



HAYDN THE SEASONS

Saturday 25 March 2017 at 7.30pm

All Saints Church, Market Place,
Kingston upon Thames KT1 1JP

Tickets: £5 - £15 from 020 8977 4801,
www.kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk, or at the door.

Aoife Miskelly Soprano

Benjamin Hulett Tenor

Robert Davies Bass

with **Thames Sinfonia**

Andrew Griffiths Conductor





Since its formation in 1949, Kingston Choral Society has earned a reputation for concerts of a high standard and for performing a wide range of music. The Society enjoys singing the familiar favourites of the choral repertoire, but is not afraid of tackling ambitious projects and has, for example, performed a new commission by Peter Maxwell Davies, Prokofiev's Alexander Nevsky in Russian and other pieces in Czech, Hebrew, Finnish and Swedish.

Kingston Choral Society has over 130 members drawn from southwest London and north Surrey. New members are welcome. The choir performs four concerts a year, usually in All Saints Church, Kingston, and St Andrew's Church, Surbiton. Two of the concerts are with a professional orchestra. Rehearsals are held on Thursday evenings (8-10 pm) at The Hollyfield School, Surbiton, in term-time. Kingston Choral Society also holds regular social and fundraising events and occasional musical workshops.

If you are interested in joining, please talk to any member of the choir during the interval or at the end of the concert. You can also contact the Membership Secretary on 020 8949 5253 or join@kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk for more information and arrange to come to a rehearsal.

~ ~ NEXT KCS CONCERT ~ ~

1st July 2017 at 7.30 pm

Dove: *The Passing of the Year*
Armstrong Gibbs: *The Turning Year*
Tchaikovsky: *The Seasons* (excerpts)

Leanne Singh-Levett - Piano

Andrew Griffiths - Conductor

St Andrew's Church, Maple Road, Surbiton KT6 4DS

For further details contact the Box Office on 020 8977 4801

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~ ~ PROGRAMME ~ ~

Haydn: The Seasons

Spring

Summer

~ ~ INTERVAL ~ ~

Autumn

Winter

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FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1732 - 1809)

Born in Rohrau, Austria, in 1732, Franz Joseph Haydn showed his musical propensity at an early age. By age five he was having private music lessons and at seven he was a chorister at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, where he became a soprano soloist. This was obviously a family trait as Haydn's brother, Johann Michael, five years his junior, also went to St. Stephen's Cathedral, where Joseph was placed in charge of his education, and when Joseph left, Michael took over as soprano soloist. Michael also became a composer, conductor and organist for the Archbishop of Salzburg at the time that Mozart was being thrown out by the Archbishop.

Joseph Haydn spent 10 years in the choirs at St. Stephen's Cathedral and at court, and there is very little evidence that he was given a very thorough education in anything except music and singing. In 1749 the Empress Maria Theresa, his patron, the consort of Franz II, complained about his 'crowing' voice. Soon afterwards he was dismissed, ostensibly on the grounds that he had snipped off the pigtail of a fellow chorister as a prank, for which he was caned and then sent into the streets with little more than the clothes he stood in.

Haydn found lodgings in Vienna at the Michaelerhaus just next to St. Michael's Church, one of the oldest churches in Vienna. He made several important contacts there. The dowager Princess Esterházy, the mother of the two princes that would later employ Haydn for 30 years, lived on the first floor.

The most famous court composer of the time, Metastasio, lived on the third floor, and through Metastasio Haydn was engaged as accompanist to the aged composer Nicolo Porpora, from whom he learnt Italian, voice and composition. In 1759 Haydn became Musical Director for Count von Morzin, but the count quickly squandered his fortune and so in 1760 Haydn moved on to become the vice-kapellmeister to the Esterházy family, the wealthiest in Hungary, at Eisenstadt.

The first Prince, Paul Anton died in 1762 and his brother Nicholas was passionate about music. He built a splendid new palace called Esterháza to which the court would go every summer. Haydn's duties involved composing for the weekly church services, the twice-weekly concerts, the opera performances, the family's frequent celebrations and constant stream of visiting dignitaries. The isolation of the court in Esterháza meant that, as Haydn himself said, he was 'forced to become original' and it is a testament to his personal strength and inventiveness that he met the challenge and was able to learn from it, develop his own talent and influence the development of musical forms in Europe. He single-handedly invented the string quartet, established and developed the four movement symphony, and the piano sonata.

Haydn's reputation was spreading throughout Europe. In 1785 he was commissioned by the Loge Olympique to write the six 'Paris' symphonies, and the following year, Cadiz Cathedral asked for a set of instrumental meditations on the *Seven Words of the Saviour on the Cross*. On the death of Prince Nicholas in 1790 the orchestra was disbanded and Haydn, on full salary, retired to Vienna. He was invited to London in 1791 to compose and perform six symphonies, an opera and 20 other works. This proved so successful, for all concerned, that he was invited again in 1794. During the first visit Haydn attended a performance of the *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt* and was deeply affected by them. When Haydn returned to Eisenstadt it was as a richer, and more famous man with more freedom than he ever had before.

