



Hexham Orpheus Choir



17TH MAY 2025

MUSIC AT HEXHAM ABBEY

ETHEL SMYTH – MASS IN D



Musical Director
Mark Edwards

THE WRECKERS OVERTURE
BRAHMS - SCHICKSALSЛИД



The old order gives place to the new.
The dishevelled, wrinkled woman of yore, to the orderly laundress of to-day.
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With Rachel Heater (Soprano), Valerie Reid (Alto)
Austin Gunn (Tenor) and Joshua Lane (Bass)

DAME ETHEL MARY SMYTH 1858-1944

Ethel Smyth's Mass in D would be far better known if only it had been written by an 'Eric' rather than an 'Ethel'. It had its premiere in 1893 in the Royal Albert Hall in the presence of royalty. Dedicated to Lady Pauline Trevelyan of Wallington, it's a majestic, era-defying choral work.

Smyth's story is a name-dropper's delight: she knew Brahms, Tchaikovsky and Clara Schumann; she was briefly engaged to Oscar Wilde's older brother, Willie; she was a close friend of Princess Eugenie of France and Virginia Woolf, with whom she fell in love at first sight... not to mention Queen Victoria, who invited her to play her newly written Mass on the piano in the drawing room of Balmoral Castle. She managed to pull this off using the piano as an orchestra, her voice to render both solo and choral parts and her feet for drums; the Queen loved it, hence its premiere in the Royal Albert Hall.

What you will hear tonight:
The Wreckers Overture
Schicksalslied
Interval
Mass in D

ETHEL'S STORY IS COMPELLING

If only someone would make a film of it! As a girl growing up in Sidcup, Kent, she locked herself in her bedroom on hunger strike until her father, Major General John Hall Smyth, allowed her to study music in Leipzig. From then on, the narrative is one of discovery: how to write for the piano, strings, voices... how to orchestrate (thanks to Tchaikovsky for that), but above all it was how to be taken seriously as a composer.



THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL of Arts and Sciences, at Kensington, was opened yesterday by the Queen. We need not here trace the history of the movement of which this capacious hall is the result; nor will it be necessary for us to describe the purposes to which the building will be devoted. The locality and the title sufficiently indicate whence it sprung and what objects it is intended to serve. It was grand, but — *continued p94*



REBELLION AND UPRISING

Marginalised by the establishment, her entire working life was a battle to get her music heard, even though, in December 1920, she was made Dame Commander of the British Empire and was by then the most famous woman composer of her day.

The Daily Mail set about educating the British public about Ethel's music and at last the Leeds Music Festival stepped up and offered her a foot in the door. With typical wry Ethel humour, she conducted her choral work, *Hey Nonny No*, the first line of which is, 'Men are fools...'



GIVEN HER TEMPERAMENT it's no wonder that she took two years out from composing to be a leading suffragette. Alongside her comrade-in-arms — in this case literally — Emmeline Pankhurst (whom she taught to throw bricks, to aid their cause) she served two months in Holloway for smashing an MP's window. In the cell adjoining Emmeline's she wrote her well-known March of the Women, conducting it with her toothbrush as fellow suffragettes marched round the prison yard, singing their anthem.

Although she later remarked that the writing of her Mass had "sweated out" any thought she'd had of converting to Catholicism, she was certainly going through some kind of religious crisis at the time of its composition. She'd read a copy (borrowed from Pauline Trevelyan) of *The Imitation of Christ*, the influential 15th Century Christian devotional work by Thomas à Kempis, which had affected her profoundly. It's thanks to Pauline, a devout Catholic and another of Ethel's lovers, that the Mass was written. Although the Orpheus performance is in Hexham Abbey, the choir's musical home, the Mass is fit for an opera house — it's dramatic and huge.

Smyth's music is unashamedly not what used to be considered feminine, not for the drawing room; it's a deliberate response to the misogyny that tried to keep this firebrand of a woman in her place.

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Ethel Smyth

making
music

THE OVERTURE TO THE WRECKERS

is perhaps the Smyth work most often performed. She shows her melodic invention, her skill at orchestration, and her keen sense of drama. The eccentric story of The Wreckers profiles a band of Cornish outlaws who cause shipwrecks in order to loot the cargoes. This overture cannily combines the energy, camaraderie, and sardonic tone of the story and characters. Keep in mind that at the time opera was the most prominent public combination of serious music and drama in a single work. The opera overture provided an opportunity to preview that drama in a purely instrumental work. Smyth pulls out all the stops in this overture. It's all packed into nine minutes of intense music that still thrills us today.



