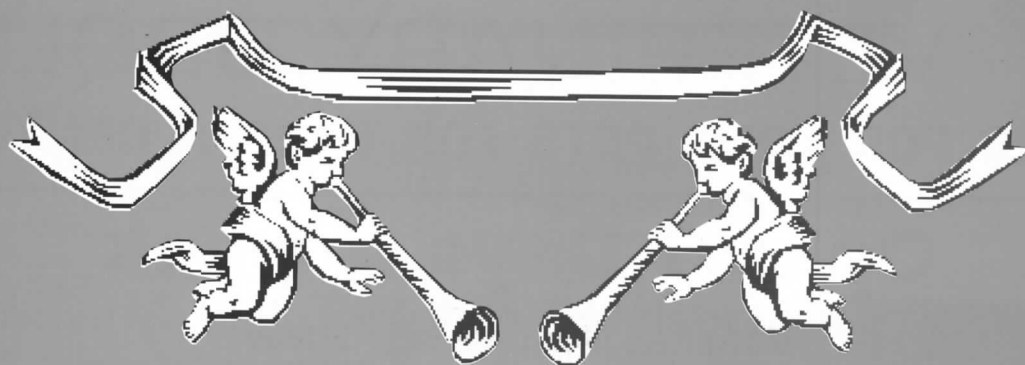


# The Hexham Orpheus Choir



1955 - 2005



*50th Anniversary Concert*

**Saturday 23rd April  
Queen Elizabeth High School  
Hexham**



# The Hexham Orpheus Choir

Conductor

**Glenn Davis**

With an invited orchestra led by

**Julia Boulton**

Choir rehearsal pianist

**Margaret Huntington**

## Tonight's Soloists



### **Kathryn Jenkin – Soprano**

We are delighted to welcome Kathryn back to Hexham after singing with the Orpheus Choir in our 2004 performance of Brahms's German Requiem. Kathryn was educated in Hertfordshire, gaining her early professional solo experience with local choirs and opera companies. Kathryn studied music, drama and education at Warwick University, where she held a Choral Scholarship for four years, and widened her experience of solo, concert and recital work. She also studied on both the opera and early music courses at the Royal Academy of Music.

She now enjoys a broad range of singing work both at home and abroad, encompassing every genre from early music, through opera, to musicals and films. Her oratorio career has caused her to travel extensively, performing regularly in Scotland, Wales and overseas. Recent engagements include Bach's *B Minor Mass* at St. James, Piccadilly, Handel's *Dixit Dominus* at St. Martin in the Fields, Mozart's *C Minor Mass* and Beethoven's concert aria '*Ah Perfido!*' in Jersey. She has appeared with soloists from the Royal Opera House in a tribute to Verdi at the Linbury Theatre, Covent Garden, and at the Chatelet Theatre in Paris, and in Berlin, in the premiere of John Adam's opera '*El Nino*'. Kathryn sings and records with the Royal Opera House Extra Chorus, London Voices, BBC Concert Singers and the Maida Vale Singers.



### **Susan Davis – Contralto**

Born in Liverpool and raised in Doncaster, Susan has made the North East her home after gaining a degree in Sciences at Newcastle University. After both choral and solo experience with various Newcastle societies, her solo work developed under the teaching of Clarice Stringer. She gained further choral experience with the Sinfonia Chorus and small-group singing with Musica Johannis, and she has appeared as a soloist with a number of choirs in the area and the Northern Sinfonia Orchestra in a joint schools choral concert in the New Tyne Theatre. Her repertoire includes Masses by Beethoven, Charpentier, Haydn, Mozart and Rossini, cantatas and the St. John Passion by J.S. Bach as well as Handel's *Messiah* and *Judas Maccabeus*.



