

Hexham Orpheus Choir

Vaughan Williams

Chilcott

Jenkins

Hexham Abbey 14th November 2025



under the Gaia installation

Welcome to our concert

Five Days that Changed the World —Bob Chilcott

The Lark Ascending—Ralph Vaughan Williams

Interval

The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace—Karl Jenkins

Five Days that Changed the World —Bob Chilcott (b.1955)

Bob Chilcott's 2013 choral work, *Five Days that Changed the World*, is an uplifting fifteen-minute meditation on human ingenuity and compassion, setting newly written texts by poet Charles Bennett. Commissioned for the Worcester International Festival for Young Singers, the five-movement piece was designed as a unifying anthem for a large, international youth choir. Rather than dwelling on conflicts or political history, the work centres exclusively on moments of positive human achievement and the immense creative vitality of humanity.

Thursday 29th March 1455:

The invention of printing

The quick brown fox. Quick brown fox.
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.
I saw them walking like footprints in the snow.
Saw them walking into houses all over the world.
Open the door of the eye and let them in.

I saw each letter. Saw each letter like a person.
Z was lonely and E was everyone's friend.
I watched them gather together into words.
I knew if I took the letters one by one.
Knew if I held them tight in forty-two lines.
They could speak to everyone everywhere.
In the beginning were footprints over the page.

The footprints of a fox who jumps.
Into your eye and over the lazy dog.

Friday 1st August 1834:

The abolition of slavery

Sometimes a piece of paper.
A piece of white paper.
Can set a person free. Just a few words.
A few words written in black ink
on white paper. Can set a nation free.

Sometimes one person. One good person.
Can set a nation free. Just a few words.
A few words written on the open page
of the human heart. Can set a people free.
Give me the good words. Make me the right
person.

Give me a piece of paper to set me free.
Pure words written on my open heart.
Just a few words can set me free.

Monday 14th December 1903: The first powered flight

A thought can learn to fly if you give it wings.
I said to Orville, Perhaps,
Maybe if perhaps we might possibly try.
And we did. And it was difficult.

Below us the ground was green
and heavy with failure.
Ready to break our fall.
But a thought will fly sometimes if you give it wings.
I said to Wilbur Why not?

Most everything that could went wrong before.
But it pulled us up in the end.
We said to each other, Let's toss for who goes first.
And we did. And it was glorious.

We carried it back to the top of Kill Devil Hill.
How many times? I forgot.
But we did and it was and it is and there you have it.
Sometimes a dream will fly.

Friday 28th September 1928: The discovery of penicillin

Green/blue. It was green/blue.
I happened upon it. Stumbled across it.
It wasn't supposed to be there but there it was.
Sometimes you find what you're looking for
Where you never thought it would be.

Thrown away.
Nearly thrown away.
I clettered the dishes. Washed the pots.
I thought there was something wrong but it
turned out right.

Sometimes where you never thought it would be
There's what you've been looking for all along.

Holiday. Just back from holiday.
It was meant to be. Serendipity.
What went wrong had gone as right as rain.
Sometimes what you're looking for will find you.
Sometimes what seems wrong was right all along.
Green/blue. It was green/blue.
I hope you find what you're looking for.
Hope what you're looking for finds you

Wednesday 12th April 1961: The first man in space

I saw how beautiful our planet is.
Seventeen thousand miles an hour.
They thought I might go mad.
But I saw the face of God.
The son of a carpenter circling round the Earth.

I saw how beautiful our planet is.
April twelfth nineteen sixty one.
Stars are the alphabet of God.
One hundred and
eight minutes.

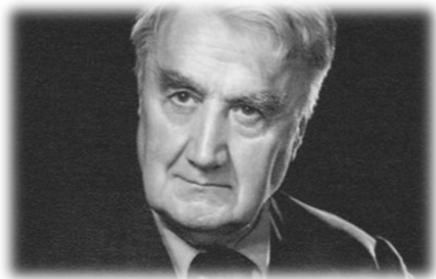
Can it be that you have come from outer space?
Well yes and I've seen something beautiful.
Keep this beauty safe and let it grow.