JOHANNES BRAHMS

1833-1897

SCHICKSALSЛИED

“SONG OF DESTINY” OPUS 54

Brahms

began *Schicksalslied* in summer 1868 completing it in May 1871. Hermann Levi led the premiere on October 18, 1871, in Karlsruhe.

Late in the summer of 1868, having taken his father to Switzerland for a mountain holiday, Brahms visited his friends the Dietrichs in Oldenburg. While there, Brahms started reading the poems of Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1825), which he found amidst the Dietrich family's books. He told his hosts that he had been deeply moved by a poem entitled “Hyperion’s Song of Fate.” Years later, Dietrich wrote: *“When, later in the day, after having wandered about and seen everything of interest, we sat down by the sea to rest, we discovered Brahms at a great distance, sitting alone on the beach and writing. These were the first sketches for the Schicksalslied.”*



The text, re-enacting the Classical fatalism of the Greeks, spoke to some central element in the composer's own soul; yet despite the immediate reaction to the poem and the instant musical sketch, he was unable to bring the work to completion until May 1871. The problem may have lain in the structure of Hölderlin's grim text: the poem is in two parts, the first depicting the tranquil, eternal bliss of the gods in their abode of light, the second contrasting it with the torments of humanity, driven by a blind destiny. Brahms did not want to end the music in such a negative mood. He considered simply repeating the opening words at the end, but was dissuaded from that course by the conductor Hermann Levi. Instead he concluded the piece with a tranquil orchestral statement of the opening music, thus rounding it off musically with a hint of consolation, while retaining the text's original form. The music of the gods is luminous, sharply contrasted to the hard-driven torments of mankind, especially the dramatic depiction of “water thrown from crag to crag,” followed by a sudden silence. The chorus ends on a note of resignation, but as in the Alto Rhapsody, a shift from C minor to C major brings reconciliation.



MARK EDWARDS



MUSICAL DIRECTOR



Mark, originally from Edinburgh, is a trained percussionist who transitioned to conducting, earning his Masters in Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music, where he received the Brierley Kershaw Prize. He won the National Brass Band Conducting Competition in 2017 and was a semi-finalist in the Città Di Brescia Conducting Competition. He has served as assistant conductor for the RTE Concert Orchestra and covered for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, collaborating with notable ensembles like the BBC Philharmonic. In

addition to directing the award-winning Voices of Hope choir, he has curated tonight's programme and brought together our guest performers.

WARREN SMITH – ACCOMPANIST

Warren is currently Director of Music and organist for Saint Mary's Parish Church, Ponteland, Director of Music for the Tyne Valley based chamber choir Jubilate and sings bass in the 2016 BBC Choir of the Year, Voices of Hope.

In 2019, Warren took up the role of Head of Choir, Music Teaching, Piano & Singing Tutor at Mowden Hall

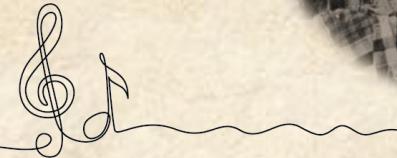
Preparatory School, which certainly fills up his daylight hours. In his free time, Warren enjoys traveling the world and exploring the culinary delights on offer at fancy restaurants with his wife, Michelle.



THE PLAYERS

TONIGHT'S CONCERT IS PERFORMED BY ~

THE HEXHAM ORPHEUS CHOIR



SOPRANO:

The soprano is the highest female voice type. There are many types of sopranos such as coloratura soprano, lyric soprano and the soubrette, which differ in vocal agility, vocal weight, timbre, and voice quality. All sopranos have the ability to sing higher notes with ease.

Anne Bagley, Sarah Barker, Deborah Beasley-Suffolk, Carolyn Below, Paddy Burridge, Elspeth Christie, Lizzie Cooper, Judi Cornforth, Sally Dodgson, Fiona Hewitt, Meg McCaldin, Liz McNeil-Grist, Anna Pattinson, Tanja Pless-Mulloli, Ann Reed, Nuala Rose, Maeve Selby, Esther Urwin, Carolyn Vasey and June Welch .

ALTO:

In music, "alto" generally refers to the second-highest voice part in four-part harmony, usually sung by either low female voices or high male voices.