### **Stephen Newlove – Tenor**

Stephen was born in East Yorkshire and sang as a chorister in Beverley Minster before studying for a music degree at Huddersfield, followed by a Masters in composition at the University of Hull. He studies singing with Nicolas Powell. As an experienced cathedral singer in the choirs of York Minster and Chester Cathedral, Stephen has broadcast on radio and television and has featured on a number of acclaimed recordings. He is currently a member of the Britten Singers, Canzonetta and Chudleigh's Company. Recent solo engagements include Monteverdi Vespers with the Orchestra of the Golden Age and His Majesty's Sagbutts and Cornetts, arias in Bach St John Passion with the English Haydn Orchestra, Evangelist in Bach St Matthew Passion, Handel *Messiah* and *Saul*, Haydn Stabat Mater and *Creation*, Puccini *Messa Di Gloria*, Janacek *Otcenas*, Sir George Dyson *Canterbury Pilgrims*, Britten *St Nicolas* Cantata and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies *Solstice of Light*.

As well as performing Stephen is Director of Music at Carmel College in St Helen's, Merseyside.



### **Robert Seaton – Bass**

Robert has performed with the Orpheus choir on many occasions and we are pleased that he is able to join us in celebrating our 50th season tonight. Recent performances with the choir include Brahms's *German Requiem* in March 2004 and as 'The Judge' in *Trial by Jury*, December 2003. Robert is well known in the North of England for performances in all the major choral works including Beethoven's Choral Symphony, Haydn's *Creation* and *The Seasons*, and the Requiems of Mozart, Brahms and Faure, the Passions of Bach together with his Christmas Oratorio and B minor Mass, and the many choral works of Handel. He has sung Rachmaninov's *The Bells* in Russian and Bloch's *Sacred Service* in Hebrew. In the recital field his repertoire embraces Lieder and French

Melodie, together with a special emphasis on British composers. His career has included recitals with the pianist Keith Swallow, appearances at the Ashington and Cambridge Festivals, a performance of Verdi's Requiem in the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield as well as Charity concerts in Devon, Cheshire, Lancashire and the North East.



### Glenn Davis – Conductor

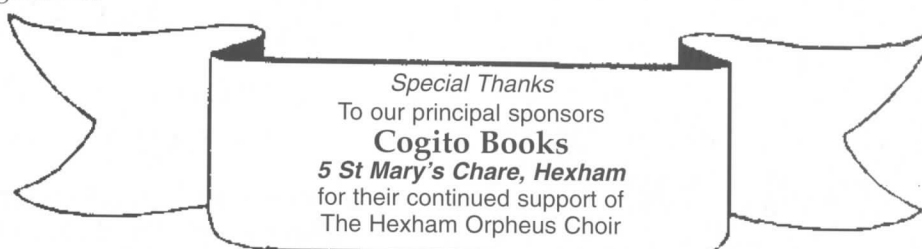
Choral music has been a major part of Glenn's life since singing in the school choir of Newcastle R.G.S. under Jack Wolstenholme, (where he first encountered Brahms's *Requiem* at the tender age of sixteen!) After years as a choral singer Glenn was given the chance to direct a small and highly successful madrigal group (the Tynemouth Consort) between 1974 and 1982, and has been the choral trainer and conductor of the Priory Singers since its formation in 1979. In January 1998 Glenn took on the directorship of the Hexham Orpheus Choir, and was keen to take up their suggestion of joint concerts, offering the opportunity for both choirs to combine for works requiring larger forces than either could manage individually. The result to date has been three performances: Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and Brahms's *Song of Destiny* in Hexham Abbey in 2000, *Elijah* two years later in the hall of King's School, Tynemouth and Brahms' *German Requiem* in 2004, again in Hexham, attracting an audience of over 300. Over the whole period he has developed his own and both choirs' standards of performance, particularly after his experience of summer schools in choral conducting at Canford with Simon Halsey and the late Simon Johnson. He is a regular member of the Association of British Choral Directors and sings with the Sinfonia Chorus.

