

Thursday 6 November, 2014

LONDON



CONCERT  
CHOIR

Handel

# JUDAS MACCABAEUS

*Conductor:* Mark Forkgen  
London Concert Choir  
Counterpoint

Programme: £2

Cadogan Hall,  
5 Sloane Terrace  
London SW1X 9DQ



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Judas Maccabeus

Words by Rev. Thomas Morell

Music by George Frederic Handel

Edited by Merlin Channon

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Thursday 6 November, 2014  
Cadogan Hall

Handel:  
**JUDAS MACCABAEUS**

Mark Forkgen *conductor*

Mary Nelson *soprano*

William Towers *counter-tenor*

Nathan Vale *tenor*

Giles Underwood *bass*

London Concert Choir

Counterpoint *period instrumental ensemble*

There will be an INTERVAL of 20 minutes after Part One

**GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL**

# JUDAS MACCABAEUS

*An Oratorio to*

*Words by **Thomas Morell***



Judas Maccabaeus, commander of the Israelite army  
Simon, his Brother, religious leader of the Israelites  
Israelite Woman  
Israelite Man, Israelite Priest and Messenger  
Eupolemus, Israelite Ambassador to Rome  
Chorus of Israelites

Nathan Vale  
Giles Underwood  
Mary Nelson  
William Towers  
Giles Underwood  
The Choir

George Frideric Handel was born in Halle, Saxony in 1685 and died in London in 1759, having become a British subject at the age of forty-two. His early musical ambitions did not please his family who had wanted him to go into the law, but his talent was quickly noticed by the great and the good and he studied harmony and composition as well as keyboard and violin. He became a violinist in the Hamburg opera orchestra, grew fascinated by that musical genre and then spent four years in Italy learning his craft. In 1710 Handel was offered the post of Kapellmeister to the Elector of Hanover, who was to become King George I, the first Hanoverian King of Great Britain. Handel's acceptance was conditional on first having time to visit England and, although he returned to Hanover for about a year, Britain was to be his home for the rest of his life.

Handel's musical output was prodigious: he wrote great cantatas and sacred music and his operas – full of high drama – were widely popular. But by the time he was sixty he was tiring and unwell, 'disordered in his head,' as a contemporary put it,

perhaps from a stroke. He went to France to recuperate, returning to London in better health, but a little uncertain about his future. He loved the excitement of opera but staging it was very expensive and its musical conventions could be constraining.

Oratorio was a genre popular on the continent but new to England and created here almost by accident in 1732 when Handel composed the biblical story of *Esther* for performance as a masque at a private occasion. He had planned to stage it for the public but ran into opposition from the Bishop of London, who strongly objected to the staging of sacred drama in a secular setting. So Handel expanded the story of Esther, which was then given in concert performance – no actors, costume or scenery – at the King’s Theatre in London. The Bishop’s obduracy turned out to be a blessing: Handel was to write many oratorios after that, some of which, especially *Messiah*, the most famous, continue to fill concert halls worldwide.

Although oratorio, the ‘new’ genre, had many fans, there was opposition from the opera lobby who yearned for something more elaborate and ‘showy’. Some performances were even boycotted by ladies of the fashionable upper class. Audiences became sparser and, by 1745, Handel’s finances were in a bad way. *Messiah* had been a tremendous hit in 1742 when it was first performed in Dublin and Handel perhaps decided that his musical future lay in oratorio, but his fickle public were being hard to please and his health suffered once more.

At this lowpoint for the composer, Britain’s political history took a decisive, if savage, turn. There was a second crisis in the long-running Jacobite rebellion against the Hanoverian Succession when news came that Bonnie Prince Charlie, the Young Pretender, had sailed from Nantes to land with his army in the Hebrides and was moving south. This caused consternation in London. The Hanoverian (mostly English) army was promptly recalled from Flanders and the Jacobites were forced into retreat. Then, under the command of William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, the rebels were finally crushed in 1746 at the Battle of Culloden.