During the last years of his life, he switched from instrumental and orchestral writing, which had formed his stable, to vocal music, and he wrote two oratorios, his six famous masses and a *Te deum*.

When he died on 31 May 1809 Haydn was one of the most famous and respected musicians of his age.

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THE SEASONS

The success of Haydn's first oratorio *The Creation* (Die Schöpfung) in 1798, based on a text by John Milton (1608-1674), was phenomenal and unprecedented. Demand was such that it was the first oratorio to be published simultaneously in two languages, both German and English. The librettist for *The Creation*, Baron Gottfried von Swieten (1734 - 1803), who was also a diplomat, the Vienna Court Librarian and an amateur musician, was keen that Haydn should follow up the success. To this end he selected another English text, *The Seasons*, by the Scottish poet, playwright and author of *Rule Britannia*, John Thomson (1700 - 1748).

The poem is a pastoral epic which was published in instalments between 1726 and 1730. It was a very influential poem, stimulating works by the fellow poet John Christopher Smith, as well as the painters Thomas Gainsborough and J. M. W. Turner. Van Swieten reduced the original, which ran to over 5000 lines, to a modest 650 lines with only about a sixth of the poetry being a direct translation of Thomson's verse. In the process he lost much of the digression and moralising of the original, concentrating instead on the narrative and descriptive scenes, something that was designed to appeal directly to Haydn.

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Citation

During their previous collaboration on *The Creation*, van Swieten had provided Haydn with detailed instructions on how to set the text and Haydn had been diligent in following them. For the new oratorio, *The Seasons* (Die Jahreszeiten), the Baron had just as much advice, however Haydn was a lot less attentive to it. Haydn was not very impressed with the Baron's compositions, saying of his symphonies that they were 'as stiff as the Baron himself', so one can only imagine what Haydn thought when van Swieten started dictating melodies that he wanted Haydn to use, and told him in one chorus that he should 'write fugally' and even where he should introduce the countersubject.

In another instance van Swieten angered Haydn by asking to hear 'the purling of brooks and the buzzing of the flying insects' and 'the wailing cry of owls'. Haydn was concerned that the text offered too much opportunity for gratuitous word painting and, since he had been criticised for his use of animal imitations in *The Creation*, he raged against 'that sort ... of vulgar Frenchified trash ... that Grétry did'. Haydn grumbled about the banality of the libretto, complaining that he was too tired to work on it and would rather be working on *The Last Judgement*, a project that unfortunately never materialised. When he was asked to set a chorus extolling hard work, something he was no stranger to, he remarked that it had never occurred to him to set the word 'Fleiss' ('diligence') to music.

The Seasons, more than any other work, has suffered from some of the worst press that a composer has given his work. Haydn is reported as saying that it "broke his back", and it took him from 1798 to 1801 to write it, with constant cajoling from van Swieten. Haydn complained of headaches, nervousness, failing eyesight, rheumatism or grippe. He did not compose very much after *The Seasons* – some partsongs, and two string quartet movements. However, for a composer who was approaching 70 years of age, *The Seasons* is a youthful and joyous work, an evocation of the world in which he had grown up. It is a culmination of all he had learnt in his long career, incorporating a wide variety of styles, from popular Viennese singspiel to learned fugue, from German opera to English oratorio, and all held together with elements of the masterly Austrian symphonic tradition that he had done so much to forge.

The Seasons was first performed in the Palace of Prince Schwarzenberg in Vienna on 24 April 1801 and again twice in the following week. It was performed at court on 24 May, with Empress Maria Theresa, the consort of Franz II, singing the solo soprano role. Haydn conducted the first public performance in Vienna on 29 May. From there it made its way rapidly through Europe. The final score was published in French, German and English, making it the first tri-lingual publication. The Baron provided the English back-translation and this has come in for much criticism. For tonight's performance we are using the New Novello Choral Edition with a new translation by Michael Pilkington in 2000.

Spring

Each of the seasons starts with an orchestral tone-poem. The journey from winter to spring begins with four mighty chords. The ensuing music starts off dramatically and densely contrapuntal, which is contrasted with a jaunty second theme. This leads directly into a recitative for the peasants Simon (bass), Lucas (tenor) and Simon's daughter, Jane (soprano), which is left hanging in mid-air. The G major resolution is provided by the chorus ("Come, gentle spring") with its rustic droning effect and alternating sections for men's and women's voices.

The ploughman's song which follows proved instantly popular. Despite van Swieten's suggestion that he use a tune from a popular German opera, Haydn has Simon whistle the tune from his own 'Surprise' Symphony, No. 94 in G major, accompanied by oboes, horns, bassoons and piccolo (the only time that Haydn used the instrument).

We now have an extended section for trio with chorus including a 'Song of Joy' for all the bounty that the world offers. There are lots of illustrative effects for "lambs leaping", "fishes swimming", "bees swarming" and "birds fluttering". The mood is interrupted by dramatic fanfares and timpani with the choir intoning homophonically ("Wonderful, powerful, merciful God!"). Spring closes with an earnest fugue in praise to the Lord ("Glory, laud and praise be thine").

