

HEXHAM ORPHEUS CHOIR & ORCHESTRA

WITH VOICES OF HOPE

WINNERS OF CHOIR OF THE YEAR 2016

EDWARD ELGAR

DREAM OF
GERONTIUS

Director: Mark Edwards

Soloists:

Anna Harvey (Mezzo)

Robert Gardiner (Tenor)

Paul Grant (Bass)

Saturday 13th May 2017

Hexham Abbey

7:30pm

HEXHAM



TOWN COUNCIL



Cogito Books

Hexham Orpheus Choir Regd. Charity No.514942

Painting by James Naughton Programme design - Nick Lord



DREAM OF GERONTIUS

SIR EDWARD ELGAR (1857-1934)

PART 1

Prelude

Tenor Solo (Gerontius): *Jesu, Maria, I am near to death*

Chorus (Assistants): *Kyrie Eleison*

Tenor Solo (Gerontius): *Rouse thee, my fainting soul*

Chorus (Assistants): *Be merciful, be gracious; spare him Lord*

Tenor Solo (Gerontius): *Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus*

Tenor Solo (Gerontius): *I can no more*

Chorus (Assistants): *Rescue him, O Lord, in this his evil hour*

Tenor Solo (Gerontius): *Novissima hora est*

Bass Solo (The Priest): *Proficiscere anima Christiana*

Chorus (Assistants): *Go, in the name of Angels and Archangels*

Interval with refreshments

PART 2

Introduction

Tenor Solo (Soul of Gerontius): *I went to sleep; and now I am refreshed*

Mezzo-Soprano Solo (Angel): *My work is done, My task is o'er*

Dialogue, Mezzo-Soprano and Tenor (Angel and Soul): *All hail, My child and brother, hail!*

Chorus (Demons): *Low-born clods of brute earth*

Mezzo-Soprano Solo (Angel): *It is the restless panting of their being*

Chorus (Demons): *The mind bold and independent*

Dialogue, Mezzo-Soprano and Tenor (Angel and Soul): *I see not those false spirits*

Chorus (Angelicals): *Praise to the Holiest in the height*

Tenor Solo (Soul): *The sound is like the rushing of the wind*

Chorus (Angelicals): *Glory to him*

Mezzo-Soprano Solo (Angel): *They sing of thy approaching agony*

Tenor Solo (Soul): *But hark! A grand mysterious harmony*

Mezzo-Soprano Solo (Angel): *And now the threshold as we traverse it*

Chorus (Tutti): *Praise to the Holiest in the height*

Dialogue, Mezzo-Soprano and Tenor (Angel and Soul): *Thy judgment now is near*

Bass Solo (Angel of Agony): *Jesu! By that shuddering dread which fell on Thee*

Chorus (Voices on Earth): *Be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord*

Mezzo-Soprano Solo (Angel): *Praise to his name*

Tenor Solo (Soul): *Take me away*

Chorus (Souls in Purgatory): *Lord, Thou hast been our refuge*

Mezzo-Soprano Solo (Angel): *Softly and gently, dearly ransomed soul*

Chorus (Souls): *Lord, Thou hast been our refuge*

Chorus (Angelicals): *Praise to the Holiest*

PROGRAMME NOTES



Edward Elgar

Cardinal John Henry Newman's poem *The Dream of Gerontius* was written in 1865. The text, with its many references to music, appealed to various composers: Dvořák, for example, had taken to it immediately and had planned to set it for the 1888 Birmingham Triennial Festival, an appropriate choice considering Newman's long-standing connection with the Birmingham Oratory. Elgar had presented a copy of the poem to his future wife, Alice, as early as 1887, but it was not until the 1900 Birmingham Festival that, following a period of intense composition at Malvern, *The Dream of Gerontius* was first performed on 3 October.

The poem describes the visions which pass through the imagination of the dying Gerontius, 'a man like us', as Elgar put it, 'a sinner, a repentant one of course, but still no end of a worldly man in his life, but now brought to book'. The text required a considerable amount of cutting: Part II was four times as long as Part I, and Elgar had to halve this length. The first part describes the death of Gerontius, surrounded by his friends and the priest who pray for his soul. The opening prelude introduces some of the work's main *leitmotifs* – returning themes which are associated with extra-musical ideas such as sleep, fear and judgement. Many of those also appear in the second part, as does the music for the Demons' Chorus whose music is anticipated to depict 'some bodily form of ill...tainting the hallowed air'.

Part II begins with serene muted strings before Gerontius's words 'How still it is! I hear no more the busy beat of time' indicate that his soul has now moved on from earth into the care of his guardian angel. The majority of the music from here on is in triple time, as opposed to the predominantly common time of Part I, including much of the long choral section 'Praise to the holiest in the height...' that builds up to a mighty shout of praise. In Part II the bass soloist, who takes the role of the priest in Part I, sings the Angel of the Agony, whose duty is to plead for souls before the Throne of God. For this section, Elgar's harmonic language

is at its most chromatic, reflecting the powerful influence of Wagner and most notably *Parsifal*, which he had seen twice at Bayreuth in 1892. As Gerontius sings 'I go before my judge', the voices on earth are heard still pleading 'be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord'. There follows a massive climax in which, at the moment in which Gerontius sees God, every instrument in the orchestra is directed to play with the maximum possible force. The work ends with the moving Angel's Farewell, in which the mezzo-soprano's radiant D major music is set against a gentle choral background.