In England, the scent of victory was in the air; popular feelings of militarism and patriotism were running high. It was the perfect time for a victory oratorio. Handel was inspired to write *Judas Maccabaeus* in honour of the victorious Duke of Cumberland – the man of the moment. The composer's librettist, the Reverend Thomas Morell, dedicated it to the Duke with considerable pomp as a 'Faint portraiture of a Truly Wise, Valiant and Virtuous Commander'.

Thomas Morell was a music-loving cleric and scholar who had spent a long life dedicated to classical and Biblical learning. He delved into the *First Book of Maccabees* from the Apocrypha, taking in as well some details from *Antiquitates Judaicae* by the Jewish historian Josephus in the first century CE. As a parallel to Cumberland and his victory in the Hanoverian-Jacobite battles of the time, Morell took Judas Maccabaeus and his victory over the Graeco-Syrian invaders of Judaea in the second century BCE.

The back story to the oratorio concerns an important era of Jewish history when, in about 198 BCE, Antiochus the Great, ruling over the Graeco-Syrian empire, invaded Judaea. The Jewish people were well treated by their new ruler, but when he died and was succeeded by the brutal Antiochus IV Epiphanes, their lives became unbearable. This new despot was determined to ban the Jewish faith and culture and impose his own Hellenistic ways which, to the Jews, were abominable heathen customs. He sacked Jerusalem in 167 BCE and outlawed Judaism and its practices on pain of death. The people suffered greatly and, when the invaders actually desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem, it was such a bitter blow that it sparked a rebellion led by the Jewish priest Mattathias, one of whose five sons was Judas Maccabaeus, who became leader of the revolt after his father's death.

The Hebrew word 'Chanukah' translates as 'dedication' and the restoration of the Temple and the miracle of the burning oil following Judas' victory are commemorated each year in the Jewish Festival of Lights.

## PART ONE

The imposing overture which begins the oratorio is heavy with tribulation; majestic dotted rhythms set the sombre picture as the Israelites gather to mourn the death of Mattathias, who had been their leader in guerrilla warfare against the heathen invaders. The first chorus is a lament, 'Mourn, ye afflicted children,' in the funereal key of C minor. The Israelites' fears are expressed by the Israelite Man and Woman, who wonder what will become of them in the duet 'Ah, whither shall we fly? O Solyma' (an old term for Jerusalem). The next chorus continues the lament. The first glint of hope comes with the Israelite Woman's reminder that their sorrow is not in vain and that they should put their trust in the Lord of Hosts. 'Pious orgies' in the next aria seems a contradiction in terms, but Morell was using the word 'orgies' to mean 'rituals' with no particular connotation, as was acceptable at the time.

### **Chorus of Israelites**

Mourn, ye afflicted children, the remains  
Of captive Judah, mourn in solemn strains;  
Your sanguine hopes of liberty give o'er,  
Your hero, friend and father is no more.

### **Recitative: Israelite Man**

Well may your sorrows, brethren, flow  
In all th'expressive signs of woe;  
Your softer garments tear,  
And squalid sackcloth wear.  
Your drooping heads with ashes strew,  
And with the flowing tear  
your cheeks bedew.

### *Israelite Woman*

Daughters, let your distressful cries  
And loud lament ascend the skies;  
Your snowy bosoms beat, and tear,  
With hands remorseless,  
your dishevell'd hair.  
For pale and breathless, Mattathias lies,  
Sad emblem of his country's miseries.

### **Duet: Israelite Woman and Man**

From this dread scene,  
These adverse pow'rs,

Ah, whither shall we fly?  
O Solyma! Thy boasted tow'rs  
In smoky ruins lie.

### **Chorus of Israelites**

For Zion lamentation make,  
With words that weep, and tears that speak.

### **Recitative: Israelite Woman**

Not vain is all this storm of grief,  
To vent our sorrows gives relief.  
Wretched indeed! But let not Judah's race  
Their ruin with desponding arms embrace.  
Distractful doubt and desperation  
Ill become the chosen Nation,  
Chosen by the great I AM,  
The Lord of hosts, who, still the same,  
We trust, will give attentive ear  
To the sincerity of pray'r.