Summer

Summer opens with a portrayal of the "gentle morning light" for divided strings. The tenor joins in and the oboe depicts the cockerel announcing dawn. Simon is accompanied in his aria by an obbligato horn ("So now the cheerful shepherd"). After a short recitative the trio of soloists depicts the sunrise and the chorus sings in praise of the sun ("And now ascends the sun").

Jane's recitative provides a moment of relief ("O welcome now ye shady groves"). She continues with an aria that begins as a duet with the oboe, depicting the shepherd's pipe, but ends with coloratura touches.

The timpani start to introduce ominous thunder-rolls during the next recitative, which heralds a full-scale storm with pizzicato raindrops and jagged flashes of lightning on the flute. This is the first such depiction in the classical-romantic repertoire and had influenced those of Beethoven (in the *Pastoral Symphony*) and Rossini (in *Cinderella* and *William Tell*). The chorus enters with a terrifying diminished chord. The storm ends with a fugue on a descending chromatic subject – a musical phrase that was traditionally used as a harbinger of death.

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As the storm recedes, nature returns to normal with the recitative that Haydn complained about as “frenchified trash”, with its imitations of the returning herd, the quail calling, the cricket chirping, the frog croaking and the distant curfew bell. Summer closes with a lulling chorus.

Autumn

The introduction to Autumn is in the style of a minuet. This leads into a trio in praise of toil and industry which the chorus rounds off with an earnest sounding fugue.

The majority of Autumn is taken up with a series of hunting scenes. Haydn was an enthusiastic hunter in his younger days and obviously relished setting this. We start with an aria from Simon describing a bird hunt, with a prominent part for bassoon, flute and timpani. Lucas provides a brief description of hare-coursing, with skittish writing in the strings depicting the erratic behaviour of the hares. This is all but preparation for the thrilling main event. The choir enters for the stag hunt, with blazing trumpets based on traditional hunting calls. The stag puts up a brave fight in D major before eventually succumbing exhausted in E flat major.

Autumn ends with a recitative to the wine harvest and an enthusiastic drinking chorus. As the chorus progresses, and the wine flows, we break into an unruly German dance with droning pipes, drums and fiddles, again with antiphonal effects between the male and female voice parts. We finish with a drunken fugal section where the vocal entries keep coming in at the wrong places with broken snatches of fugue subject.

Winter

Winter opens with a depiction of thick swirling fogs in a wonderfully impressionistic and sombre sound word which is reminiscent of the depiction of Chaos from *The Creation*.

A tenor aria tells the tale of a lost traveller caught in this desolation as he becomes disorientated and anxious. In the original poem, the traveller dies, however van Swieten changed it so that he is saved by finding a bustling Inn in the nick of time.

Next, Jane tells us the saucy tale of a peasant girl outwitting the attentions of a nobleman. The text for this, the last of the two imported texts, comes from a translation of a novel by Mademoiselle Favart.

The closing section of Winter becomes more philosophical. The bass aria likens the passing of the year to the progress of ageing man (“So understand deluded man”). It quotes from the slow movement of Mozart’s Symphony No. 40 at the words *For now are come thy Autumn Years*.

The final movement sets a series of question and answer phrases between the chorus and the trio of soloists. It has Masonic overtones and is similar to the Act I finale from Mozart's "*The Magic Flute*" between Tamino and Speaker. The work ends with a fugue asking for God's help to make us strong and brave. Van Swieten had suggested that the work should finish with an eight part fugue, however Haydn stuck with a four part ending with a blaze of brass fanfares.

Programme notes courtesy of Paul Chambers



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THE SEASONS - FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

SPRING

Recitative

Behold how surly Winter flies; to polar regions now he goes. Now follows at his call the savage storm's tumultuous host with all its dreadful roar. And see, from craggy rocks the snow in muddy streams flows down the slopes! And see how from the south, by mild and gentle winds allur'd, the spring again appears.

Chorus

Come, gentle Spring! The gift of heaven, come! From deathly winter sleep bid Nature now awake! And now she nears, the gentle Spring, her soft and balmy breath we feel, and soon will all to life return. But yet do not too soon rejoice, for oft, enwrapp'd in mist and fog, the winter will return and spread o'er bud and flow'r his chilling frost. Come, gentle Spring! The gift of heaven, come! Upon our meadows now descend. O come, return, delay no more!

Recitative

From Aries now the sun shines brightly down upon us here. Now frost and fog retire, and mild mists hover all about; our mother earth is now revived, enliven'd is the air.

Aria

With joy th'impatient husbandman sets forth to till the field, the furrow's length he strides along and whistles as he ploughs. And then with slow and measur'd step he casts the seed abroad, by faithful earth preserv'd it soon will grow to golden corn.

Recitative

The farmer now his work has done, avoiding neither pain nor toil; the hand of Nature will in time provide reward; for this he pleads, and so he prays to heaven above.

Trio and Chorus

Now be gracious, bounteous heaven, open wide, and pour thy blessings over all our lands below.

Let earth receive the dew's refreshment.

Let rainfall now enrich the furrows. And let thy breezes gently blow, thy sun send forth his shining rays! To us abundant life will flow, and we will give thee thanks and praise.