As Elgar did not start work on the music until January 1900, there was only one full score by the time of the premiere, and the conductor Hans Richter received this just ten days before he was due to conduct it. Further complications ensued when the chorus-master fell ill and died of pneumonia. His replacement was seventy years old and very unsympathetic towards the new work, while many of the choir, who had less than two months to rehearse this and other Festival works, did not understand it. Elgar was so upset with the results that he extended the final rehearsal to six hours, something which probably only made matters worse. Not surprisingly, then, the first performance

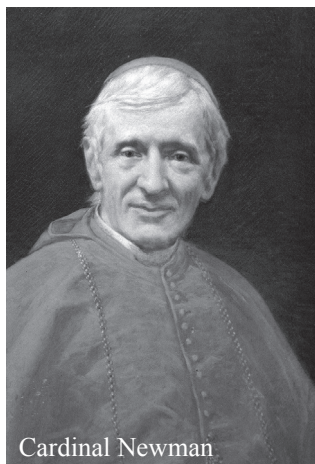
was a disaster. Vaughan Williams described the first Gerontius, Edward Lloyd, as singing the part 'like a Stainer anthem, in the correct tenor attitude with one foot slightly withdrawn'. Plunket Greene, who sang the bass solos, began the Angel of the Agony's music in Part II a semitone flat and refused to be moved by the orchestra. Marie Brema as the Angel improved matters somewhat, but by that stage little could be done.

For Elgar, the experience was shattering, but some musicians present,

including Richter, could gauge the work's potential. Elgar's close friend Jaeger rapidly set in motion arrangements for a German performance, and this time the work was a resounding success. The very dramatic style of the oratorio, close to opera in many places (Elgar insisted that it should not be regarded as a sacred cantata), would have

been familiar to its German audience, as would its very chromatic harmonic language and integral use of *leitmotifs*. Richard Strauss publicly declared Elgar's genius and, from then on, his career could be taken seriously, even in his native land. Certainly, few now would disagree with the composer's comment at the end of the score: 'This is the best of me.'

Eric Cross



Cardinal Newman

PART I

Gerontius

Jesu, Maria - I am near to death,
And Thou art calling me; I know it now.
Not by the token of this faltering breath,
This chill at heart,
this dampness on my brow,
(Jesu have mercy! Mary, pray for me!)
'Tis this new feeling, never felt before,
(Be with me, Lord, in my extremity!)
That I am going, that I am no more,
'Tis this strange innermost abandonment,
(Lover of souls! great God! I look to Thee,)
This emptying out of each constituent
And natural force, by which I come to be.
Pray for me, O my friends; a visitant
Is knocking his dire summons at my door,
The like of whom, to scare me and to daunt,
Has never, never come to me before;
So pray for me, my friends, who have not
strength to pray.

Assistants

Kyrie eleison.
Holy Mary, pray for him.
All holy Angels, pray for him.
Choirs of the righteous, pray for him.
All Apostles, all Evangelists, pray for him.
All holy Disciples of the Lord, pray for him.
All holy Innocents, pray for him.
All holy Martyrs, all holy Confessors,
All holy Hermits, all holy Virgins,
All ye Saints of God, pray for him.

Gerontius

Rouse thee, my fainting soul,
and play the man;
And through each waning span
Of life and thought as still has to be trod,
Prepare to meet thy God.
And while the storm of that bewilderment
Is for a season spent,
And ere afresh the ruin on me fall,
Use well the interval.

Assistants

Be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord.
Be merciful, be gracious; Lord, deliver him.
From the sins that are past;
From Thy frown and Thine ire;
From the perils of dying;
From any complying
With sin, or denying
His God, or relying
On self, at the last;
From the nethermost fire;
From all that is evil;
From power of the devil;
Thy servant deliver,
For once and for ever.
By Thy birth, and by Thy Cross,
Rescue him from endless loss;
By Thy death and burial,
Save him from a final fall;
By Thy rising from the tomb,
By Thy mounting up above,
By the Spirit's gracious love
Save him in the day of doom.

Gerontius

Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,
De profundis oro te,
Miserere, Judex meus,
Parce mihi, Domine.
Firmly I believe and truly
God is Three, and God is One;
And I next acknowledge duly
Manhood taken by the Son.
And I trust and hope most fully
In that Manhood crucified;
And each thought and deed unruly
Do to death, as He has died.
Simply to His grace and wholly
Light and life and strength belong.
And I love, supremely, solely,
Him the holy, Him the strong.
Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,
De profundis oro te,