### **Air: Israelite Woman**

Pious orgies, pious airs,  
Decent sorrow, decent pray'rs,  
Will to the Lord ascend, and move  
His pity, and regain His love.

The Israelites pray for a new leader in the fugal chorus 'And grant a leader bold and brave.' Their prayers are answered: Simon, Judas' brother, has the revelation that Judas should be their leader and spurs his people to action in the rousing aria 'Arm, arm ye brave.' The Israelites react excitedly in 'We come in bright array', with the bold repetitions of 'Judah' powerfully expressing their readiness to fight.

**Chorus of Israelites**

O Father, whose almighty pow'r  
The heav'ns and earth and seas adore;  
The hearts of Judah, thy delight,  
In one defensive band unite.  
And grant a leader bold and brave,  
If not to conquer, born to save.

**Accompanied Recitative:** *Simon*

I feel, I feel the Deity within,  
Who, the bright Cherubim between,  
His radiant glory, erst display'd.  
To Israel's distressful pray'r  
He hath vouchsafed a gracious ear,  
And points out Maccabæus to their aid:

Judas shall set the captive free,  
And lead us on to victory.

**Air:** *Simon*

Arm, arm, ye brave! A noble cause,  
The cause of Heav'n your zeal demands.  
In defence of your nation, religion,  
and laws,  
The Almighty Jehovah will strengthen  
your hands.

**Chorus of Israelites**

We come, we come, in bright array,  
Judah, thy sceptre to obey.

Accepting authority, Judas sings 'Tis well, my friends: with transport [*rapture*] I behold the spirit of our fathers.' After Judas' powerful aria 'Call forth thy powers', the Israelite Woman sings of Liberty and the now-warlike Israelites sing the scornful chorus 'Lead on, lead on'.

**Recitative:** *Judas Maccabæus*

'Tis well, my friends; with transport I behold  
The spirit of our fathers, fam'd of old  
For their exploits in war. Oh, may they fire  
With active courage you, their sons, inspire:  
As when the mighty Joshua fought,  
And those amazing wonders wrought,  
Stood still, obedient to his voice, the sun,  
Till kings he had destroy'd,  
and kingdoms won.

**Air:** *Judas*

Call forth thy pow'rs, my soul, and dare  
The conflict of unequal war.  
Great is the glory of the conqu'ring sword,  
That triumphs in sweet liberty restor'd.

**Recitative:** *Israelite Woman*

To Heav'n's immortal king we kneel,  
For blessings on this exemplary zeal.  
Bless him, Jehovah, bless him,  
and once more  
To thy own Israel Liberty restore.



**Air: *Israelite Woman***

Come, ever-smiling Liberty,  
 And with thee bring thy jocund train.  
 For thee we pant, and sigh for thee,  
 With whom eternal pleasures reign.

**Chorus of Israelites**

Lead on, lead on! Judah disdains  
 The galling load of hostile chains.

Judas proclaims the dying words of his father, vowing 'liberty or death'. By now, the people are fired up to jeer at the enemy with the chorus 'Disdainful of danger we'll rush on the foe', in which the repetitive scales in the orchestra represent the bold Jewish fighters. After Judas has set out his ambition for victorious peace, Part One ends as the Israelites implore Jehovah to 'Hear us, O Lord' which shows how clearly they are aware of the huge odds that are stacked against them.

**Recitative: *Judas***

So will'd my father, now at rest  
 In the eternal mansions of the blest:  
 'Can ye behold,' said he, 'the miseries,  
 In which the long-insulted Judah lies?  
 Can ye behold their sore distress,  
 And not, at least, attempt redress?'  
 Then, faintly, with expiring breath,  
 'Resolve, my sons, on liberty, or death!'

