carlos in Lisbon and Ryba's *Stabat Mater* with Prague Symphony Orchestra.

NAOMI SIMON (YOUTH)



Currently a boarder at Rugby School, Naomi Simon has loved singing since she was first introduced to choral singing at the age of 7 with the York Minster Choir. She particularly enjoyed Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and the Christmas services at York Minster, and was also involved in choral outreach singing with local state schools.

Naomi joined Rugby School at 13 where her confidence as a soprano soloist has grown. She has been helping to promote the New Chorister Programme and sang the solo piece *Adonai Ro'i* (Psalm 23). She was delighted to be recognised as one of the top five young female singers in the country in the Chorister of the Year 2021 semi-finals. In addition to singing, Naomi plays the saxophone and the piano.

Tonight's performance as the Youth in *Elijah* marks Naomi's London debut as a soprano solo, with Rebecca Taylor, Twickenham Choral's Assistant Conductor and on the Music Staff at Rugby School, helping her to prepare for the occasion.

ELIJAH AND TWICKENHAM CHORAL

This evening's performance of *Elijah* is the tenth in the Choir's 100-year history, the first taking place exactly 100 years ago to the month, at the Old Town Hall in Twickenham.

Another performance was given in April 1933 before the war, then a spate of four in the post-war period, in January 1949, May 1952, November 1954 and November 1959. There was a 20-year gap before the next, in January 1979, conducted by Christopher Herrick at All Hallows Church in Twickenham, with the Capriol Orchestra, and John Lawrenson as Elijah.

Five years later, at St John the Divine in Richmond, Michael Pearce sang the title role, and the choir was accompanied by the Rosebery Orchestra. Tickets back in 1984 cost £3.50 and could be bought from Albert's Music Shop in Twickenham. Eric Fraser was producing his superb cover designs for us in the early 1980s and this concert saw the first use of his design for *Elijah*, which we have called on with such appreciation for this evening's concert poster and programme, as well as our Centenary booklet.

By 2006 our great partnership with Brandenburg Sinfonia was thriving and the role of Elijah on that occasion, at Kingston Parish Church, was taken by Roderick Williams.

CHRISTOPHER HERRICK

Christopher Herrick has been Conductor of Twickenham Choral for nearly 50 years. He began his conducting career while an organ scholar at Oxford University and then won a Boult Scholarship to the Royal College of Music to study under Sir Adrian Boult. He has been ambitious for the choir's development, working with them to perform a huge repertoire, ranging from Monteverdi through all the great choral classics to specially commissioned works.

Many of his conducting appearances have been in top London venues such as the Royal Albert Hall (including Verdi's *Requiem* with 500 singers), Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral, Barbican Hall, the Wigmore Hall, St John's Smith Square, Cadogan Hall – most recently in January 2020 just before the Covid 19 Lockdown – as well as the Queen Elizabeth Hall, where he has conducted twenty concerts covering the whole gamut of the choral repertoire. In Guildford Cathedral he has directed Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, Britten's *War Requiem*, Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* and Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*. Twickenham Choral have frequently sung under his baton at St Martin-in-the-Fields during the Brandenburg spring and autumn choral festivals.

Christopher has successfully combined his conducting duties with his work as a concert organist. Having spent ten years as an organist at Westminster Abbey, he has since given hundreds of organ concerts all over the world and has made well over forty solo CDs for Hyperion Records, including all Bach's organ works, and fourteen CDs entitled *Organ Fireworks*, recorded on great organs around the world. Two highlights of his organ concert career have been to play the complete organ works of J.S. Bach, first at the Lincoln Center Festival in New York (1998), and more recently in St Petersburg at the Mariinsky Concert Hall (2014). Last year his 45th CD, recorded for Hyperion in August 2020 on one of the largest organs in the world – the Steinmeyer organ in Trondheim Cathedral, Norway – was brought out to enthusiastic reviews; and Christopher will be back to giving concerts post-pandemic this coming summer, in Germany, Denmark and Italy as well as the UK.