Celia Atherton, Marion Bates, Lou Baxter, Sheila Dance, Camilla Drax, Anabel Gammidge, Liz Gray, Julia Grint, Julie Harrison, Caroline Howard, Carolyn Howell, Margaret Huntington, Linda Lord, Val Mallinson, Hilary McKendrick, Susan Morse, Joanna O'Neill, Bronya Read, Jenny Sadgrove, Siobhan Stephenson, Pam Vennart and Jean Wilks



BASS:

The bass voice is the lowest male singing voice, known for its deep, resonant tone and is often used to convey authority and nobility.

John Below, Paul Berry, Stuart Dearlove, Warwick Eden, Martyn Farrer, Graeme Helliwell, Chris Hewitt, Rob Hull, Richard Jackson, Nick Lord, Keith Mallinson, Owen McArdle, Bruce Reed, John Rose, Michael Scott, Jim Vennart and Chris Welch

TENOR:

A tenor voice is a high male/low female vocal range, the highest among typical male voice types, often used in classical and operatic music, and also found in various other genres.

Malcolm Chainey, Bill Day, Charles Drax, Tim Grew, Leigh Harrison, Bridget Holton, Steve Lloyd, Pat Marriott, Stella Mason, Denis McCaldin, Jenny McKay, Steve Middleton, Rachel Ogilvie, David Pattinson and Peter Vasey



Not all our subscribing members are singing with us this evening, but we are indebted to everyone's ongoing support and input throughout the year. Together, they are our choir.



For Tired Mothers



"I feel very thankful for what Hood's Sarsaparilla has done for me. I have taken three bottles and the medicine has made a great change. I was

All Run Down

from trouble and over-work, and had other complaints common to my sex at my age, 44 years. Now since taking Hood's Sarsaparilla.

I am much stronger and am gaining in flesh. I would advise all overworked, tired, weak mothers to take Hood's Sarsaparilla to build them up." Mrs. G. W. WARACK, Beverly, Nebraska.

Remember,

Hood's Sarsaparilla Cures

RACHAEL HEATER



Rachael is an American soprano based in Northern

Ireland. Born in Pennsylvania to two music teachers, she was a member of several community children's choirs, and went on to participate in many prestigious festival choirs through high school. In university, she was the first place winner at the Lehigh Chapter NATS Singing Competition in 2010. In her early adult years, Rachael had the privilege of singing several principal roles with Pennsylvania Lyric Opera Theatre's summer productions, including Yum-yum (The Mikado), Mabel (Pirates of Penzance), and Lauretta (Gianni Schicchi). She has featured as a soloist with local Pennsylvania groups through the years, including the historic Ringgold Band, and more recently with New Irish Arts in Northern Ireland. Since moving to NI, Rachael has been studying with Graeme Danby, and is an active member of the Northern Ireland Opera Chorus and the Ulster Consort. Rachael holds a B.A. in Vocal Performance from Kutztown University.

VALERIE REID



Valerie was born in Fife, Scotland and studied with Patricia MacMahon at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Whilst there she won the Governors Recital Prize, the prestigious John Noble Bursary, three Caird Scholarships, the Worshipful Company of Musicians Silver Medal and was twice a finalist in the Kathleen Ferrier and Royal Overseas League competitions.

Valerie's operatic roles with English National Opera include Anina in Peter Konwitschny's production of *La Traviata* conducted by Ed Gardner, Glasha in David Alden's production of *Katya Kabanova*, Madalena in Sir Johnathon Millar's production of *Rigoletto*, 2nd Lady in *Magic Flute*, The

Fishmonger in Richards Jones acclaimed production of *Julietta*, Anne's Mother in the World Premiere of Nico Muhly's *Two Boys*, Grimgerde in *Die Walkure* which was broadcast live from the pyramid stage at Glastonbury and most recently Grandmother Burja in David Alden's production of *Jenufa* about which Rupert Christiansen of the Telegraph said that 'Valerie Reid's excellent mezzo cleverly unleashed the power of Janaceks score'. Valerie completed a very successful tour as Lady Jane in the ETO production of the Gilbert and Sullivan masterpiece *Patience* and looks forward to Juno in *Semele* at the Brel Festival near Toulouse this Autumn as well as St John Passion, Vivaldi Gloria and St Matthew Passion in various venues across the UK. Equally at home on the concert and oratorio platform Valerie has sung Elgar Sea Pictures at the Megaron Concert Hall in Athens and at the Bury St Edmunds Festival, Verdi Requiem in Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, Coventry Cathedral, St Albans Abbey – Dream of Gerontius in Dunblane Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds Cathedral – Elijah at the Barbican, Truro Cathedral and St Albans Abbey. Valerie is a highly respected vocal tutor both privately and at the London College of Music.