We come! Oh see, thy sons prepare  
 The rough habiliments of war;  
 With hearts intrepid, and revengeful hands,  
 To execute, O sire, thy dread commands.

**Semi-chorus of Israelites**

Disdainful of danger,  
 We'll rush on the foe,  
 That Thy pow'r, O Jehovah,  
 All nations may know.

**Recitative: *Judas***

Ambition! If e'er honour was thine aim,  
 Challenge it here:  
 The glorious cause gives sanction to  
 thy claim.

**Air: *Judas***

No, no unhallow'd desire  
 Our breasts shall inspire,  
 Nor lust of unbounded pow'r.  
 But peace to obtain,  
 Free peace let us gain,  
 And conquest shall ask no more.

**Recitative: *Israelite Man***

Haste we, my brethren,  
 Haste we to the field,  
 Dependent on the Lord,  
 Our strength and shield.

**Chorus of Israelites**

Hear us, O Lord, on Thee we call,  
 Resolv'd on conquest, or a glorious fall.

**INTERVAL - 20 Minutes**

## PART TWO

Part Two opens with the Israelites jubilantly celebrating victory in a particular battle: 'Fall'n is the foe' they sing, cheering Judas as their hero, in particular for his 'righteous sword'. The duet and chorus in confident D major, 'Hail Judea, happy land', is rather countered by Judas' reminder 'How vain is man who boasts in fight'.

### **Chorus of Israelites**

Fall'n is the foe; so fall Thy foes, O Lord,  
Where warlike Judas wields his righteous  
sword!

### **Recitative: *Israelite Man***

Victorious hero! Fame shall tell,  
With her last breath, how Apollonius fell,  
And all Samaria fled, by thee pursued  
Through hills of carnage and a sea of  
blood.

While thy resistless prowess dealt around,  
With their own leader's sword,  
the deathful wound.  
Thus, too, the haughty Seron, Syria's boast,  
Before thee fell, with his unnumber'd host.

### **Duet and Chorus:**

*Israelite Man and Woman; Israelites*  
Hail, hail, hail, Judea, happy land!  
Salvation prospers in his hand.

The mood suddenly changes to alarm as a messenger arrives hotfoot from the battlefield with news that Antiochus has sent his general, Gorgias, with an army to 'root out Israel's strength' and annihilate Jerusalem.

### **Recitative: *Israelite Messenger***

O Judas, O my brethren!  
New scenes of bloody war  
In all their horrors rise.  
Prepare, prepare,  
Or soon we fall a sacrifice  
To great Antiochus; from th'Egyptian coast,

### **Recitative: *Judas***

Thanks to my brethren; but look up  
to Heav'n;  
To Heav'n let glory and all praise be giv'n.  
To Heav'n give your applause,  
Nor add the second cause,  
As once your fathers did in Midian,  
Saying, 'The sword of God and Gideon'.  
It was the Lord that for his Israel fought,  
And this our wonderful salvation wrought.

### **Air: *Judas***

How vain is man, who boasts in fight  
The valour of gigantic might.  
And dreams not that a hand unseen  
Directs and guides this weak machine.

(Where Ptolemy hath Memphis  
and Pelusium lost)  
He sends the valiant Gorgias,  
and commands  
His proud, victorious bands  
To root out Israel's strength, and to erase  
Ev'ry memorial of the sacred place.

A single cello poignantly introduces the aria and chorus 'Ah! Wretched Israel' (again in C minor) with even greater pathos being expressed with the phrase 'fall'n how low' repeated by the different sections to great effect.

But Judas is still intent on battle with the rousing aria 'Sound an alarm'. After the Israelites' bold response, 'We hear the pleasing dreadful call and follow thee to conquest', the mood changes again as Simon gently reminds them that holy Sion (Jerusalem) is in ruins and the Temple has been desecrated.

**Air and Chorus:**

*Israelite Woman and Israelites*

Ah! wretched, wretched Israel!  
fall'n, how low,  
From joyous transport to desponding woe.