Miserere, Judex meus,
 Parce mihi, Domine.
 And I hold in veneration,
 For the love of Him alone,
 Holy Church, as His creation,
 And her teachings, as His own.
 And I take with joy whatever
 Now besets me, pain or fear,
 And with a strong will I sever
 All the ties which bind me here.
 Adoration aye be given,
 With and through the angelic host,
 To the God of earth and heaven,
 Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
 Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,
 De profundis, oro te,
 Miserere, Judex meus,
 Mortis in discrimine.
 I can no more; for now it comes again,
 That sense of ruin, which is worse than pain,
 That masterful negation and collapse
 Of all that makes me man.
 And, crueller still,
 A fierce and restless fright begins to fill
 The mansion of my soul.
 And worse, and worse,
 Some bodily form of ill
 Floats on the wind,
 with many a loathsome curse
 Tainting the hallowed air,
 and laughs, and flaps
 Its hideous wings
 And makes me wild with horror and dismay.
 O Jesu, help! pray for me, Mary, pray!
 Some Angel, Jesu! such as came to Thee
 In Thine own agony
 Mary, pray for me. Joseph, pray for me.
 Mary, pray for me.

Assistants

Rescue him, O Lord, in this his evil hour,
 As of old, so many by Thy gracious power:-
 Noe from the waters in a saving home;
 (Amen)
 Job from all his multi-form and fell distress;

(Amen)
 Moses from the land of bondage and
 despair; (Amen)
 David from Golia and the wrath of Saul;
 (Amen)
 So, to show Thy power,
 Rescue this Thy servant in his evil hour.

Gerontius

Novissima hora est; and I fain would sleep,
 The pain has wearied me.
 Into Thy hands,
 O Lord, into Thy hands.

The Priest and Assistants

Proficiscere, anima Christiana,
 de hoc mundo!
 Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul!
 Go from this world!
 Go, in the Name of God
 The Omnipotent Father, Who created thee!
 Go, in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,
 Son of the Living God, Who bled for thee!
 Go, in the Name of the Holy Spirit,
 Who Hath been poured out on thee!
 Go in the name
 Of Angels and Archangels; in the name
 Of Thrones and Dominations; in the name
 Of Princedoms and of Powers;
 and in the name
 Of Cherubim and Seraphim, go forth!
 Go forth, in the name of
 Patriarchs and Prophets;
 And of Apostles and Evangelists,
 Of Martyrs and Confessors, in the name
 Of holy Monks and Hermits; in the name
 Of holy Virgins; and all Saints of God,
 Both men and women, go!
 Go on thy course;
 And may thy place today be found in peace,
 And may thy dwelling be the Holy Mount
 Of Sion: through the Same,
 through Christ our Lord.

INTERVAL

PART II

Soul of Gerontius

I went to sleep; and now I am refreshed
A strange refreshment: for I feel in me
An inexpressive lightness, and a sense
Of freedom, as I were at length myself,
And ne'er had been before. How still it is!
I hear no more the busy beat of time,
No, nor my fluttering breath,
nor struggling pulse;
Nor does one moment differ from the next.
This silence pours a solitariness
Into the very essence of my soul;
And the deep rest, so soothing and so sweet,
Hath something too of sternness
and of pain.
Another marvel: someone has me fast
Within his ample palm;
A uniform
And gentle pressure tells me I am not
Self-moving, but borne forward on my way.
And hark! I hear a singing; yet in sooth I
cannot of that music rightly say
Whether I hear, or touch, or taste the tones.
Oh, what a heart-subduing melody!

Angel

My work is done,
My task is o'er,
And so I come,
Taking it home,
For the crown is won,
Alleluia,
For evermore.
My Father gave
In charge to me
This child of earth
E'en from its birth
To serve and save,
Alleluia,
And saved is he.
This child of clay
To me was given,
To rear and train

By sorrow and pain
In the narrow way,
Alleluia,
From earth to heaven.

Soul

It is a member of that family
Of wond'rous beings, who,
ere the world were made,
Millions of ages back, have stood around
The throne of God.
I will address him. Mighty one, my Lord,
My Guardian Spirit, all hail!

Angel

All hail!
My child and brother, hail!
what wouldest thou?

Soul

I would have nothing but to speak with thee
For speaking's sake. I wish to hold with thee
Conscious communion;
though I fain would know
A maze of things, were it but meet to ask,
And not a curiousness.

Angel

You cannot now
Cherish a wish which ought not to be
wished.

Soul

Then I will speak: I ever had believed
That on the moment
when the struggling soul
Quitted its mortal case, forthwith it fell
Under the awful Presence of its God,
There to be judged and sent to its own place.
What lets me now from going to my Lord?

Angel

Thou art not let; but with extremest speed
Art hurrying to the Just and Holy Judge.

Soul

Dear Angel, say,
Why have I now no fear at meeting Him?
Along my earthly life, the thought of death
And judgment was to me most terrible.

Angel

It is because
Then thou didst fear;
that now thou dost not fear.
Thou hast forestalled the agony, and so
For thee bitterness of death is passed.
Also, because already in thy soul
The judgment is begun.
A presage falls upon thee, as a ray
Straight from the Judge,
expressive of thy lot.
That calm and joy uprising in thy soul
Is first-fruit to thee of thy recompense,
And heaven begun.

Soul

Now that the hour is come, my fear is fled;
And at this balance of my destiny,
Now close upon me, I can forward look
With a serenest joy.
But hark! upon my sense
Comes a fierce hubbub,
which would make me fear
Could I be frightened.