## Programme

1. **Te Deum (No. 2) for the Empress** Haydn
2. **Motet: Exsultate Jubilate (sung by Kathryn Jenkin)** Mozart
  - Aria: Exsultate, jubilate
  - Recit: Fulget amica dies
  - Aria: Tu virginum corona, leading to
  - Alleluia
3. **Motet: Jesu, meine Freude** J.S. Bach
  - Hymn verse 1: Jesu, meine Freude
  - Es ist nun nichts
  - Verse 2: Unter deinem Schirmen
  - Trio: Denn das Gesetz
  - Verse 3: Trotz dem alten Drachen
  - Ihr aber seid nicht fleischlich
  - Verse 4: Weg mit allen Schätzen
  - Trio: So aber Christus
  - Verse 5: Gute Nacht, O Wesen
  - So nun der Geist
  - Verse 6: Weicht, ihr Trauergeister.
- Interval*
4. **Concerto for two violins in D minor** J.S. Bach
  - Vivace
  - Largo, ma non tanto
  - Allegro

Played by Julia Boulton and Pauline Aitchison (solo violins)

5. **Mass in C major (The Coronation)** Mozart
  - Kyrie
  - Gloria
  - Easter Sequence
  - Credo
  - Motet *Salus Infirmorum*, then *Regina Caeli*
  - Sanctus
  - Benedictus
  - Agnus Dei



## PROGRAMME NOTES:

### F.J. HAYDN: TE DEUM

"And on account of its easy style, in which it is written throughout, it can easily be performed by any choir. Moreover it lacks not in expression and in a magnificent orchestration, which greatly attracts the larger public, especially in Catholic churches." Thus the Viennese musical press reviewed tonight's opening item, in 1803. It had been written in 1799 at the request of the Empress, Marie Thérèse (a monarch who was capable of singing the solos in *The Creation*). Thus it was one of the only church works not written for Haydn's regular employers, the Esterhazys, in this late period of the composer's career. The *Te Deum* is "grand" church music in the key of C major – the one most often associated with ceremonial in Austria. Like *The Creation*, it must have been influenced by the large-scale performances of Handel's oratorios that Haydn heard while in England in the 1790s. It is perhaps fitting, therefore, that the congregation at its first performance included Horatio Nelson, returning overland to England after his great triumph against the French at Aboukir Bay in 1798. The *Te Deum* is continuous, but set in three sections (the second being the short but intense *Te ergo quaesumus*). The last leads to one of Haydn's best-ever fugues to the text *In Te Domine, speravi, non confundar in aeternum*.

### W.A. MOZART: EXSULTATE JUBILATE

Like the next item in the programme, Mozart's *Exsultate Jubilate* was designated as a motet. In the words of J.J. Quantz (1752) "in Italy this name is ...applied to a sacred Latin solo cantata that consists of two arias and two recitatives, and closes with an Alleluia....sung by one of the best singers during Mass after the Credo". (Vivaldi's now-famous *Nulla in Mundo Pax Sincera* would be an example). Mozart's own motet was written after the second of Mozart's journeys to Italy, with his father. Here Wolfgang began to absorb the style of Italian opera with *Mithridate* and *Lucio Silla* as the products. Italian opera still featured the use of the virtuoso castrato voice. It was for such a singer, Venanzio Rauzzini (who sang in *Lucio Silla* "like an angel", according to Leopold Mozart), that Mozart wrote this motet. The opening aria (which would not be out of place as the first movement of a violin concerto), features a considerable degree of "operatic" display, as does the final Alleluia, while the central movement, scored for strings only with the voice, is a lyrical prayer to the "Crown of Virgins".

### J.S. BACH: JESU MEINE FREUDE

No-one seems to know when Bach's longest motet was written, or for what purpose. Six out of its eleven movements set a hymn by the seventeenth-century writer Johann Franck. This emphasises the centrality of Jesus to the Christian, and the need to embrace His message rather than the worthless pleasures of the world. As befits a writer who lived through the devastation of the Thirty Years' war, the assaults of the world and the devil are portrayed in graphic terms, especially in the hymn's third verse.

The old view among scholars was that *Jesu, meine Freude* was written as a funeral piece, even naming the death of the Leipzig postmaster's wife, Frau Kees, as the occasion in 1723. However a recently-discovered copy of that particular service makes no mention of the motet. (Motets from the seventeenth century were most often performed during the Christmas season in German churches).