**Recitative:** *Judas*

My arms! Against this Gorgias will I go.  
The Idumean Governor shall know  
How vain, how ineffective his design,  
While rage his leader, and Jehovah mine.

**Air and Chorus:**

*Judas*

Sound an alarm! Your silver trumpets sound,  
And call the brave, and only brave, around.  
Who listeth, follow: to the field again.  
Justice, with courage, is a thousand men.

*Israelites*

We hear, we hear the pleasing dreadful call,  
And follow thee to conquest; if to fall,  
For laws, religion, liberty, we fall.

**Recitative:** *Simon*

Enough! To Heav'n we leave the rest.  
Such gen'rous ardour firing ev'ry breast,  
We may divide our cares; the field be thine,  
O Judas, and the sanctuary mine;  
For Sion, holy Sion, seat of God,  
In ruinous heaps, is by the heathen trod.  
Such profanation calls for swift redress,  
If e'er in battle Israel hopes success.

**Air:** *Simon*

With pious hearts, and brave as pious,  
O Sion, we thy call attend,  
Nor dread the nations that defy us,  
God our defender, God our friend.

Action is needed and it is taken. After the people's angry destruction of the heathen idols and profane altars, it is clear that the Temple has been purified and rededicated. In the chorus 'O never bow we down' the Israelites vow they will never show respect to 'the rude stock or sculptur'd stone' (the rough wooden idols and stone gods worshipped by the heathen enemy). Instead they vow to 'worship God, and God alone' in a majestic chorale with fugal counterpoint which is reminiscent of Bach.

**Recitative:***Israelite Man*

Ye worshippers of God!  
 Down, down with the polluted altars, down.  
 Hurl Jupiter Olympus from his throne,  
 Nor reverence Bacchus with his ivy crown  
 And ivy-wreathed rod.  
 Our fathers never knew  
 Him, or his beastly crew,  
 Or, knowing, scorn'd such idol vanities.

*Israelite Woman*

No more in Sion let the virgin throng,  
 Wild with delusion, pay their nightly song  
 To Ashtoreth yclep'd [called] the Queen  
 of Heav'n.  
 Hence, to Phoenicia be the goddess driv'n:  
 Or be she, with her priests and pageants,  
 hurl'd  
 To the remotest corner of the world,  
 Ne'er to delude us more with pious lies.

**Duet and Chorus:***Israelite Woman and Man*

Oh, never, never bow we down  
 To the rude stock or sculptur'd stone.  
 But ever worship Israel's God,  
 Ever obedient to His awful nod.

*Israelites*

We never, never will bow down  
 To the rude stock or sculptur'd stone.  
 We worship God, and God alone.

**PART THREE**

The final part opens serenely with a Festival of Thanksgiving for the reconsecration of the Temple – the origin of Chanukah – and a prayer for peace. In a virtuoso aria the Israelite Woman bids the lute and harp awake.

**Air:** *Israelite Priest*

Father of Heav'n, from Thy eternal throne,  
 Look with an eye of blessing down,  
 While we prepare with holy rites,  
 To solemnize the Feast of Lights.  
 And thus our grateful hearts employ;  
 And in Thy praise  
 This altar raise,  
 With carols of triumphant joy.

**Recitative:** *Israelite Woman*

Oh grant it, Heav'n, that our long woes  
 may cease,  
 And Judah's daughters taste the calm  
 of peace;  
 Sons, brothers, husbands to bewail no  
 more,  
 Tortur'd at home, or havocked in the war.

**Air:** *Israelite Woman*

So shall the lute and harp awake,  
 And sprightly voice sweet descant run,  
 Seraphic melody to make,  
 In the pure strains of Jesse's son.

News comes from Capharsalama (a village about twelve miles from Jerusalem) that Judas has routed the armies of two very senior enemy leaders, Lycias and Nicanor, 'with thousands slain.' Judas returns victorious, entering Jerusalem in triumph to the famous chorus 'See, the conqu'ring hero comes.' This is sung first by the Chorus of Youths (double soprano and alto) then by a Chorus of Virgins (first and second soprano) and finally the whole orchestra and choir combine. Handel had not written these numbers when *Judas Maccabaeus* was first performed, but they were so popular in his *Joshua* a year afterwards that he included them when revising the earlier work.