Stars are the smile of God.
His face was the Earth looking back.
Five hundred and twenty people
Have seen how beautiful it is.



The Lark Ascending—Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

The Lark Ascending, which was inspired by George Meredith's poem of the same name, expresses the song of a soaring skylark – a stirring metaphor for our collective yearning to rise above quotidian life. The effortless joy of the violin solo represents both the lark and its song which '*... rises and begins to round [dropping] the silver chain of sound*', as it circles ever higher into the sky.



The premiere of the original violin and piano version was given by Marie Hall (for whom the work was written) and the pianist Geoffrey Mendham at the Shirehampton Public Hall in Bristol on 15 December 1920. The orchestral version was premiered a year later.



*For singing till his heaven fills,
'T is love of earth that he instils,
And ever winging up and up,
Our valley is his golden cup,
And he the wine which overflows
To lift us with him as he goes.*

From *The Lark Ascending*
by George Meredith, 1881

*As up he wings the spiral stair,
A song of light, and pierces air
With fountain ardour, fountain play,
To reach the shining tops of day,
And drink in everything discern'd
An ecstasy to music turn'd.*

Our concert ensemble

Trumpet 1: Dick Stacey

Trumpet 2 : Michael Atkinson

Perc 1 : Matt Moore

Perc 2 : Thomas Cross

Flute : Clare Crinson

Organ : Warren Smith

Cello : Deborah Thorne

Chamber Organ : Michael Haynes

Solo Violin: Bradley Creswick

Call to Prayer—Hafaz Abdul Razzaq



Bradley Creswick — violin

Bradley Creswick has recently been made Leader Emeritus of Royal Northern Sinfonia and began his long relationship with them in 1984.

His musical life then, as now, was amazingly rich and varied, providing personal highlights such as the EMI recording of Vaughan Williams' 'The Lark Ascending' and Concerto Accademico with Richard Hickox,

performing Prokofiev's Concerto no.2 for Radio 3 and recording all the Handel op.6 Concerti grossi with George Malcolm. More recent recordings include: Handel Concerti grossi op.3 for Naxos, co directing six Mozart piano concertos with Imogen Cooper, "Venus Blazing" by Deirdre Gribbin with RTE and the Sinfonia Concertante for Violin and Viola by Mozart with the Zurich Chamber Orchestra.

In 1987 Bradley moved to London to lead the Philharmonia, still maintaining his relationship with the Sinfonia, making guest appearances, notably as soloist with them in the 1989 BBC Proms playing 'The Lark Ascending'.

The London years continued as leader of the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House before taking the opportunity, in 1994, to return to the Sinfonia and the North East for a second time.

Bradley has twice taken part in the Marlboro Music Festival in America and is asked regularly to guest lead a wide range of orchestras. Playing with friends is a vibrant part of life and he relishes the chance to play and give recitals around the country; and has occasionally been heard playing western swing fiddle 'back home'.

Michael Haynes— Organist

Michael studied at the Birmingham Conservatoire, the Royal Academy of Music and Newcastle University, and holds an MMus degree and the FRCO (CHM) diploma. His organ teachers have included Peter Hurford and Dame Gillian Weir.

He held Organ Scholarships in St Alban's Cathedral and Winchester College, and various teaching posts including Clifton College and Roedean School.

Michael is Director of Music at Hexham Abbey, having previously held similar positions at The University Church in Cambridge and St Chad's College, Durham. He has conducted many choral CDs and recorded three solo organ CDs. He examined for ABRSM for 27 years.

He also works as a freelance recitalist, accompanist and teacher. Music has given Michael opportunities to travel around Europe, South East Asia and the USA.

He has given organ recitals in King's College Cambridge, Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral.