Angel

We are now arrived
Close on the judgement-court;
that sullen howl
Is from the demons who assemble there,
Hungry and wild, to claim their property,
And gather souls for hell. Hie to their cry!

Soul

How sour and how uncouth a dissonance!

Demons

Low born clods
Of brute earth,
They aspire
To become gods,
By a new birth,
And an extra grace,
And a score of merits,
As if aught
Could stand in place
Of the high thought,
And the glance of fire
Of the great spirits,
The powers blest;
The lords by right,
The primal owners,
Of the proud dwelling
And realm of light, -
Dispossessed,
Aside thrust,
Chucked down,
By the sheer might
Of a despot's will,
Of a tyrant's frown,
Who after expelling
Their hosts, gave,
Triumphant still,
And still unjust,
Each forfeit crown
To psalm-droners,
And canting groaners,
To every slave,
And pious cheat,
And crawling knave,
Who licked the dust
Under his feet.

Angel

It is the restless panting of their being;
Like beasts of prey, who,
caged within their bars,
In a deep hideous purring have their life,
And an incessant pacing to and fro.

Demons

The mind bold
And independent,
The purpose free,
So we are told,
Must not think
To have the ascendant.
What's a saint?
One whose breath
Doth the air taint
Before his death;
A bundle of bones,
Which fools adore,
When life is o'er.
Ha! Ha!
Virtue and vice,
A knave's pretence.
'Tis all the same,
Ha! Ha!
Dread of hell-fire,
Of the venomous flame,
A coward's plea.
Give him his price,
Saint though he be,
From shrewd good sense
He'll slave for hire,
Ha! Ha!
And does but aspire
To the heaven above
With sordid aim,
And not from love.
Ha! Ha!

Soul

I see not those false spirits; shall I see
My dearest Master,
when I reach His throne?

Angel

Yes, - for one moment
thou shalt see thy Lord.
One moment;
but thou knowest not, my child,
What thou dost ask;
that sight of the Most Fair

Will gladden thee, but it will pierce thee too.

Soul

Thou speakest darkly, Angel! and an awe
Falls on me, and a fear lest I be rash.

Angel

There was a mortal, who is now above
In the mid glory: he, when near to die,
Was given communion with the Crucified,
Such that the Master's very wounds
were stamped
Upon his flesh; and from the agony
Which thrilled through body and soul
in that embrace,
Learn that the flame
of the Everlasting Love
Doth burn ere it transform.

Choir of Angelicals

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise:

Angel

Hark to those sounds!
They come of tender beings angelical,
Least and most childlike of the sons of God.

Choir of Angelicals

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise;
In all His words most wonderful;
Most sure in all His ways!
To us His elder race He gave
To battle and to win,
Without the chastisement of pain,
Without the soil of sin.
The younger son He willed to be
A marvel in His birth:
Spirit and flesh His parents were;
His home was heaven and earth.
The eternal blessed His child, and armed,
And sent Him hence afar,
To serve as champion in the field
Of elemental war.
To be His Viceroy in the world

Of matter, and of sense;
Upon the frontier, towards the foe,
A resolute defence.

Angel

We now have passed the gate,
and are within
The House of Judgement.

Soul

The sound is like the rushing of the wind
The summer wind - among the lofty pines.

Choir of Angelicals

Glory to Him, Who evermore
By truth and justice reigns;
Who tears the soul from out its case,
And burns away its stains!

Angel

They sing of thy approaching agony,
Which thou so eagerly didst question of.

Soul

My soul is in my hand: I have no fear,
But hark! a grand mysterious harmony:
It floods me, like the deep
and solemn sound
Of many waters.

Angel

And now the threshold, as we traverse it,
Utters aloud its glad responsive chant.

Choir of Angelicals

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise:
In all His words most wonderful;
Most sure in all His ways!
O loving wisdom of our God!
When all was sin and shame,
A second Adam to the fight
And to the rescue came.
O Wisest love! that flesh and blood
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against the foe,

Should strive and should prevail.
And that a higher gift than grace
Should flesh and blood refine,
God's Presence and His very Self,
And Essence all divine.

O generous love! that He who smote
In man for man the foe,
The double agony in man
For man should undergo;
And in the garden secretly,
And on the cross on high,
Should teach His brethren and inspire
To suffer and to die.
Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise:
In all His words most wonderful,
Most sure in all His ways!

Angel

Thy judgment now is near, for we are come
Into the veiled presence of our God.

Soul

I hear the voices that I left on earth.

Angel

It is the voice of friends around thy bed,
Who say the 'Subvenite' with the priest.
Hither the echoes come; before the Throne
Stands the great Angel of the Agony,
The same who strengthened Him,
what time He knelt
Lone in the garden shade;
bedewed with blood.
That Angel best can plead with Him for all
Tormented souls, the dying and the dead.