**Recitative:** *Israelite Messenger*

From Capharsalama, on eagle wings I fly,  
With tidings of impetuous joy:  
Came Lysias, with his host, array'd  
In coat of mail; their massy shields  
Of gold and brass, flash'd lightning  
o'er the fields,  
While the huge tow'r-back'd  
elephants display'd  
A horrid front. But Judas, undismay'd,  
Met, fought, and vanquish'd all the  
regeful train.

Yet more, Nicanor lies with thousands slain;  
The blasphemous Nicanor, who defied  
The living God, and, in his wanton pride,  
A public monument ordain'd  
Of victories yet ungain'd.  
But lo, the conqueror comes;  
and on his spear,  
To dissipate all fear,  
He bears the vaunter's head and hand,  
That threaten'd desolation to the land.

**Chorus**

*Youths*

See, the conqu'ring hero comes!  
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums.  
Sports prepare, the laurel bring,  
Songs of triumph to him sing.

*Virgins*

See the godlike youth advance!  
Breathe the flutes, and lead the dance;  
Myrtle wreaths, and roses twine,  
To deck the hero's brow divine.

*Israelites*

See, the conqu'ring hero comes!  
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums.  
Sports prepare, the laurel bring,  
Songs of triumph to him sing.  
See, the conqu'ring hero comes!  
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums.

At this point the Ambassador Eupolemus arrives from Rome to announce that in future Imperial Rome will defend Judaea from its enemies. The beautiful melody for soprano which follows, 'O lovely peace', with its gentle rhythm, has remained a favourite.

The final chorus, introduced by Simon, ends with a 'Hallelujah, Amen' with trumpets and drums as Handel brings the work to its triumphant close.

**Recitative:** *Eupolemus*

Peace to my countrymen; peace and Liberty.  
From the great Senate of Imperial Rome,  
With a firm league of amity, I come.  
Rome, whate'er nation dare insult us more,  
Will rouse, in our defence,  
her vet'ran pow'r,  
And stretch her vengeful arm,  
by land or sea,  
'To curb the proud, and set the injur'd free.'

**Recitative:** *Israelite Woman*

Again to earth let gratitude descend.  
Praiseworthy is our hero and our friend.  
Come then, my daughters,  
choicest art bestow,  
To weave a chaplet for the victor's brow;  
And in your songs for ever be confess'd  
The valour that preserv'd,  
the pow'r that bless'd,  
Bless'd you with hours, that scatter,  
as they fly,  
Soft quiet, gentle love, and boundless joy.

**Air:** *Israelite Woman*

O lovely peace, with plenty crown'd,  
Come, spread thy blessings all around.  
Let fleecy flocks the hills adorn,  
And valleys smile with wavy corn.  
Let the shrill trumpets cease,  
nor other sound,  
But nature's songsters wake  
the cheerful morn.

**Air and Chorus:**

*Simon*

Rejoice, O Judah, and in songs divine,  
With Cherubim and Seraphim  
harmonious join!

*Israelites*

Hallelujah! Amen.

## Mark Forkgen *conductor*



Mark Forkgen has been Music Director of London Concert Choir since 1996. He is also Music Director of Canticum chamber choir, Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of Kokoro (the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's New Music Group) and Director of Music at Tonbridge School. He has conducted major UK orchestras, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, English Chamber Orchestra, English Northern Philharmonia and Manchester Camerata, appearing at major venues, including the Royal Festival Hall, the Barbican and the Royal Albert Hall.

