



### Musical Direction

**Mark Edwards**, 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.

**Simon Davies-Fidler**, a choral conductor in the Northeast, is music director of Voices of The River's Edge, based at The Glasshouse International Centre of Music. The choir is preparing for a BBC Proms performance with Dinis Sousa and future concerts with Royal Northern Sinfonia and Ellie Slorach.



Simon founded and was former music director of the multi-award-winning chamber choir Voices of Hope. This choir toured Europe, recorded multiple albums, broadcast regularly on BBC radio and television, won National Choir of the Year in 2016, and represented the UK at the 2017 European Choir of the Year.

Until recently, Simon was Director of Music at St James' & St Basil's Church in Newcastle, where he still directs Fenham Ensemble, J's & B's Singers, The Newcastle Phoenix Choir, and The St James Consort. He has prepared the Chorus of Royal Northern Sinfonia for conductors like Nicholas McGegan and Paul McCreesh, and as a conductor, he's premiered works by composers such as Will Todd and Kathryn Tickell.

Simon's extensive work in the Northeast includes many years with university choirs, as well as regular collaborations with Streetwise Opera and Sunderland Opera. He has also directed several choirs for The Glasshouse ICM, including Quay Voices, the youth choir of Royal Northern Sinfonia.

## Come and Sing!

A taster session with the  
**HEXHAM ORPHEUS CHOIR**

Wednesday 10 September 2025  
7.10pm for 7.30 in Trinity Methodist Hall  
No audition and no fee

Experience singing with Mark Edwards, our professional director, in a large choral society that performs the greatest choral works.

You'll be taking part in an early rehearsal for  
**THE ARMED MAN**  
A MASS FOR PEACE  
by Sir Karl Jenkins

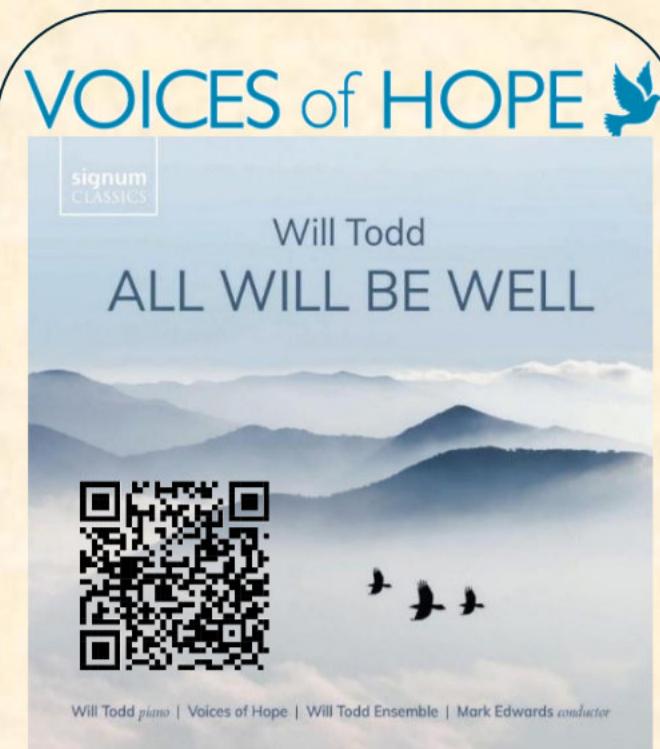
We'll be singing this wonderful Mass under the  
Gaia installation in Hexham Abbey  
Friday 14 November

**Come along, try us, join us!**

[hexham-orpheus-choir.org.uk](http://hexham-orpheus-choir.org.uk)  
for more details and to contact us

### Acknowledgements

- Members of the committees 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, Charles Drax, Nick Lord, Mark Edwards and Simon Davies-Fidler
- Programme design by Graeme Helliwell
- Special thanks to Christine Beard for sponsoring the programme printing
- Accompanists. Special thanks to Warren Smith and Len Young for being with us through it all.



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](http://signumrecords.com)

We are delighted to be joined tonight by

**Mary Houlton, Gail Davies-Fidler,  
Owain Bennett and Lewis West**

### Supporting Music across the region

The Hexham Orpheus Choir alongside the J's and B's Singers 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 event. If you would like to support future concerts, please speak to our choir members or contact us through our Facebook or Website.

**making music**

### Accompanists

**Len Young** is a multitalented composer, conductor and performer who initially studied at the Royal College of Music in London. He taught in London and Newcastle for 14 years, then served for 10 years as Adviser for Music with Newcastle Education Authority before becoming Head of Music, then Asst. Head (Performing Arts College), at Queen Elizabeth High School from 1995 to 2008. He conducted Newcastle Choral Society from 1976 to 2007 and also led Newcastle City Chorus and Felling Male Voice Choir.