Recitative

Our fervent prayers are heard; the warm west wind arises and fills the sky above with sailing clouds. The clouds increase; they now descend, and pour into the lap of earth the pride and wealth of Nature's store.

Trio and Chorus

O how lovely is the landscape spread before our eyes! Come, dear maidens, let us wander o'er the verdant fields! O how lovely is the landscape spread before our eyes! Come, young fellows, let us wander through the fresh green woods!

See the lilies, see the roses, all the flow'rs in bloom! See the pastures, see the meadows, see the open fields. See the mountains, see the rivers, see the sparkling air! All is living, all is floating, ev'ry creature now astir. See the lambs, how they are leaping! See the shoals of fishes swimming! See how all the bees are swarming! See the birds now all aflutter! O what pleasure, what enjoyment swells within our hearts! Sweetest fancies, gentle charms bring gladness to our souls. That which touches and delights you is the presence of the breath of God. Let us honour, let us worship, let us give our praise to him! In resounding song to thank him raise your voices high.

Trio and Chorus

Wonderful, powerful, merciful God! From thy most blessed table dost thou provide our food, from streams of joy unending thou givest us to drink. Glory, laud and praise be thine, wonderful, merciful God.

SUMMER

Recitative

In misty mantle now draws near the gentle morning light; with limping step at her approach the weary night retires. To dark and gloomy caves the birds of doom now take their flight, and with their mournful cries appal the timid heart no more. The herald of the new-born day, with sharp and penetrating voice, to new activity now calls the shepherd from his rest.

Aria and Recitative

So now the cheerful shepherd goes to gather all his bleating flock; to pastures rich he drives them out, slowly o'er the verdant hills. Towards the East he gazes then, while leaning on his shepherd's crook, and waits to see the rising sun shed abroad his glorious light. The rosy dawn breaks forth in light; like wisps of smoke the clouds disappear; the heav'n is clothed resplendent in blue, the mountain peaks in fiery gold.

Trio and Chorus

And now ascends the sun, he climbs, he nears, he comes, he beams, he shines. Now shine with glorious pow'r the fires of his majesty. Hail, O sun, all hail! The source of light and life, all hail! Thou soul and eye of all the worlds, thou God-like shining star. We give thee grateful thanks, thou God-like shining star. For who can tell the jubilation thy gracious presence stirs in us? Who numbers them, the many blessings that of thy kindness we receive? The jubilation, who can tell? Thy blessings, O who numbers them? Who? All thanks to thee for giving joy. All thanks to thee for giving life. All thanks to thee for giving health. But more to God who gave to thee the pow'r thy beams display. Now praises come from all men, these praises Nature joins.

Aria

What refreshment to the senses, what a comfort to the heart! Life through ev'ry vein is flowing, and in stirring ev'ry nerve invigorates the soul.

The spirit now awakes to pleasure and to joy; with strength renew'd it lifts the heart to fresh delights.

Recitative

O see! There rises in the sultry air, close by the border of the hills, a pallid fog of mist and vapour form'd. 'Tis small at first, but now expands, and soon black darkness covers all beneath the gloomy sky. Hear, from the vale, how the dull roar announces storm to come! See how the baleful cloud with slow progression makes its way and threatens all the land beneath! In dread foreboding all living Nature waits. No beast, no leaf dares stir itself. A deathly hush is all around.

Chorus

Ah, the thunderstorm comes near! Help us, heaven! O how the thunder rolls! Now rage the winds about us! Where shall we fly? Flashes of lightning now streak through the air, the bolts from the sky now burst the clouds open, to pour down torrents of rain. Where is safety? Dreadful roars the storm. The open sky is aflame. Save us wretches! Crashing, smashing, crack on crack the thunder rolls with awful noise. Save us! The whole world shakes and trembles e'en to the ocean floor.

Trio and Chorus

And now the storm has passed away; the clouds disperse, the wind dies down. Before the time to set has come the sun looks out once more, and so his final sparkling rays with pearls adorn the fields. Now to its well-accustom'd home, enliven'd and refreshed, the well-fed herd returns. The quail already calls his mate. The cricket chirps from out the grass. The frog is croaking in the marsh; the distant curfew tolls. The evening star shines from above, inviting us to soft repose. Maidens, young men, women, come! Soothing sleep awaits us now, for this is granted honest hearts and healthy bodies after toil. We come. We follow you. The distant curfew now has tolled, the evening star shines from above, inviting us to soft repose.

AUTUMN

Recitative

What with all its blossoms was promis'd by the spring, what the warmth of summer to welcome ripeness brought, autumn with its fullness shows to the farmer now. For there on heavy loaded carts th'abundant harvest home is borne. The plenty that the fields provide his massive barns can scarce contain. With cheerful eye he looks around, and measures all the bounteous produce there, and pleasure floods into his heart.

Trio and Chorus

So Nature thus rewards his toil; she calls, she smiles at him, encouraging his hopefulness, she willing gives her aid; she works for him with pow'r and strength. From thee, O toil, comes ev'ry good. The cottage where we dwell, the clothing that we wear, our daily bread to eat, are blessings all by thee bestow'd. O toil, O noble toil, from thee comes ev'ry good.