AUSTIN GUNN

Austin Gunn, tenor, made his professional operatic debut as Vorsinger Zaide with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras, at the Edinburgh International Festival. He regularly performs across the UK, France, Sweden, and Italy, with a diverse oratorio and recital repertoire. Notable recitals include *Tennyson's Lyricism* in Newcastle, *Languorous Ecstasy* at Hull University, and Victorian medicinal songs at The Wellcome Collection in London. He has also appeared as a guest soloist for the Daft As A Brush Proms and performed online recitals during the Covid-19 lockdowns for the World Harmony Orchestra and National Student Opera Society Gala.

JOSHUA LANE

Jane Robinson. Joshua recently covered Gesler in Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* for Nouvel Opéra Fribourg, and sang Count Almaviva with Opera for Woodbridge. Earlier in 2024 he toured with Opera Brava singing Morales in their production of *Carmen* as well as singing Second Mate in a concert performance of *Billy Budd* with New Palace Opera. Joshua looks forward to joining the Grand Théâtre de Genève for their production of *Khovantchina*, followed by his debut as Silvio in *I Pagliacci* with North Wales Opera. Joshua is extremely grateful for the generous support of the The Wayne Sleep Foundation, Alice Orrell and A&N Kendall Award, Francis Higgins Bursary, Leverhulme Trade Charities Trust and the Sir Richard Stapley Education Trust during his studies.

SCHICKSALSLIED

“SONG OF DESTINY” OPUS 54

Ihr wandelt droben im Licht
Auf weichem Boden selige Genien!
Glänzende Götterlüfte
Rühren Euch leicht,
Wie die Finger der Künstlerin
Heilige Saiten.

Schicksallos, wie der Schlafende
Säugling, atmen die Himmlischen;
Keusch bewahrt,
In bescheidener Knospe
Blühet ewig
Ihnen der Geist,
Und die seligen Augen
Blicken in stiller
Ewiger Klarheit

Doch uns ist gegeben
Auf keiner Stätte zu ruh'n;
Es schwinden, es fallen
Die leidenden Menschen
Blindlings von einer
Stunde zur andern,
Wie Wasser von Klippe
Zu Klippe geworfen
Jahrlang in's Ungewisse hinab.

Ye wander gladly in light
Through goodly mansions, dwellers in Spiritland!
Luminous heaven-breezes
Touching you soft,
Like as fingers when skillfully
Wakening harp-strings.

Fearlessly, like the slumbering
Infant, abide the Beatified;
Pure retained,
Like unopened blossoms,
Flowering ever,
Joyful their soul
And their heavenly vision
Gifted with placid
Never-ceasing clearness.

To us is allotted
No restful haven to find;
They falter, they perish,
Poor suffering mortals
Blindly as moment
Follows to moment,
Like water from mountain
to mountain impelled,
Destined to disappearance below.

ACROSS

1. Johannes ____ (1833-1897), Ger.
7. ____ *canto*, operatic singing style
8. First and fifth notes of an A major or minor scale
9. Abbr. for minor
11. Karl ____ (1894-1981), famous conductor
13. ____ *pro nobis* (pray for us)
14. Hector ____ (1803-1869), composer of *Symphonie Fantastique*
16. ____ Rachmaninoff (1873-1943), Russia
17. J. S. ____ (1685-1750)
19. Edward ____ (1857-1934), England
20. Abbr. for oratorio
- 21.
22. Abbr. for *ritardando*

DOWN

1. Three of these:
2. Do ____ mi
3. ____ ban ____ (1885-1935), Austrian composer
4. Gustav ____ (1860-1911), Austrian composer
5. ____ quaver, Brit. for sixteenth note
6. Honorary title for 19 Across
9. Wolfgang Amadeus ____ (1756-1791)
10. *Eine kleine ____ musik*, by 9 Down
12. Bach wrote *Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue in C Major* for this instrument
14. ____ Bartók (1881-1945), Hungary
15. Oboes (It.)
16. Meaning of “mer” in Debussy’s *La Mer*
- 18.