A specialist in the field of choral and contemporary music, Mark has given the first performances of more than 100 works. He has also conducted stage works with the Trestle Theatre Company and Britten Sinfonia, and contemporary opera with the Unicorn Theatre Company and an ensemble from the Philharmonia, at the Linbury Studio, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Mark's wide range of conducting also includes performances with Deep Purple for the Henley Festival and recreating Pink Floyd's *Atom Heart Mother* in the Chelsea Festival. He also enjoys an active life as a pianist, focusing on 20th Century and contemporary music. His recitals this season cover repertoire by Stravinsky, Debussy, Messiaen, Bartok, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Oliver Knussen and Thomas Adès.

He has been Conductor and Artistic Advisor for highly acclaimed festivals including: Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' 70th Birthday; Stravinsky, 'A Festival of Britten', 'Music of the Americas', 'Britain since Britten' and 'East meets West'. Outside the UK he has conducted in Denmark, Spain, France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Eire, the Czech Republic and Italy (including Handel's *Messiah* in Sienna and *Israel in Egypt* at the Viterbo Early Music Festival), Bulgaria (concerts broadcast for National TV and Radio) and Hong Kong.

Last season's highlights included a production of *Oh What a Lovely War*, Jonathan Lloyd's score to Hitchcock's *Blackmail*, performed with the film, concerts celebrating Britten's centenary and a highly acclaimed Shakespeare project. Highlights in October and November include Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' *Vesalii Icones* with the composer, the first performance of a new edition of Rachmaninoff's *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*, Vaughan Williams' *London Symphony* and a production of *Cabaret*.

## Mary Nelson *soprano*



Born in Northern Ireland, Mary Nelson is an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music where she studied. She made her debut with English National Opera as Wood Nymph in *Rusalka*, followed by Amor in *Orpheus and Eurydice* (a role which she also sang with London Concert Choir) and Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas*. An ENO Company Principal from 1999 to 2004, her subsequent roles included Susanna, Pamina, Dalinda in *Ariodante*, Atalanta in *Xerxes*, Trash in *The Fairy Queen* (also at the Liceu, Barcelona), and Lucia in *The Rape of Lucretia* for ENO and the Aldeburgh Festival, also broadcast on BBC TV and Radio 3. She has also sung with Opera North, Castleward Opera, the Early Opera Company, Classical Opera Company and Stanley Hall Opera.

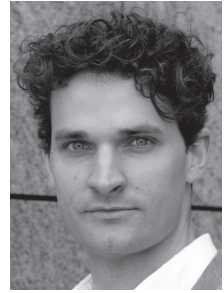
An experienced oratorio and concert soloist, her many performances include Mozart's *Requiem* and Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with City of London Sinfonia at the Barbican, Vivaldi's *La Senna Festeggiante* with The King's Consort in The Netherlands and Spain, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Handel's *Gloria* with the Irish Chamber Orchestra, Bach's *St John Passion* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Britten's *Les Illuminations* and Handel's *Gloria* with the Israel Camerata, and Fauré's *Requiem* with the Northern Sinfonia.

She has worked with conductors including Christian Curnyn, Nicholas McGegan, Jane Glover, Thierry Fischer, David Hill, Richard Hickox, John Nelson, Kenneth Montgomery and Takuo Yuasa, with orchestras including the Academy of Ancient Music, BBC Concert Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, the Hallé, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, Irish Baroque Orchestra, and the Ulster Orchestra. Internationally she has appeared with the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra, Prague Philharmonic, Netherlands Radio Symphony Orchestra, Israel Camerata, Music of the Baroque (Chicago) and the Tenerife Symphony Orchestra. Recordings include Mendelssohn Symphony No. 2, Georg Schumann's *Jerusalem, du hochgebaute Stadt* and Vivaldi Cantatas.

2013/14 included Mahler's Fourth Symphony with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, Brahms' *German Requiem* with the Midland Festival Chorus, Finzi's *Dies Natalis* with the Ulster Orchestra, *Messiah* with the Bristol Choral Society and Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle* with the St Albans Choral Society.