Mark Edwards — Musical Director

Originally from Edinburgh, Mark trained as a percussionist before taking up conducting, and has recently completed his Masters in Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music, studying with Clark Rundell and Mark Heron, where he was awarded the Brierley Kershaw Prize for Conducting. In 2017, Mark won the National Brass Band Conducting Competition and more recently was a semi-finalist in the Citta' Di Brescia-Giancarlo Facchinetto Conducting Competition.

Comfortable working on large scale projects for both orchestra and choir, he has recently directed larger repertoire including: Elgar – The Dream of Gerontius, Vaughan Williams – A Sea Symphony, and Verdi Requiem. As assistant conductor, he has taken rehearsals for RTE concert orchestra and acted as cover conductor for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Mark has also worked on projects with BBC Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Psappha ensemble, assisting conductors such as Sir Mark Elder, Vasily Petrenko, Vassily Sinaisky, John Storgårds and Simone Young. As musical director for the award winning chamber choir 'Voices of Hope' (recent winners of the BBC Choir of the Year Competition), Mark has curated numerous programmes including a recent jazz-inspired concert with Will Todd and a concert of new commissions with Neil Ferris. He is also musical director for Hexham Orpheus Choir and is a lecturer in Conducting at Newcastle University. He has also undertaken masterclasses with renowned conductors such as Sir Mark Elder, Marin Alsop and David Hill. He is the artistic director of Kainos, a pierrot contemporary ensemble championing innovative performances of contemporary and North East repertoire.

During his time in Manchester he worked with a variety of RNCM ensembles, conducting a range of repertoire including a number of premieres. With a keen interest in contemporary music, Mark has worked with Royal Northern Sinfonia, London Sinfonietta Academy and Streetwise Opera on new

compositions. Recent highlights include performing at the Royal Albert Hall, London and Symphony Hall, Birmingham and live broadcasts for various BBC R3 programmes.



Warren Smith — Piano Accompanist

Warren is currently Director of Music and Organist at St Mary's Parish Church, Ponteland, Director of Music for the Tyne Valley based chamber choir 'Jubilate' and accompanist for the 'Hexham Orpheus Choir'. He sings bass in the choir, 'Voices of Hope'. Warren also holds the post of Music Teacher and Director of Choir at Mowden Hall Preparatory School.

Bonnie Brinn - Soprano



Sheffield born, **Bonnie Brinn** began her musical career at the age of four with piano lessons with the late Margot Pacey, composer and accompanist to Kathleen Ferrier. During her school career she added flute, 'cello and voice to her repertoire and went on to complete a degree in Music at Newcastle University, studying voice with Richard Wistreich. Her early vocal development was nurtured by acclaimed vocal coach Vivien Pike and she sang for a number of years with Vivien's choir Cantores Novae.

Still based in Newcastle as a primary teacher at Dame Allan's Schools, Bonnie continues to develop her career as a professional soprano. Her engagements as a soloist include performances with many choral and orchestral societies across the North East. She continues to sing regularly with the celebrated choir and winners of Choir of the Year, Voices of Hope.

Charlotte Galloway—Alto

Originally from Sunderland, Charlotte is a musician and educator who has recently returned to the North East. With a drive for making music accessible to all, she works with choirs, community groups and schools across the region believing that everyone deserves the opportunity to find and use their voice. Charlotte is delighted to be performing with Hexham Orpheus Choir and contributing to the area's exciting musical life.



Owain Bennet – 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, and solo engagements in recent years have included works by Mozart (Requiem, Sparrow Mass) and Bach (Magnificat, "Du Hirte Israel, höre") alongside Hexham Orpheus Choir, Riding Mill Choral Society, Voices for Tynedale, Js & Bs Singers and more.