Angel of the Agony

Jesu! by that shuddering dread
which fell on Thee;
Jesu! by that cold dismay
which sickened Thee;
Jesu! by that pang of heart
which thrilled in Thee;
Jesu! by that mount of sins

which crippled Thee;
Jesu! by that sense of guilt
which stifled Thee;
Jesu! by that innocence which girdled Thee;
Jesu! by that sanctity which reigned in Thee;
Jesu! by that Godhead
which was one with Thee;
Jesu! spare these souls
which are so dear to Thee;
Souls, who in prison, calm and patient,
wait for Thee;
Hasten, Lord, their hour,
and bid them come to Thee,
To that glorious Home,
where they shall ever gaze on Thee.

Soul

I go before my Judge.

Voices on Earth

Be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord
Be merciful, be gracious; Lord, deliver him.

Angel

Praise to His Name!
O happy, suffering soul! for it is safe,
Consumed, yet quickened,
by the glance of God.

Soul

Take me away, and in the lowest deep
There let me be,
And there in hope
the lone night-watches keep,
Told out for me.
There, motionless and happy in my pain
Lone, not forlorn,
There will I sing my sad perpetual strain,
Until the morn,
There will I sing,
and soothe my stricken breast,
Which ne'er can cease
To throb, and pine, and languish, till possess
Of its Sole Peace.
There will I sing my absent Lord and Love:

Take me away,
That sooner I may rise, and go above,
And see Him in the truth of everlasting day.
Take me away, and in the lowest deep
There let me be.

Souls in Purgatory

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge:
in every generation;
Before the hills were born, and the world
was, from age to age Thou art God.
Bring us not, Lord, very low: for Thou hast
said, Come back again, O Lord! how long:
and be entreated for Thy servants.

Angel

Softly and gently, dearly-ransomed soul,
In my most loving arms I now enfold thee,
And o'er the penal waters, as they roll,
I poise thee, and I lower thee, and hold thee.
And carefully I dip thee in the lake,
And thou, without a sob or a resistance,
Dost through the flood
thy rapid passage take,
Sinking deep, deeper, into the dim distance.
Angels to whom the willing task is given,
Shall tend, and nurse, and lull thee, as liest;
And Masses on the earth,
and prayers in heaven,
Shall aid thee at the
Throne of the Most Highest.
Farewell, but not for ever! brother dear,
Be brave and patient on thy bed of sorrow;
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,
And I will come and wake
thee on the morrow.
Farewell! Farewell!

Souls

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge, etc. Amen

Choir of Angelicals

Praise to the Holiest, Amen

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Mark Edwards MMus

Originally from Edinburgh, Mark trained as a percussionist before taking up conducting and receiving an MMus with Distinction from Newcastle University, studying with Professor Eric Cross. Mark is pleased to have studied and worked with many great conductors including: Sian Edwards, Pierre-André Valade, Philippe Bach, Rodolfo Saglimbeni, Philip MacKenzie, Christopher Gayford and Edwin Roxburgh. With a keen interest in contemporary music, Mark has worked on new compositions with Royal Northern Sinfonia, London Sinfonietta and Streetwise Opera. Previous engagements have included working with: Amadeus Orchestra, St Michel Strings (Finland), Newcastle University Symphony Orchestra and London Firebird Orchestra.

Recent highlights include performing at the Royal Albert Hall and Symphony Hall (Birmingham); live broadcasts for BBC 3's In Tune and Words and Music programmes. Recent concerts included Rachmaninov *Symphonic Dances*, Tchaikovsky *Symphony No. 5* and *Violin Concerto*, Rachmaninov *Symphony No. 2*, Mahler *Symphony No. 1*, Strauss *Till Eulenspiegel* and *Four Last Songs*, Brahms *Ein deutsches Requiem* and Mozart *Requiem*.



In June 2016 Mark was awarded third prize in the National Brass Band Conducting competition. Mark has been lucky enough to receive scholarships to participate in international conducting masterclasses with Sasha Mäkilä in Finland, Dr László Norbert Nemes at the Kodály Institute (Hungary), Sian Edwards at Dartington Festival.

He is currently director of music for Northern Praeclassica, Felling Male Voice Choir, Hexham Orpheus Choir, Newcastle Sinfonietta, workshop leader for Streetwise Opera, Associate Artistic Director for the Northern Chords Music Festival and he sings with 'Voices of Hope' winner of Choir of the Year, 2016.

SOLOISTS

Anna Harvey (mezzo-soprano)

British mezzo-soprano Anna Harvey studied on the opera course at the Royal Academy of Music under Elizabeth Ritchie and Iain Ledingham, graduating with the Alumni Development Award for a singularly distinguished studentship.

Harvey's engagements in the current season include house debuts at the Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar (*Zulma L'Italiana in Algeri*, *Zweite Dame Die Zauberflöte*, Groom/Theatre-Gardrobieri/Gymnasiast *Lulu*, Kay *Die Schneekönigin*), Landestheater Altenburg in Gera (Mayor's Wife *Jenüfa*, *Gold*) and Theater Nordhausen (*Page Salome*). Other engagements include an appearance at the Last Night of the BBC Proms in Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music*, a recording for Hyperion directed by Jonathan Cohen, a performance of Handel's *Messiah* on Good Friday at the Royal Albert Hall, and covers of Octavian *Der Rosenkavalier* and Prince Orlofsky *Die Fledermaus* for Welsh National Opera. From May 2017 she becomes a WNO Associate Artist and recipient of the Chris Ball Bursary.