Recitative

Now on the bare denuded field some uninvited guests appear, that on the stalks found nourishment, and wander seeking further food. These little thefts do nought to harm the farmer, he can leave them be, unless excessive losses come that he can ill afford. Then action that can this prevent he sees as benefit, and willing enters on the hunt that gives his master such delight.

Aria

Look there upon the open field! The hound is moving through the grass. He searches there to find the scent and then will tireless follow it. But over eager now he runs, he heeds his master's orders no more: he hastens on forward then sudden stops and stands unmoving as a stone. The startl'd bird now takes to flight in hope the danger to avoid: but all his speed will not avail. The gun is fired, he is struck by the shot that drops him dead from the sky to earth.

Recitative

The hares from out their beds are driven by the closing ring. Now press'd about on ev'ry side they find there's no escape, and soon they fall, to be laid out as trophies of the hunter's sport.

Chorus

Hark, hark, a sonorous sound is through the forest ringing! What a clamorous din is heard throughout the wood! It is the horn with its thrilling call, the ravenous hounds are now baying. The stag already is arous'd, pursuing are huntsmen and eager dogs. He flies, O see how he bounds! See how he leaps! Then from the coppice he breaks for the fields, and hastens across to the thickets beyond. He now has bewilder'd the hounds, at fault they range and go astray. The hounds are now at fault, they wander here and there. The huntsman calls, and blows his horn to gather them once again. Tallyho! With redoubled ardour now the pack recovers the scent of the fleeing prey. Thus overtaken by his foes, his courage and his vigour lost, exhausted now the deer will fall. Proclaiming that his end is come the jubilant song of sounding brass announces the hunters' victory. Ha-la-li! Proclaiming that the stag is dead the jubilant song of sounding brass announces the hunters' victory. Ha-la-li!

Recitative

The shining grapes are fully ripe upon the branches of the vine, they call the happy vintner out to gather them without delay. Already tubs and vats below the hill are set, and from their houses villagers stream, and gather ready the welcome work to do. See how the mountainside with swarming folk is cover'd! And hear how joyful sounds from ev'ry quarter echo. The work is eased by humorous talk from morn until the evening comes, and then the sparkling juice of the grape will raise the mirth to shouts of joy.

Chorus

Yo-ho, yo-ho! The wine is here, the barrels now are fill'd; so let us merry be and yo-ho, yo!

From open throats we shout! Let us drink then!
 Drink up, brothers, let us merry be! Let us sing
 then, all must sing now, let us merry be! Yo-ho,
 yo-ho, yo! All hail to the wine. All hail to the land
 that brings it forth! All hail to the vat that gives it
 strength! All hail to the bowl from whence it flows!
 Brothers come and fill the tankards, drain the
 mugs and let us merry be! The pipes are now
 playing, the tabor is beating, the fiddle is
 screeching and buzzing the zither, the bagpipes
 now drone. The children are skipping, and
 youngsters are leaping. Now foot all the maidens,
 embrac'd by their lovers, the steps of the dance.
 Heisa, hopsa, we are skipping. Come brothers
 come! Heisa hopsa, we are leaping! Heisa
 hopsa! We are dancing. The tankards fill and
 drain the mugs! Ho there let us merry be and yo-
 ho, yo! From open throats we shout! Roister
 revel! Yo Ho! Heisa Hopsa dance around.
 Skipping dancing, roister revel! Now we have the
 final jug. So let us praise in chorus full the joyous
 produce of the grape! Heisa hopsa, ho! All hail to
 the wine, the noble wine, that trouble and grief
 removes, his praises sing we loud and high,
 exalting him a thousandfold.

WINTER

Recitative

Now pale, the year begins to fade, and cold the
 mists form round about. They wrap the mountains
 in their fogs, and lastly cover all the land, and
 e'en at noon the sun is hid in all-pervading
 gloom. The Winter with his dismal storms now
 rushes forth from Lapland's caves, and his
 approach doth freeze all Nature, fill'd with anxious
 care. The face of earth is now a grave, where
 Nature's charms quite buried lie, a deathly colour
 sadly rules, and wheresoe'er the gaze may roam
 it finds no more than desert wastes.

Aria

The trav'ler stands perplex'd; uncertain and unsure
 which way his wand'ring steps to turn. In vain he
 strives to find the road, but neither track nor path
 appear.

In vain he struggles on his way, and wading
 through the drifting snow he finds himself still
 more astray. Now all his courage fails, and fear
 o'ercomes his heart, he sees the day will soon be
 gone, and weariness and cold turn all his limbs to
 stone. Now all his courage fails, and fear
 o'ercomes his heart: but suddenly his searching
 eye discovers shining lights at hand. With life
 restor'd to him, and joyful beating heart, he runs
 in haste to reach the house where, stiff and cold,
 he hopes relief.

Recitative

As he draws near, into his ears, till now by the
 howling winds oppress'd, comes the sound of
 voices clear. The circle closes in, surrounded by
 the men and boys, impatient all to hear the tale
 that Jane will soon recount to them.