Len has recently recorded carols with Simon Davies-Fidler and the St James Consort. He also works with Simon as accompanist for Js and Bs Singers, the Morning Chorus, and occasionally the Fenham Ensemble. Other freelance work includes composing, arranging, and occasional collaborations with Voices of Hope and Hexham Orpheus Choir.



**Warren Smith** 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 travelling the world and exploring the culinary delights on offer at fancy restaurants with his wife, Michelle.

### Choir Members

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 choirs

#### HOC are:

##### Soprano

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, Mary Oswell, Ann Reed, Nuala Rose, Maeve Selby, Judi Singleton, Esther Urwin, Carolyn Vasey and June Welch

##### Tenor

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

##### J's and B's are:

Aileen Duncan, Alan Verheyden, Anne Henderson, Anne Podmore, Apsara Panikkar, Barbara Harrington, Cath McNaught, Charles Walmsley, Chris Gardner, Christine Baker, Christine Bullmore, David Buckley, David Patterson, Eduardo Bouda, Gael Henry, Hanno Kossen, Hayley Llandro, Helen Marr, Hilary Broomfield, Hugh Mellish, Jim Miller, Joe Painter, John Keddie, Joo Li Ng, Jude Parks, Judith Brown, Judith Urwin, Judy Elliot, Jules Williamson, June Thomas, Les Hodgson, Libby Chamberlin, Linda Surrey, Liz Richmond, Lizi Norman, Lottie Bridgewater, Margaret Reid, Maggi Shepherd, Maggie Fitzsimons, Margaret Henderson, Margaret Selman, Marilyn McCoull, Marjorie Rochester, Mary Hogarth, Matthew West, Matthias Schmid, Michael Clarke, Monica Newcombe, Monika Smialkowska, Niel Soulsby, Peter Berrie, Rachael Adeney, Rosalind Walmsley, Rowena Ward, Ryan McKeon, Sandra Marsden, Sue Birkett and Tom Donnelly



## Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Missa Brevis in C major 'Spatzenmesse', K. 220

Mozart wrote this charming work in 1775 or 1776 while he was employed as a court musician in Salzburg. The period from 1773-1777 was a productive one for Mozart, who had just returned from a long period of travel, but he did clash frequently with his employer, the Prince-Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo. Mozart was frustrated with his low salary in Salzburg and was often absent from his post, annoying Colloredo no end. His works during this period (including symphonies, chamber music, string quartets, sonatas, church music and a few operas) nevertheless show a verve and enthusiasm, and also often his tremendous sense of humour. The 'Spatzenmesse' (or 'Sparrow Mass') is no exception.

Why does the nickname of this piece refer to sparrows?

The reason for this is a figuration/motif in the Osanna section of two movements - the Sanctus and Benedictus. In the full score, violins seem to 'chirp' just before the choir takes up the main theme, and this has led this piece to be nicknamed the 'Sparrow Mass'. This might well be a piece of sacred, devotional music but Mozart's personality and creative flair shine through from start to finish. This chirping figure which appears a number of times is not the only recurring musical material however - the final movement (Agnus Dei) recalls the music of the very first movement to create a cohesive musical whole.

Kyrie – Gloria – Credo – Sanctus  
Benedictus – Agnus Dei

Our soloists will be performing:

Les Fleurs et les arbres - Camille Saint-Saens

The Seal Lullaby - Eric Whitacre

Earth Song - Frank Tichelli



**Mary Houlton, Soprano**

Most recently, Mary performed the role of Second Woman in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* as part of the Northern Chords Festival under Jonathan Bloxham. Mary is a founder member of chamber choir Voices of Hope who were awarded a Gold Diploma in the 2025 Hull International Choir Competition and whose latest album, *All Will Be Well* reached number 5 in the classical charts.



**Gail Davies-Fidler, Alto**

Gail is a founder member of Voices of Hope, winning Choir of the Year in 2016 and representing the UK at the European Let the People's Sing competition in Helsinki. As a soloist, Gail has performed with many choral societies and choirs throughout the region and further afield, and was the first female Lay Clerk at Newcastle Cathedral.



**Owain Bennett – Tenor**

An alumnus of the National Youth Choir of Great Britain and founding member of the award-winning Northern Spirit Singers, Owain has performed in venues around the world and with artists from Lesley Garrett to Barry Manilow. He now sings regularly with the local choirs Antiphon and Voices of Hope



**Lewis West – Bass**

Lewis started his choral career as a chorister at Westminster Abbey, aged 8. Since studying music at Newcastle University he has sung with several local choirs including Voices of Hope and Durham Cathedral, and he is enjoying taking his first steps into solo singing. Lewis is second bass in local a capella septet, Vox Populi and he teaches singing and drum kit around the region.

## BAVARIAN HIGHLANDS LIGHNANDE

Nov. Eustachius Jr. Elaundrum.  
Eustachius Jr. - Dellaundrum. Rauvus Gauvusdrum.  
Dellaundrum.