Highlights last season included La Grosse Dame *Les mamelles de Tirésias* (Dutch National Opera), Cherubino *Le nozze di Figaro* (Longborough Opera and cover for Welsh National Opera), Bradamante *Alcina* (Longborough Festival Opera), cover Serafin *Figaro Gets a Divorce* (Welsh National Opera), Handel's *Messiah* at the Royal Festival Hall and the Cadogan Hall, Bach's *Mass in B Minor* with the Royal Northern Sinfonia under Paul McCreesh, and Vivaldi's *La Senna Festeggiante* at the Spitalfields Festival with Harry Bicket and The English Concert.

Other recent operatic roles include the



title role of Ariodante at the London Handel Festival, Hänsel *Hänsel und Gretel* for Garsington Opera at West Green House, Lapák the Dog *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Garsington Opera), Flosshilde *Das Rheingold* and Popova *The Bear* (both Royal Academy Opera), Jean *The Choker* (*Tête à Tête*), and Astron *The Ice Break* (Birmingham Opera Company and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra).

A keen recitalist, Anna has performed solo recitals at venues including the Wigmore Hall, Holywell Music Room, Kettle's Yard, Garrick Club, and St George's, Hanover Square. Recordings include *Messiah* for BBC Radio 2, rare Schubert songs on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune*, *Ascendit* (a CD of music for Passiontide with the Whitehall Choir) and *Messiah* for Abbey Road 'Live Here Now'.

Anna is the recipient of numerous prizes, including the London Bach Society Bach Singers Prize in 2015. At the Royal Academy of Music she was awarded the English and Russian Song Prizes and the Fordyce and Dame Kiri Te Kanawa Scholarships.

Robert Anthony Gardiner (Tenor)



British tenor Robert Anthony Gardiner was a member of the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme from 2008-10 and made his Royal Opera debut as Egoldo *Mathilde di Shabran*, followed by Filch *The Beggar's Opera*, Count of Lerma *Don Carlo*, Major Domo *Der Rosenkavalier* and Gastone *La Traviata*. He also covered Nathanael *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Borsa *Rigoletto*, Steuermann *Der fliegende Holländer*, Ruiz *Il Trovatore*, Bajazet *Tamerlano* and Tom Rakewell *The Rake's Progress*.

Most recent engagements include Polidoro *La Finta Semplice* for Bampton

Classical Opera, Lensky *Onegin* for Grange Park Opera, Siebel *Faust* for Opera North, Max *Fantasio* for Opera Rara, Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* for Iford Festival, Strážnik in *Hubička* by Smetana, Joe in *Winners* by Richard Wargo and Britten's *St Nicolas* for Wexford Festival Opera, and a newly commissioned opera by John Barber *We are Shadows* for the Spitalfields Festival.

He has given solo recitals and sung with choirs and choral societies all over the UK. Recent performances include a concert performance of *Ywain Garwain* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Stravinsky's *Mavra* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Britten's *Serenade for tenor, horn and strings* with the Filarmonica Arturo Toscanini, and Britten's *Michelangelo Songs in Italy*.

Robert Anthony Gardiner studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, Frankfurt Opera School and the National Opera Studio, after gaining a BSc Honours in Astrophysics at Durham University and a Certificate of Education at Manchester University. Born in Birmingham, Robert studied at King Edward's School, and sang as a treble in St Philip's Cathedral.

Paul Grant (Bass)

Born and raised in Edinburgh, Paul Grant is currently studying at the Royal Academy of Music with Glenville Hargreaves and Jonathan Papp. He was Highly Commended in the 2016 Marjorie Thomas Art of Song Prize and Commended in the Elena Gerhardt Lieder Prize.

Recent performances include recitals in Edinburgh, Glasgow and London singing Finzi's *Let Us Garlands Bring*, Schumann's *Liederkreis Op.39* and *Spanisches Liederspiel* as well as Ravel's *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée*. Operatic roles include: Frank (*Die Fledermaus*, Strauss), Cadmus (*Semele*, Handel) and Keeper of the Madhouse (*The Rake's Progress*, Stravinsky), all with Edinburgh Studio Opera. In opera scenes: Baldassare (*L'arlesiana*, Cilea); Frédéric (*Lakmé*, Delibes) with The Royal Academy of Music and Count Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*, Mozart), Henry Kissinger (*Nixon in China*, Adams), Sid (*Albert Herring*, Britten) and Marco (*Gianni Schicchi*, Puccini), with Edinburgh Studio Opera.

Before starting at the Royal Academy of Music, Paul studied Music at the University of Edinburgh and was awarded the Eileen Cameron Music Prize for his contribution to the musical life of the Music Department, the University of Edinburgh and the wider Edinburgh community.



Upcoming concerts include Handel's *Messiah* with Halifax Choral Society, a concert in Oxford with the group 'three parts vied' celebrating the Feast of St. Cecilia as well as performing as a soloist for the RAM/Kohn Foundation Bach Cantata Series.