1	2	3		4	5			6	
7				8			9		10
		11	12				13		
	14						15		
16						17		18	
19							20		
21					22				

THE BOWES HOTEL - BARDON MILL

Have you ever wondered where the name, "The Bowes Hotel" came from? In 1905 the pub was razed and rebuilt, and at that time was called The Station Hotel. The Honourable Francis Bowes-Lyon (the late Queen Mother's cousin, residing at nearby Ridley Hall), noted that the designs for the rebuild didn't include two of the bedrooms on the North Side. The architect apologised and the committee members decided to ignore this oversight, due to the benefit to the local area of the extra bedrooms for tourists and the current landlord at the time, renamed the pub to 'The Bowes Hotel', which it has kept to this day, along with the two extra bedrooms!

Lovely community pub in the heart of Bardon Mill village serving great food and fantastic beers

with six beautiful hotel rooms 01434 344237 admin@theboweshotel.uk



THE ORCHESTRA

Violin 1

Sarah Roberts
The 'Anonymous' Chair

Ed Cross

Violin 2

Mateaus Dandalo
The 'Margaret' Chair

Natalie Wild

Viola

Alba Alonso
The 'Mary Marriott' Chair

Alison Woolsey

Cello

Deborah Thorne
The 'Anonymous HOC' Chair

Alexa Palmer Campiglia

Double Bass

Pietro Lusvardi

Flute

Clare Crinson
The 'Christine Beard' Chair

Oboe

Anna Williams
The 'Joanna Lloyd' Chair

Clarinet

Dov Goldberg
The 'Jim & Paddy Burridge' Chair

Bassoon

Sharon Clatworthy
The 'Anonymous HOC' Chair

French Horn

Rachel Brady
The 'Mary Marriott' Chair

Chris Senior

Trumpet

Dick Stacey

Trombone

Ian Sankey

Timpani

Matt Moore

SUPPORTING MUSIC ACROSS THE REGION

The Hexham Orpheus Choir are proud to be performing with tonight's other professional musicians. We are truly grateful for the kind and generous support and donations which have helped us bring together this orchestra. If you would like to support future concerts, please speak to our choir members or contact us through our Facebook or Website.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Members of the committee and the many others who have helped put together this event, including Anabel Gammidge, Julia Grint, John Below, Bob Hull, Jenny McKay, Steve Lloyd, Graeme Helliwell and Charles Drax
- Programme notes and design by Graeme Helliwell and Julia Grint
- Accompanist. Special thanks to Warren Smith for being with us through it all.



THE HEXHAM ORPHEUS CHOIR

AND

THE ST JAMES AND ST BASIL CHOIR

JOINT SUMMER CONCERT

5TH JULY 2025 IN HEXHAM ABBEY

From the Bavarian Highlands, Op.27

Edward Elgar

and other journeys

Directed by Simon Davies-Fidler

and Mark Edwards

QUEEN'S HALL ARTS CENTRE 40 YEARS

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Hexham & district Music Society

Come and join us in October for the start of our new concert season!

Every year, we bring some of the finest classical musicians from the UK and beyond to Hexham. Six concerts by performers whose artistry and music will move and inspire you.

The great clarinettist and co-founder of the Corbridge Chamber Music Festival, Rob Plane, starts the season with Ensemble 360 on 19th October and a performance of Brahms's sublime *clarinet quintet*.

Other season highlights include the Mithras Trio playing Rachmaninov's magnificent *Trio élégiaque* – his tribute to the memory of Tchaikovsky; an evening of baroque masterpieces by Bach and Handel in the skilled hands of the London Handel Players; and Schubert's much loved *Trout Quintet*, played by the Rossetti Ensemble.

A season to remember!

Full details will be published in July at

www.hexhammusic.net

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Will Todd

ALL WILL BE WELL



Will Todd piano | Voices of Hope | Will Todd Ensemble | Mark Edwards conductor

A NEW ALBUM featuring Voices of Hope, the one-time National Choir of the Year, features previously unrecorded choral works by Durham-born composer Will Todd. The album is available on CD or download from signumrecords.com

We are delighted to be joined tonight by Hannah Fumoleau (soprano), Gail Fidler-Davies (alto), Owain Bennett (Tenor), Chris Davies (Bass) from VoH. Our thanks for their support and involvement in tonight's event.