Song with Chorus

There was a squire as I've heard say, once lov'd
 a pretty maid, and, meeting her alone one day,
 sprung off his horse and said: 'My pretty lass
 you've won my heart, indulge me with a kiss.'
 Her heart would fain have answer'd No, her lips
 responded Yes! Ha, ha, but why not answer No?
 'Be not alarm'd, my pretty lass, but give thy love
 to me, and doubt not that I'll always prove a true
 love unto thee. Thou shalt be happy, see, this
 ring and purse to thee I grant; I'll study ev'ry wish
 of thine, in nothing shalt thou want!' So so, indeed
 young squire, you promise fair! 'What if my brother
 were to know, or what my father, say, they're
 both in yonder field at plough, perchance they'll
 look this way.

Were they not there why then indeed I can't say
 what I'd do, creep through the hedge and let me
 know if they can see us two'. Ha, ha! What next,
 I pray? The thorns and briars held him fast, as he
 were in a vice, Meanwhile the maid sprung on his
 horse and vanish'd in a trice. 'Farewell to thee,
 my gentle swain' she cried in bitter scorn, 'And
 when you next would pluck a rose you'll not
 forget the thorn.' Ha, ha, well done my girl, ha ha,
 poor squire, goodbye!

Recitative

From out the East there comes an icy blast with piercing cold. Harsh and cutting to the bone, it gathers up the fog, and steals the breath from man and beast. This tyrant, full of rage, the Winter now has vict'ry won, and voiceless in her fear the whole of Nature lies aghast.

Aria and recitative

So understand, misguided man, the picture of thy life is here. Thy spring was short and now is gone, exhausted is thy summer's strength. For now are come thine autumn years, while winter pale already nears, and shows to thee the open tomb. Where are now those hopes of joy and gladness, those lofty schemes and plans? Misfortune's heavy burdens, the vain desire of fame? Where are they now, those times of plenty, once spent in luxury? And where those cheerful evenings and nights of revelry? Where are they now? Where? They all are vanish'd as a dream. Only virtue stays. Alone she stays and leads us on, unchangeable, through passing days and years, through good or evil fortune, to reach the highest goal of life.

Trio with Double Chorus

Then comes the great and glorious morn; the word of the Almighty Lord calls us to second life, from pain and death for ever free. The gates of heaven are open'd wide, the holy hill appears. There stands the house of God where peace and freedom dwell. But who may pass between those gates? The man whose life was incorrupt. And who may climb the holy hill? The man whose lips spoke only truth. And who may make that house his dwelling? The man who help'd the poor and weak. And who shall joy and peace delight in? The man who saved the innocent. O see, the glorious morn is near. Behold, the splendid light! The gates of heaven are open'd wide, the holy hill appears. Now are they gone, for ever past, the days of woeful suffering, the winter storms of living, for Spring eternal reigns, and everlasting happiness is virtue's true reward. May we alike reward deserve! Let us labour, let us struggle. Let us struggle, and continue our attempt that prize to gain. Direct us in thy ways, O God, and make us strong and brave. Then shall we sing, we shall ascend into the glorious realm of heaven. Amen.

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For further information please contact info@kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk or phone 020 8942 2275

ANDREW GRIFFITHS – Musical Director

Andrew Griffiths enjoys an enviable reputation as a dynamic and versatile young conductor with a particular flair for opera and choral music.

A graduate of The Royal Opera's prestigious Jette Parker Young Artist Programme, Andrew has conducted productions for The Royal Opera, Opera North, Opera Theatre Company, Early Opera Company, Mid Wales Opera, Bampton Classical Opera and Iford Festival Opera. He has appeared in concert with the orchestras of The Royal Opera and Opera North, Southbank Sinfonia and Orpheus Sinfonia, and is regularly engaged to broadcast and record with the BBC Singers.

Andrew has worked at Glyndebourne, ENO, Scottish Opera, WNO, Chicago Opera Theatre and with the BBC Symphony and Scottish Symphony Orchestras, as well as on numerous Royal Opera productions (including the *Ring* and the world première of *The Minotaur*), under such conductors as Pappano, Bychkov, Elder, Gardiner and Mackerras. He is often engaged for projects outside the standard operatic canon, and is particularly experienced in Baroque repertoire and the music of the last fifty years. Much sought-after as a vocal coach, he works frequently with the singers at the National Opera Studio and The Royal Opera.

In constant demand as a choral conductor, Andrew appears regularly with the BBC Singers, for whom his engagements have included an acclaimed performance of *Gawain* (BBC SO/Brabbins), recordings of twentieth-century American repertoire, and broadcasts of the Howells Requiem, Parry's *Songs of Farewell* and MacMillan's *Tenebrae Responses*. He is Musical Director of Kingston Choral Society and chamber choir Londinium, and has appeared as a guest conductor with New London Chamber Choir, Hong Kong's Tallis Vocalis, and the choirs of Dartington International Summer School.