Paul is very grateful to the generous support from The Dewar Arts Awards, The Robertson Scholarship Trust, The Leverhulme Charitable Trust, The McGlashan Charitable Trust, The Michael Shea Scholarship and The University of Edinburgh Bucher-Fraser Scholarship.

Alexandra Raikhlina (Leader)

Alexandra Raikhlina was born in Moscow in 1983 and moved to Belgium in 1990. At the age of 13 she was Laureate of the “Charles de Beriot” competition in Belgium before being awarded a place at the Yehudi Menuhin School, where she studied with Natalia Boyarsky. Later she received a full scholarship to do her undergraduate and postgraduate studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with David Takeno and Krzysztof Smietana.

Alexandra has performed extensively as a soloist and a chamber musician in Belgium, England, Switzerland, Russia, Greece and Hong Kong. She has appeared as a soloist and a chamber musician in Wigmore Hall, Barbican Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Fairfield Halls and Sage Gateshead.

Alexandra has won awards from the Craxton Foundation, the Martin Scholarship Foundation and was awarded the LSO String Scheme Experience. She was a prizewinner at the Richmond upon Thames Performing Arts festival and a finalist and special prize winner (for best performance of a sonata) at the International Königin Sophie Charlotte competition.

Alexandra has appeared as a soloist with the London Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Northern Sinfonia, the Epsom Symphony Orchestra and the Richmond Symphony Orchestra.

Alexandra's first BBC Proms appearance was part of the “Composers Portrait” programme broadcast on BBC Radio 3. Other radio appearances have included performances on BBC Radio 3's “Free Thinking Festival”.

Alexandra has participated in festivals including the Gstaad, Paxos, Highgate International Chamber Music Festivals.

Alexandra currently holds the position of sub-principal first violin with the Royal Northern Sinfonia.

During her freelancing career Alexandra has played with the London Symphony Orchestra, Brussels Philharmonic, has co-led Manchester Camerata, is a frequent guest no. 3 with Britten Sinfonia and no. 3 and co-leader with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Alexandra is the Artistic Director of Brundibár Arts Festival based in Newcastle and Gateshead.

Rehearsal Pianist - Warren Smith

We would like to thank our rehearsal pianist, Warren Smith, for his hard work in helping to prepare the chorus for this performance.

VOICES OF HOPE



Voices of Hope is the winner of National Choir of the Year 2016 and Let the Peoples Sing 2017 finalists. On the way to this success the choir performed at Sage Gateshead, Symphony Hall, Birmingham and the Millennium Centre, Cardiff. The judges included Harry Christophers, Danielle de Niese, David Lawrence, Ken Burton, Will Todd, Mary King and Stephen Connelly.

Since forming five years ago for a one-off memorial concert Voices of Hope has performed widely around the UK and has toured in Berlin and Cambridgeshire. The choir has made several broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 (In Tune, Words

and Music, The Choir) and has been televised on BBC 4. With a keen sense of local identity, Voices of Hope regularly performs music by local composers, having premiered works by Ian Stephenson, John Kefala-Kerr, Kathryn Tickell and Agustín Fernández

This year the choir looks forward to performances in Helsinki; a live broadcast on BBC Radio 3's The Choir Programme; a performance of *Notes From Underground* with Royal Northern Sinfonia; a tour of Durham Hymns and the release of its first recording, *From The North*.

voicesofhope.co.uk/

Sopranos

Kate Aspray
Olivia Cameron
Mary Houlton
Bonnie Shaw

Altos

Emma Banks
Gail Davies
Sue Davis
Emma Newton
Alice Robinson
Lorna Wright

Tenors

David Molyneux
Chris Vernazza
Euan Williamson

Basses

James Brady
Chris Davies
Damien Hall
Tim Hockin

THE ORCHESTRA

1st Violin

Alexandra Raikhlina
Iona Brown
Pauline Brandon
Julia Boulton
Michael Walton
Rebecca Howell

2nd Violin

Ed Cross
Jane Cuggy
Chris Hartley
John Hutchinson

Viola

Laura Newton
Pam Else
Fabio Morabito

Cello

Nick Byrne
Clare MacFadyen

Bass

Duncan Brown

Flute

Alena Lugovkina
Clare Crinson-Graves

Piccolo

Brian Stewart

Oboe

Philip Cull
Sue Austen

Cor Anglais

Dave Tomson

Clarinet

Jennifer Murray
Katrina Buzzard

Bass Clarinet

Andrew Smith

Bassoon

Molly Nielsen
Anson Hancock

Contra Bassoon

Andy Jakob

Horn

Chris Senior
Maria Robinson
Ben Woolley
Ian Kille

Trombone

Dan Chirnside
John Millgate
Andy Hunter

Trumpet

Dick Stacey
Alastair Lord
Ben Chinery

Tuba

Phil Rosier

Harp

Helena Pearson

Timpani

Barnaby Archer

Percussion

Simon Coleman
Matt Moore

Chamber Organ

Warren Smith

HEXHAM ORPHEUS CHOIR

Sopranos

Sarah Barker
Carolyn Below
Elspeth Christie
Geraldine Coombes
Judi Cornforth
Jill Dexter
Nancy Gash
Carolyn Hawkes
Rosemarie Herdman
Margaret Huntington
Anne Kearney
Pip May
Liz McNeil Grist
Dorothy Morris
Carol Nunan
Mary Oswell
Sara-Jane Palmer
Meg McCaldin
Ann Reed
Hannah Reynolds
Faye Robinson
Nuala Rose
June Welch
Carrie Winger