Photo: Åsa Bäckman



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FROM OUR ARCHIVE

Our Centenary booklet, brought out at the start of the year, contains a History of the Choir, but in the way of such things further points of interest have emerged since it was compiled. (If you come across any items that would enhance future programmes, please contact publicity@twickenhamchoral.org.uk.)

The Twickenham Musical Society (as it was until as late as 1977) took part in a Grand Concert at the Royal Albert Hall in a 'Thanksgiving for Victory' concert in the presence of the King and Queen, not quite eight months after the end of the war, on Saturday 20th April 1946.

In a pile of old papers our Chairman came across an intriguing bundle fastened together with a rusty paperclip. There she found all the mementos saved from that concert: a choir ticket for a second soprano in the upper orchestra; a flier listing the main participants – Sir Adrian Boult ('by kind permission of the BBC') and Dr Malcolm Sargent both conducting, as well as Isobel Baillie (Soprano) and Valentine Dyall (Orator), with Arnold Greir at the organ; also (to modern eyes) an austere programme; and a list of essential 'instructions for choralists', indicating such things as the seating plan, dress code and the all-important information about which entrance and cloakroom to use.

On the front page, the programme states that the performance 'is given by representatives of choral societies and festivals in Great Britain which kept going during the war (1939-1945), to commemorate the devoted efforts of our amateur choral singers during the War.' Inside, the Twickenham Music Society appears in the London & Home Counties Region, alongside representatives from over 150 choral groups all over Britain, as far as away as Falmouth, Welshpool, the Isle of Man and Inverness.

The National Anthem preceded an oration – 'Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more: Or close the wall up with our English dead!', followed by Walton's *Agincourt Song*, then Vaughan Williams's *Thanksgiving for Victory*, for Soprano Solo, Chorus and Speaker; *Nimrod* and *For the Fallen* by Elgar; Rupert Brooke's 'Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!' and Parry's *Blest pair of Sirens*; Vaughan Williams again, with the first movement of his *London Symphony*, and of course the Hallelujah chorus to end.

Our second soprano naturally kept a letter of thanks from representatives of the Arts Council of Great Britain, the National Federation of Music Societies and the Musicians' Benevolent Fund, expressing 'grateful thanks for the amount of time, money, and energy which you gave up for so notable a demonstration of the vitality and power of choral singing in this country. Both Sir Adrian Boult and Dr Malcolm Sargent agree that no-one ever heard such a choir before. Bigger choirs have been attempted in the Albert Hall but they have never tackled music of that calibre and importance. You indeed pulled off the impossible... We feel certain that each one of you left the Albert Hall and made your long journey to your distant homes with but one thought in mind – "O may we soon again renew that song"':

BRANDENBURG SINFONIA

The Brandenburg Sinfonia, much valued as our orchestra for 25 years, is renowned as one of the most dynamically versatile musical organisations in the UK, known for the special quality of its sound and poised vivacity in performance. The orchestra performs regularly in most of the major venues across the country, and in London at the Barbican Halls, Royal Albert Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Fairfield Hall, St John's Smith Square, and of course at the Cadogan Hall.

Violin 1

Richard Milone
Jens Lynen
Hilary-Jane Parker
Alicja Smietana
Judith Stowe
Minsi Yang

Violin 2

Elizabeth van Ments
Fiona McCapra
Alicia Berendse
Willemijn Steenbakkens
Ed Webb
Gabriella Nikula