Of the eleven movements, odd numbered ones set the hymn in astonishingly varied ways. The third verse sounds freely composed, while the fifth "buries" the hymn tune (sung by the Altos), in an instrumental-like texture sung by the two Sopranos with the Tenor as a walking bass part.

The even numbered movements set texts from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. The sixth movement is at the centre (209 bars precede it, and 207 follow it), while the second movement's music is reused for the second-last, and the fourth, (a trio for upper voices) is balanced by the fourth-last, (a trio for lower voices). The first verse harmony is used again for the sixth and last, and the very first words the choir sings become their very last words. (Brahms was to copy this device in his Requiem). Thus, *Jesu, meine Freude* shows the same concern for symmetry that marks the St. John Passion, (even though it may have been put together in stages at Leipzig from earlier music, in the manner of the B minor Mass).

### J.S. BACH: CONCERTO FOR TWO VIOLINS

As with Mozart and Italy, so (earlier) with J.S.Bach. The instrumental concerto was an Italian device of composers like Torelli (in Bologna) and Albinoni, but most famously, Vivaldi. It virtually invented the concept of purely orchestral music, and established a three-movement form (fast-slow-fast). In addition the outer movements all featured the use of contrast between sections for the whole ensemble (a ritornello), and those for one or more soloists, usually more "showy" in nature. While at Weimar, Bach had been required to arrange many of Vivaldi's concerti. He transcribed them for organ and one or more harpsichords, thus acquiring mastery of the form. This famous Double Concerto, like the two solo concertos for violin, was written while Bach was employed at the court of Anhalt-Cöthen between 1717-23. A particular highlight is the central movement where "the soloists interweave their beguiling melodic lines, almost in the manner of an operatic love-duet" (Malcolm Boyd).



## W.A. MOZART: MASS IN C MAJOR (THE "CORONATION")

Six years after the composition of *Exsultate*, Mozart found himself back in Salzburg in the employment of its formidable Prince-Archbishop, Hieronymus, Count Colloredo. The latter was fully in agreement with the recent reforms of the Emperor Joseph (he of the "too many notes" remark in *Amadeus*), to the effect that mere display should be eliminated from music for the church. The result for Mozart was the need to concentrate and pare down his church composing style. As he and his father wrote to Padre Martini, the Italian teacher: "Our church music is very different from that in Italy, all the more so because a mass with Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Epistle Sonata and Agnus Dei may not last longer than three-quarters of an hour at most, even upon the most important feast days when His Highness himself reads the service. This kind of composition requires special study, and yet it must be a mass with all the instruments – even military trumpets!"

Finished in late March 1779, the mass was almost certainly used for the Easter Day service in April. It remained a favourite with contemporaries and with Mozart himself, who asked for the parts to be sent to him in Vienna on more than one occasion in the 1780s. Every writer comments on the close link between the Soprano's Agnus Dei and the Countess's aria Dove Sono in Figaro. The nickname was not the composer's but one given after its use for two successive coronations in 1791 and 92, those of the short-lived Emperor Leopold and his successor, Franz, when the work was conducted by Salieri.

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### The Choir

#### Sopranos

Catherine Allen  
Sarah Barker  
Evelyn Blenkinsop  
Dorothy Booker  
Ruth Brownlee  
Elspeth Christie  
Janet Davies  
Pip Emler

Anne Firth  
Rosemarie Herdman  
Frances Hughes  
Carolyn Ramsey  
Elaine Rigg  
Nuala Rose  
Carrie Winger

#### Altos

Margaret Bainbridge  
Marie Bridges  
Pat Crompton  
Elizabeth Dixon  
Davina Dwyer  
Elizabeth Fish  
Mary Gibson  
Val Hooker  
Anita Jeffries  
Janette Kirton-Darling

Judith Murray  
Patricia Phillips  
Sarahjane Palmer  
Bronya Read  
Pat Rose  
Jean Southwell  
Janet Storrie  
Catherine Stott  
Jean Wilks