A pianist, viola player and singer by training, Andrew began his musical education as a Quirister and Scholar at Winchester College, and read music at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he held a Choral Exhibition. He studied conducting under Martyn Brabbins in Glasgow, and trained as a répétiteur at the National Opera Studio and at Scottish Opera. He is a former principal viola of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, and a founder member of vocal consort Stile Antico. In 2008 he was chosen to receive the Wagner Society's Bayreuth Bursary.

Andrew's recent and future engagements include his Barbican Hall debut conducting the BBC Singers, Handel's *La Resurrezione* with Early Opera Company at Wigmore Hall, the 1589 Florentine Intermedi at Dartington, and Londinium's debut recording, focusing on rare British 20th century repertoire.

AOIFE MISKELLY – Soprano

Northern Irish soprano Aoife Miskelly studied as a Sickel Foundation Scholar at the Royal Academy Opera under Jennifer Dakin and Audrey Hyland, graduating with the Regency Award in 2012. During her studies, Aoife was a Kathleen Ferrier Awards finalist (2010), won a BBC Northern Ireland Young Artists Platform Award (Arts Council of NI sponsored), and was a Samling Scholar and Britten-Pears Young Artist.

During the 2012/14 seasons Aoife was part of the opera studio at Cologne Opera, including singing roles on the main stage such as Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel*, Nella in *Gianni Schicchi*, Servilia in *La Clemenza di Tito* and Blumenmädchen in *Parsifal*. For the past two seasons, Aoife has been part of the full ensemble in Köln, singing roles such as Despina in *Così fan Tutte*, Valencienne in *Die Lustige Witwe*, Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*, Frasquita in *Carmen*, Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady* and Harey in *Solaris*. In May 2014, Aoife was awarded the prestigious Offenbach Prize by the friends of Cologne Opera House for outstanding achievement throughout the season.

Aoife's other operatic projects have included Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, Cecily Cardew in the Irish Première of Gerald Barry's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Sanndmädchen / Dew Fairy in *Hänsel und Gretel* with Northern Ireland Opera and Therese in Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* at both La Monnaie and the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence. In July 2014, Aoife returned to the festival in Aix for its production, directed by Katie Mitchell, of staged Bach cantatas entitled *Trauernacht*.

A natural performer of modern music, Aoife performed the role of Mary Crawford in the London première of Jonathan Dove's opera *Mansfield Park* in May 2012 with Royal Academy Opera (directed by John Ramster). With Camerata Ireland and pianist/conductor Barry Douglas, Aoife sang in the world première of Mark Anthony Turnage's *At Sixes and Sevens* in July 2013. In April 2014, Aoife returned to sing with Camerata Ireland and Codetta in their performance – live on Spanish radio – of Beethoven's oratorio *Christ on the Mount of Olives* in Cuenca.

Aoife is also a keen oratorio singer, having performed in a whole host of concerts, including Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, *St. John Passion*, *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen* and *Magnificat*, Beethoven's *Mass in C* (in Cologne Cathedral), Brahms' *Deutsches Requiem* (St. Martin in the Fields), Carissimi's *Jephte* (St. John's, Smith Square), Handel's *Messiah*, *Dixit Dominus*, *Laudate Pueri Dominum*, and *Saul* (conducted by Laurence Cummings), Mozart's *Requiem*, *Coronation Mass* and *Exultate Jubilate*, Orff's *Carmina Burana* (Ulster Orchestra), Poulenc's *Gloria*, Stravinsky's *Mass*, Varese's *Nocturnal* (NYOGB) and Vivaldi's *Gloria*.

Aoife's recent and upcoming projects include The Woman in *The Last Hotel* at the Linbury Studio Theatre at the Royal Opera House, Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Hyogo Centre for Performing Arts in Japan (directed by Antony MacDonald), the title role in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Snowmaiden* for Opera North, Polinessa in Handel's *Radamisto* for NI Opera.

Also planned are further performances of *Trauernacht* in Moscow, recitals for BBC Radio 3 and the Oxford Lieder Festival with William Vann, as well as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* for NI Opera and Cologne, Musetta in *La Bohème* and Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady* in her final season as a member of the ensemble at Oper Köln.

Aoife is very grateful for all the wonderful teaching and support she has received throughout her studies and start to her career, with particular thanks owing to the Sickie Foundation, the teaching staff of the Royal Academy of Music and to her friends and family.

BENJAMIN HULETT - Tenor

Benjamin Hulett studied music at New College, Oxford and at Oxford Brookes University. He also studied at Guildhall School of Music and Drama under David Pollard where he won the Harold Rosenthal prize for opera. He is a Samling Foundation artist and alumnus of the Britten-Pears school.

As an opera singer he was a member of the ensemble of the Hamburg State Opera 2005 - 2009 and has performed with Staatsoper Berlin, Bayerische Staatsoper, Theater an der Wien, Baden Baden and Salzburg Festivals, as well as Rome Opera, Opera National du Rhin, Opera de Rouen and at Opera North, Welsh National Opera, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and the Glyndebourne Festival. In concert he has performed regularly with the BBC orchestras, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and has appeared with the Berlin Philharmonic, Boston Symphony and Rotterdam Philharmonic orchestras under conductors including Rattle, Fischer, Jurowski, Dutoit, Harmoncourt, Herreweghe, Hogwood and Norrington.