Keir McGregor — Bass/Baritone

Keir originally hails from Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria. He moved to the North-East in 2021 to begin a PGCE and is now the Director of Music of Dame Allan's Senior School after beginning employment there in 2023. After graduating from Selwyn College, Cambridge in 2019 with a double first in Music, Keir went on to become a Choral Scholar at Norwich Cathedral. He now holds a position as a Principle Bass Lay Clerk at Newcastle Cathedral. Although singing throughout his childhood, Keir's first introduction to liturgical choral singing came at university, where he was a member of Selwyn College Chapel Choir under Sarah MacDonald throughout his degree; this springboarded his enjoyment of choral and solo singing, with recordings in Ely Cathedral and international tours, and encouraged him to continue this beyond university.

As well as singing with several groups in the North-East, Keir is a keen composer, and sometimes dusts the cobwebs from his cello and double bass!



The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Sir Karl Jenkins' *Armed Man; A Mass for Peace*, dedicated to the victims of the Kosovo conflict, whose tragedy was taking place as it was being composed. Jenkins himself conducted the first performance in 2000 by the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the National Youth Choir of Great Britain. It was commissioned by the Royal Armouries to mark the millennium, which ended a century marred by the destructive forces of two world wars and many other conflicts. It has the framework of a traditional Catholic Mass, but includes lyrics written by people from all over the world from a variety of cultures and religions. As we know, the new millennium has not brought the longed for peace in the title of this work, but it ends with an unaccompanied hymn of hope, using words from the biblical Book of Revelation: *God shall wipe away all tears, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. Praise the Lord.*

1. The Armed Man

L'homme, l'homme, l'homme armé, l'homme armé, l'homme armé doit on douter, doit on douter. On a fait partout crier, que chacun se viegne armer d'un haubregon de fer. The armed man must be feared. Everywhere it has been decreed that every man should arm himself with a coat of iron mail.

2. Call to Prayers

(Adhaan, the Muslim call to prayer)
Allah is great. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah. I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. Come to prayer. Come to success
(Muezzin—Hafaz Abdul Razzaq)

3. Kyrie

Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison
Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy

4. Save Me from Bloody Men (Psalms 56 and 59)

Be merciful unto me, O God, for man would swallow me up. He fighting daily oppresseth me. Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me. O thou most high. Defend me from them that rise up against me. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.

5. Sanctus

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth, Pleni sunt caeli et terra Gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.
Holy holy holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth of full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

6. Hymn Before Action (Rudyard Kipling)

The earth is full of anger, the seas are dark with wrath. The Nations in their harness go up against our path. Ere yet we loose the legions, ere yet we draw the blade, Jehovah of the Thunders, Lord God of Battles, aid! High lust and froward bearing, proud heart, rebellious brow. Deaf ear and soul uncaring, we seek Thy mercy now! The sinner that forswore Thee, The fool that passed Thee by, Our times are known before Thee— Lord, grant us strength to die!

7. Charge! (John Dryden and Jonathan Swift)

The trumpets loud clangor excites us to arms, with shrill notes of anger and mortal alarms. How blest is he who for his country dies. The double, double beat of the thundering drum cries Hark! the foes come. Charge, 'tis too late, too late to retreat. How blest is he who for his country dies, the double, double beat of the thundering drum cries Hark! the foes come, cries Hark! the foes come. Charge, 'tis too late, too late to retreat. Charge — Ah ...

8. Angry Flames (Togi Sankichi, a Hiroshima survivor who died of radiation exposure in 1953)

Pushing up through smoke from a world half darkened by overhanging cloud. The shroud that mushroomed out and struck the dome of the sky; black, red, blue, dance in the air, merge, scatter glittering sparks already tower over the whole city. Quivering like seaweed the mass of flames spurts forward. Popping up in the dense smoke, crawling out wreathed in fire, countless human beings on all fours, in a heap of embers that erupt and subside. Hair rent, rigid in death, there smoulders a curse.