Tenors

John Barker
John Below
Malcolm Chainey
Bill Day
Tim Grew
Louise Khazae
Lesley MacDonald
Denis McCaldin
Jenny McKay
Chris Moss
Peter Nevin
Rachel Ogilvie
Bruce Reed
Dorothy Simmons
Peter Vasey

Altos

Marjorie Anderson
Sylvia Chainey
Jane Dammers
Sheila Dance
Pippa Exham
Rita Howell
Vivienne Hubbrick
Mary Illingworth
Di Jameson
Diane Keetch
Linda Lord
Val Mallinson
Hilary McKendrick
Liz Nisbet
Joanna O'Neill
Tanja Pless-Mulloli
Pat Rose
Jenny Sadgrove
Gill Thompson
Jean Wilks

Basses

Paul Berry
Julian Boyfield
Stuart Dearlove
Warwick Eden
Alan Hayward
Nick Lord
Don MacLeod
Keith Mallinson
Tony May
Mick McCabe
Owen McArdle
John Rose
Mike Scott
Chris Simmons
Chris Welch
Alan Verheyden

Sir Mark Elder (The Honorary Patron of the Hexham Orpheus Choir)



Sir Mark Elder is Music Director of the Hallé, a Principal Artist of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Artistic Director of Opera Rara. He

was Music Director of English National Opera and has been Principal Guest Conductor of the City of Birmingham and BBC Symphony Orchestras.

He has appeared at the BBC Proms in London for many years, and worked in many of the most prominent international opera houses. He has made many recordings and since the launch of the Hallé label in 2003 his releases have met with universal critical acclaim.

In 2011 he co-presented the BBC four-part series 'Symphony', and in 2012 he acted as chair of the judging panel on BBC2's series

'Maestro at the Opera'. He presented a series of TV programmes on BBC4 during the 2015 Proms in which he introduced eight symphonies ranging from Beethoven to MacMillan.

Future engagements include Chicago Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra Washington, London Symphony, London Philharmonic, Russian National Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Vienna Symphony and the Bergen Philharmonic. Operatic engagements include a complete performance of Parsifal at the BBC Proms with the Hallé and guest engagements at Covent Garden, Paris and The Metropolitan Opera New York.

He was knighted in 2008, and awarded the CBE in 1989. He won an Olivier Award in 1991 for his outstanding work at ENO and in May 2006 he was named Conductor of the Year by the Royal Philharmonic Society. Sir Mark Elder was born in Hexham.

James Naughton

The image used in the publicity for this concert, and on the front of this programme is from a painting by James Naughton. Producing oil paintings from his Bolton studio he has created a unique vision of landscape painting, and established his reputation through a consistent determination, trusting instincts which result in emotive experiences for him and the viewer.

His work emerges from three preoccupations; light, landscape and the nature of paint, which combine to result in paintings that link tradition and a

modern visual experience. James values direct observation, as a traditional way to record the landscape but is also drawn to communicating the interplay between what we see and our imagination, forging bonds between experience and mythology. His process does not normally involve preparation, sketching or photography. He finds that inviting the natural movement of oil paint to suggest the direction of a work, in an intuitive way, provides the most exciting challenge.

jamesnaughton.com/

SPONSORS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This performance with symphony orchestra has been a major project and we are extremely grateful for the support offered by many in our community.

Cogito Books: Hexham's award-winning independent bookshop.

cogitobooksonline.co.uk

Hexham Town Council

Waitrose

Queen's Hall, for providing staging

Corbridge Middle School, for providing chairs for the choir

Allegretto Music, for score sourcing and online ticket sales.

22 Battle Hill, Hexham

allegretto.co.uk/

Margaret Huntington and **Tony May**, for the loan of lighting equipment.

Members of the committee and others who have helped, for their valuable contributions throughout this project.

Langley Furniture Works, for providing the materials for the Hexham Orpheus Choir podium.

langleyfurnitureworks.co.uk/

HEXHAM ORPHEUS CHOIR

Honorary Patron - Sir Mark Elder

Hexham Orpheus Choir (Charity Registration 514942) is dedicated to performing and promoting access to classical music in Tynedale. We have around 85 members and always welcome new singers. Our members range from the very experienced to the less so and both are equally welcome. For the less experienced, if you have a singing voice, with an innate feel for pitch and rhythm and a desire to practise and develop your singing and sight reading, then membership of the choir is a great way to develop your skills.

hexham-orpheus-choir.org.uk/

NEXT CONCERT

Summer Soirée

Wednesday July 12, 2017

Trinity Church Hall

Beaumont St, Hexham

NE46 3LS

hexham-orpheus-choir.org.uk/