Viola

Matthew Quenby
Milena Simovic
Kate Musker
Anna Cooper

Cello

Adrian Bradbury
Kirsten Jenson
Josh Salter
Harriet Wiltshire

Bass

Dan Molloy
Mark Lipski

Flute

Ian Mullin
Jonathan Slade

Oboe

Lydia Griffiths
Rachel Broadbent

Clarinet

Andrew Harper
George Sleightholme

Timpani

Tristan Fry

Bassoon

Gareth Humphreys
Michael Elderkin

Horn

Nick Benz
David Bentley
Joel Ashford
Flora Bain

Trumpet

Neil Brough
Peter Mankarius

Trombone

Rory Cartmel
Megan Roberts
Joe Arnold

Tuba

Nick Etheridge

BRANDENBURG
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OF LONDON



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TWICKENHAM CHORAL CENTENARY CHOIR MEMBERS

SOPRANO

Judy Britton, **Sarah Cheshire**, Sarah Coe, Kathryn Doley, Annette Duffy, Sarah Herrick, Vivien Jordan, Christabel King, Nancy Lee, Katrina Lidbetter, Margaret Lord, **Sarah Martin**, Liliana Martinez, **Carol Mitchell**, Gail Moss, Alison Murray, Linda Nottingham, **Ruth Parker**, **Fiona Rowett**, **Kathryn Singleton**, Edel Smith, Mary Somerville, Clare Stocks, Helen Sugiyama, Adrienne Tallents, Nancy Vickers, Lindsey Waine, Sylvia Walker, Bessie White, Nicola Whiteside, Alison Williams, Candida Williamson, Gill Zettle

ALTO

Gill Beauchamp, **Lisa Colclough**, Helen Coulson, Maggie Crisell, Anna Cunyngham, Fiona de Quidt, Mary Egan, Alison Fletcher, Rosemary Fulljames, Jan Gow, **Julie Hall**, Margaret Hamilton, Evelyn Houseman, Jo Humphreys, Susan Jacobs, Emma Jay, Lucy Jones, Kate Larcombe, Bridget Le Huray, Wendy Malseed, Cas Manning, **Adriana Martyr**, **Jo Mawby**, **Deborah Meyer**, Jane Newman, Barbara Orr, Rachel Pickering, Penelope Skinner, Sally Spencer, Anne Stephens, Silvia Strebel, Mika Takami, **Felicity Williams**

TENOR

Hadley Baldock, Chris Britton, John Dewhurst, Colin Flood, Andy Godfrey, Clive Hall, Simon Lambourn, Paul McDonald, John Mullinar, Kit Peck, Richard Phillips, Mark Roper, Rachel Skingsley, David Underdown

BASS

Robert Bell, Chris Bennett, Brian Elliott, Robin Fenton, Christopher Flook, Paul Hehir, Adrian Hunter, Tim Lidbetter, Guy Loftus, Keith Long, Richard Metcalfe, Adrian Mumford, John Saunders, Gary Stocks, Bob Vickers, David Wallis, Richard Welton, Ian Williamson

Singers in bold are soloists in sections 28 (Lift Thine Eyes) and 35 (Holy, Holy, Holy)

www.twickenhamchoral.org.uk

President
Conductor
Assistant Conductor

Tristan Fry
Christopher Herrick
Rebecca Taylor

Chairman
Hon. Secretary
Hon. Treasurer

Helen Coulson
Gill Zettle
Tim Lidbetter

Social Events
Music Librarian
Concert Manager
Publicity
Box Office
Membership Sec.
Co-opted
Centenary Co-ordinator

Annette Duffy
Rosemary Fulljames
Paul Hehir
Sarah Herrick
Deborah Meyer
Barbara Orr
Maggie Crisell
Adrian Mumford



Cadogan Hall etiquette and information

Smoking: All areas of Cadogan Hall are non-smoking areas. Please note this includes all smoking materials including vapes and electronic cigarettes.

Food and beverages: You are kindly requested not to bring food and other refreshments into Cadogan Hall. A small selection of sandwiches, confectionery and snacks is available from the bars. Concert goers may also enjoy a wide selection of champagnes, spirits, red and white wines, beers and soft drinks from the Culford Room bar.

Cameras and electronic devices: Video equipment, cameras and tape recorders are not permitted. Please ensure all mobile phones and pagers are switched off before entering the auditorium.

Interval and timings: Intervals vary with each performance. Some performances may not have an interval. Latecomers will not be admitted until a suitable break in the performance.

Consideration: We aim to deliver the highest standards of service. Therefore, we would ask you to treat our staff with courtesy and in a manner in which you would expect to be treated.