9. Torches (Hindu 6-century epic Sanskrit poem Mahàbhàrata)

The animals scattered in all directions screaming terrible screams. Many were burning others were burnt. All were shattered and scattered mindlessly, their eyes bulging. Some hugged their sons, others their fathers and mothers, unable to let them go, and so they died. Others leapt up in their thousands, faces disfigured and were consumed by the fire. Everywhere were bodies squirming on the ground, wings, eyes and paws all burning. They breathed their last as living torches.

10. Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, donna nobis pacem
Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, grant us peace

11. Now the Guns Have Stopped

(Guy Wilson, Master of the Royal Armouries)
Silent, so silent now, Now the guns have stopped.
I have survived all, I who knew I would not. But now you are not here. I shall go home alone, and must try to live life as before and hide my grief.
For you, my dearest friend, who should be with me now, not cold too soon, and in your grave, alone.

12. Benedictus

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

13. Better Is Peace (Alfred Lord Tennyson, Karl Jenkins, Sir Thomas Malory, Revelation 24:1)

Better is peace than always war, always war. L'homme armé doit on douter? Better is peace than always war. Ring, ring, ring, ring, Ring! Ring out the thousand wars of old. Ring in the thousand years of peace. Ring out the old, ring in the new. Ring happy bells across the snow. The year is going, let him go. Ring out the false, ring in the new. Ring out old shapes of foul disease. Ring out the narrowing lust of gold; ring out the thousand wars of old. Ring in the thousand years of peace. Ring in the valiant man and free, the larger heart, the kindlier hand. Ring out the darkness of the land, ring in the Christ that is to be. The year is going; let him go. Ring out the false, ring in the true. Ring, ring, ring, ring! God shall wipe away all tears, and there shall be no more death. Neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord.

Welcome to The Hexham Orpheus Choir

The Hexham Orpheus Choir performs a number of major concerts each year in and around Tynedale. As a non-auditioned choir, we provide a platform for people of differing musical backgrounds to come together and perform a wide variety of choral music, from renaissance to contemporary. New members are always made very welcome and are encouraged to participate in the choir's active calendar.

Rehearsals normally take place at Trinity Methodist Church (Beaumont Street, Hexham NE46 3LS) on Wednesday evenings from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm, usually in school term-time only.

HOC are proud to be performing with tonight's 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 pages.



Sopranos

Anne Bagley, Sarah Barker, Deborah Beasley-Suffolk, Carolyn Below, Paddy Burridge, Elspeth Christie, Jayne Cook, Judi Cornforth, Margaret Duncan, Fiona Hewitt, Jennifer Lansberry, Janet Lennard, Liz McNeil-Grist, Mary Oswell, Anna Pattinson, Tanja Pless-Mulloli, Melody Price, Nuala Rose, Maeve Selby, Judi Singleton, Alice Stephenson, Teresa Toms, Carolyn Vasey, June Welch