He performs regularly at Wigmore Hall in recital and song concerts with pianists Graham Johnson, Christopher Glynn and Andras Schiff, as well as performances with Academy of Ancient Music, Early Opera Company, King's Consort and Classical Opera. Ben's recordings have been nominated for, and received, awards from BBC Music Magazine, Gramophone, Grammy, Diapason and Echo. Current and future plans include returning to the Glyndebourne Festival, Royal Opera House, Welsh National Opera, Theater an der Wien, and making debuts with LA Philharmonic, Garsington Opera and Teatro Real, Madrid.

ROBERT DAVIES - Baritone

Born in Colchester, Robert studied at the University of Sheffield and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama before embarking on a solo career, both on the opera stage and concert platform.

Awarded the Erich Vietheer Memorial Award at Glyndebourne in 2003, Robert went on to appear as Mr Gedge in *Albert Herring*, Marcello in *La Boheme*, Count in *Le Nozze de Figaro* and Falke in *Die Fledermaus* for Glyndebourne on Tour. Other roles include the title roles in *Figaro* with English Touring Opera and *Rigoletto* with Bury Court Opera; Zurga in *Pearl Fishers* and Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* with Reisopera, Holland; Demetrius in *A Mid-Summer Night's Dream* and Papageno in *Magic Flute* with ETO; Ned Keene in *Peter Grimes* at the Stadttheater, Bern; Chef Grec in *Les Troyens* at Châtelet, Paris; Ottokar in *Der Freischütz* at the Opera Comique, Paris; Leone in *Tamerlano* at Buxton Festival. He has also performed under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Sir Mark Elder, Ed Gardner, Vladimir Jurowski and Robin Ticciati.

Recordings include Monteverdi *Vespers* with the OAE, Bach *St John Passion*; Handel *Esther* with Dunedin Consort; Haydn *Creation* for Alte Musik/ORF and Hawes *Angel* for Decca. Known for excelling in a wide range of repertoire, his performances include the World Premier of *Blitz Requiem* in St Paul's Cathedral with the RPO (recorded for Classic FM); the 50th Anniversary (Gardiner) Monteverdi *Vespers* in Kings College, Cambridge (BBC Radio 3 live), Barcelona and Versailles (recorded live for DVD); Bach *Mass in B Minor* in Duomo, Pisa (Gardiner); Orff *Carmina Burana* in Barbican, London; Brahms *Requiem* in Worcester, Westminster and Coventry Cathedrals; Mozart *Mass in C Minor* in St David's Hall, Cardiff with Florilegium; Bach *St John Passion* (OAE/Polyphony) in St John's, Smith Square, and Antwerp; Haydn *Creation* in Cadogan Hall; Bach *St Matthew Passion* tour in Holland (Nieuwe Philharmonie Utrecht).

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THAMES SINFONIA

Thames Sinfonia is delighted to welcome Peter Hanson as Guest Leader for tonight's concert. Peter led the orchestra for John Eliot Gardiner's acclaimed performances of Haydn's *The Seasons* with The Monteverdi Choir. Thames Sinfonia is comprised of professional players from many of London's most prestigious orchestras and ensembles, and has accompanied Kingston Choral Society over many years. The orchestra has also delivered many special projects, including a series of concerts featuring Scandinavian music at London's South Bank in collaboration with the Barbican Gallery exhibition, 'Dreams of a Summer Night'. These included the first UK performances of many Swedish works by composers such as Kraus, Stenhammar, Börtz, Lidholm and Rosenberg. Founder and Artistic Director Robin Page has a special affinity for Nordic music, and the orchestra has given acclaimed performances of Sibelius and Nielsen symphonies, including the inaugural concert of the UK Sibelius Society in London. Thames Sinfonia regularly champions the work of living British composers, including Matthew Taylor whose *First Symphony*, dedicated to Robin Page, was first performed at the Festival of St Paul's, Covent Garden.

For more details please contact Elizabeth Andrews at ea@elizabethandrews.com

Flutes/Piccolo

Emma Williams
Carolyn Hope

Oboes

Fraser Kelman
Philip Haworth

Clarinets

Daniel Broncano
Andrew Harper

Bassoons

Joanna Stark
Iona Garvie

Contra Bassoon

Alexandra Davidson

Horns

Martin Lawrence
Jonathan Farey

Trumpets

Stephen Keavy
Darren Moore

Trombones

George Bartle
Ian Sankey

Bass Trombone

Ed Hilton

Timpani

Janne Metsapelto

Harpsichord

Julian Perkins

First Violins

Peter Hanson (Leader)

Jayne Spencer
Philip Yeeles
Eleanor Gilchrist
Dominika Feher

Second Violins

Clare Hoffman
Kirsten Klingels
Charlotte Fairbairn
Julia Brocklehurst

Violas

Daniel Shilladay
Barnaby Adams
David Brooker

Cello

Elizabeth Andrews

Cello Continuo

Sebastian Comberti

Double Bass

Dawn Baker

Orchestra Manager

Kathryn Leeke

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