#### Tenors

John Barker  
John Brewster  
Keith Brunton  
Malcolm Chainey

Tom Frost  
Tim Grew  
Susan Kent  
Dorothy Peters  
Peter Vasey

#### Basses

Paul Berry  
Robert Firth  
John Kent  
Keith Mallinson

Tony May  
Owen McArdle  
Peter Stott  
Larry Winger

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### THE ORCHESTRA

#### Violins

Julia Boulton (Leader)  
Pauline Aitchison  
Rachel Boyfield  
Eileen Evans  
Ann-Britt Hedley  
Kathryn Wakefield  
Charlotte Howes  
Michael Walton  
Karen Wigham

#### Violas

Anne Greaves  
Ian Whaley

#### Cellos

Deborah Chandler  
Julia Watson

#### Bass

Alan Johnson

#### Flute

Rebecca Dixon

#### Oboes

Philip Cull  
Judith Rousseau

#### Horns

Richard Stent  
Tony Fairley

#### Trumpets

Alan Docherty  
Ray Poole

#### Organ

Margaret Huntington

#### Bassoon

Paul Judson

#### Timpani

Andrew Booth



# The Hexham Orpheus Choir

## 1955 - 2005

**Tonight's concert will be a very special occasion for the Hexham Orpheus Choir** as this year we celebrate being fifty years old. It is possible to trace a great deal of the history of the choir as, although many of the oldest books of minutes have disappeared, some still have survived. Fortunately, in one volume every concert the choir has performed has been noted.

It was in 1955 that the original choir for the Hexham Abbey Festival decided to change its name to the Hexham Orpheus Choir when a decision was taken to perform regularly during the year independently of the Festival. Over the years there have been many different conductors and committees and these varied personalities have all influenced the choice of repertoire and style of performance. Sadly there are no longer people around who have clear memories of the early days of the choir, but a careful study of the available records brings quite a lot of information to light. For example one of the most eminent soloists to sing with the Orpheus was Elsie Suddaby, who performed in the "Messiah" in 1957. She was one of the sixteen great singers for whom Vaughan Williams originally wrote the "Serenade to Music".

Occasionally the Orpheus arranged a celebrity recital rather than a choral concert. In 1976 the choir celebrated its 21st Anniversary with just such a recital given by the soprano Soo-Bee Lee, with some short songs and choruses by the choir added to the programme. That concert, like our 50th Anniversary event this evening, took place in the Queen Elizabeth School Hall.

A highlight in the choir's history was the opportunity to sing at the Gateshead Garden Festival in 1990. The main work performed was Horowitz' "Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo". A smaller group formed from choir members also sang a selection of madrigals. Over the years the Orpheus has joined forces with other choirs to perform works which need particularly large forces. One such occasion which many members recall with pleasure was taking part in Haydn's "The Seasons" in the Wentworth Centre under the baton of Michael Brewer, who is conductor of the National Youth Choir.



1990 Abbey Festival

In 1990, the choir joined forces with Redesdale, Corbridge and Riding Mill Choirs as "Joint Choirs of Tynedale" with the Northern Sinfonia Orchestra under the conductor En Shao to perform Mozart's Requiem as part of the Hexham Abbey Festival programme. In more recent times the choir has joined with the Priory Singers of Tynemouth, with whom we share our present conductor, Glenn Davis. The first occasion on which this happened was in 2000, with a special concert in Hexham Abbey to celebrate the Millennium. Everyone so enjoyed the experience that it has been repeated, with a notable performance of Mendelssohn's "Elijah" in Tynemouth in 2002 and a most moving account of Brahms' German Requiem last year.

Throughout its history the Orpheus has been a very sociable choir. Reading the minutes from many years ago shows that there have always been choir parties, barbecues, organised walks and other light-hearted entertainment. Firm friendships are made in this way, which can only raise the standard of performance. One of life's great pleasures is to join in making music with friends. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have supported the choir over the years. Past committee members, conductors both past and present, the front of house team, and Cogito Books who have been our principal sponsor for the past four years.

Happy Birthday Hexham Orpheus, long may you continue making music.



21st Anniversary Concert 1976



Final rehearsal's for *Elijah* - Tynemouth 2002