Altos

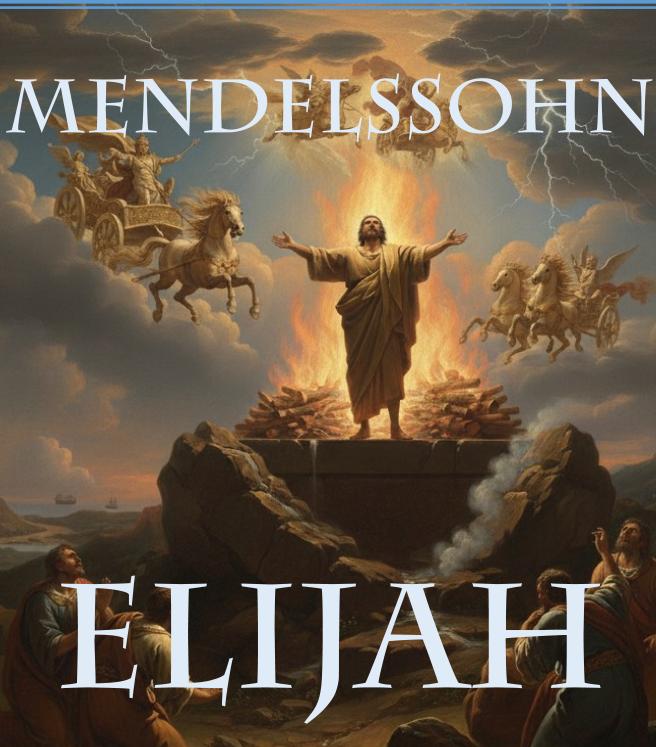
Celia Atherton, Marion Bates, Lou Baxter, Sheila Dance, Sally Davey, Rachel Dixon, Camilla Drax, Aileen Duncan, Flo Elliot, Sue Fowler, Anabel Gammidge, Julia Grint, Caroline Howard, Carolyn Howell, Claire Huddleston, Margaret Huntington, Bridget Jackson, Alison Jenkins, Barbara Johnson, Vivien Jones, Lesley Kerr, Linda Lord, Val Mallinson, Jes McEvoy, Susan Morse, Keron North, Joanna O'Neill, Bronya Read, Jenny Sadgrove, Heather Sewell, Kim Stabler, Siobhan Stephenson, Janet Storrie, Pam Vennart, Jean Wilks, Carol Wilson

Tenors

Mark Aspin, Tony Buglass, Paul Cajiao, Malcolm Chainey, Bill Day, Charles Drax, Tim Grew, Leigh Harrison, Bridget Holton, Nick Lansberry, Steve Lloyd, Pat Marriott, Jenny McKay, Steve Middleton, Selena Norfolk, Rachel Ogilvie, David Pattinson, Peter Toolan, Peter Vasey, Caroline Westgate

Basses

John Below, Peter Cook, Alex Dos Anjos de Oliveira, Neil Downie, Warwick Eden, Martyn Farrer, Graeme Helliwell, Chris Hewitt, Bob Hull, Michael Jackson, Nick Lord, Keith Mallinson, Owen McArdle, John Rose, Jim Vennart, Chris Welch



Acknowledgements

Members of the committee and the many others who have helped put together this event, including Anabel Gammidge, Julia Grint, John Below, Graeme Helliwell, Charles Drax, Steve Lloyd, Bob Hull and Jenny McKay.

Programme design by Graeme Helliwell;

Cover image of 'Tommy' (Seaham) photo by Julia Grint.

The audience – a huge thank you to our audience tonight, especially to those of you who made an additional donation to support this and future concerts.

We hope you enjoy this evening and we look forward to seeing you again soon.

HEXHAM
ORPHEUS
CHOIR

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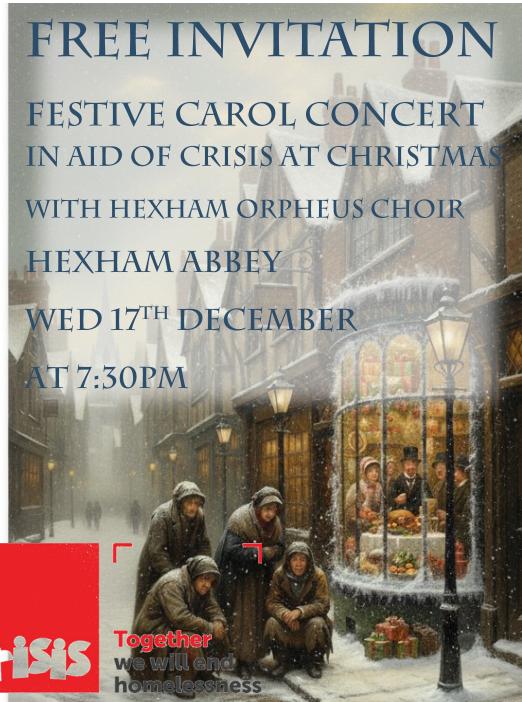
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