## William Towers *counter-tenor*



William Towers read English at Cambridge and was a postgraduate scholar at the Royal Academy of Music where, graduating with Distinction, he was awarded several prizes for singing and acting, including the Dip.RAM and the Clifton prize for the finest Final Recital. In his first year after leaving the Academy he appeared extensively as a soloist in Sir John Eliot Gardiner's Bach Cantata Pilgrimage, including appearances in the Berlin Philharmonie, the Dijon Auditorium, the Metz Arsenal, Buckingham Palace and the final concerts in New York.

His oratorio and recital schedule has featured appearances in many major venues and festivals in the UK and abroad, including Symphony Hall Birmingham, Barbican Hall, Royal Albert Hall as part of the BBC Proms, the Grosses Festspielhaus Salzburg, Konzerthaus Vienna, National Auditorium Madrid, Three Choirs Festival, Ravenna Festival, Flanders Early Music Festival, the Festivale de Musique Ancienne de Lyon and La Chaise Dieu. He has sung *Orlando* and *Belshazzar* in the US with Nicholas McGegan and Philharmonia Baroque. He recently appeared with London Concert Choir in Bach's *St Matthew Passion*.

His numerous opera engagements have included Ottone in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* at Teatro Real Madrid, Medoro (Handel's *Orlando*), Farnace in Mozart's *Mitridate Re di Ponto* and Innocent in the revival of Birtwistle's *Minotaur* for the Royal Opera House Covent Garden; Oberon (Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) for Teatro La Fenice Venice, the Royal Opera's Linbury Theatre and Staatsoper Hannover. He has sung Voice of Apollo in Britten's *Death in Venice* in Frankfurt, Brussels, Canada and Prague and at the Aldeburgh and Bregenz Festivals; and Handel's *Agrippina*, Vivaldi's *Orlando Furioso* and Egio (Handel's *Teseo*) in Frankfurt. He made his Glyndebourne Festival debut as Cristiano Mago in Handel's *Rinaldo* and has sung Lotario (Handel's *Lotario*) for the London Handel Festival and Eustazio (*Rinaldo*) for Grange Park Opera. Other Handel roles include the title roles of *Poro* and *Orlando* for the Göttingen Handel Festival, *Giulio Cesare* for Gothenburg Opera and *Ottone* in Porto. He has also sung the title role in Gluck's *Orfeo* with Opera North in Monte-Carlo, Sorceress in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, and appeared in *Playing Away* for the Bregenz Festival.

His performances in the complete Bach Cantata series have been issued on CD. Other recordings include Handel's *Messiah*, Purcell's *Fairy Queen*, Bach's *St Mark Passion* and Orff's *Carmina Burana* for BBC Television. Current plans include various engagements with the Hanover Band, Ottone *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* for Oper Frankfurt and a return to the Three Choirs Festival.

## Nathan Vale *tenor*



Winner of the 2006 London Handel Singing Competition, Nathan Vale studied with Ryland Davies at the Royal College of Music as one of the first recipients of the Peter Pears Scholarship. He was also awarded an Independent Opera Scholarship to the National Opera Studio. He continues his studies with David Pollard.

Concert engagements include, Handel's *Messiah* in Milan and Oviedo, Bach *Weinachts-Oratorium* in Denmark, Mendelssohn's *Die Erste Walpurgisnacht* and Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* in Turin, Britten's *Serenade* for Tenor, Horn and Strings in Hong Kong, Bach's *St John Passion* for Polyphony and Stephen Layton, Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* for the Last Night of the BBC Proms, Bach's *Magnificat* with the Northern Sinfonia, Haydn's *Creation* for King's College Cambridge and Handel's *Ode for St Cecilia's Day* in both Israel and Latvia. Gaining particular notice as a Bach Evangelist, he has appeared throughout the UK and in Milan, the Netherlands and Norway. Nathan has also made appearances with Les Arts Florissants, Il Concerto Barrocco, Pro Musica Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, London Mozart Players, the Bach Choir, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the Philharmonia Orchestra. With London Concert Choir Nathan has performed Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, Britten's *War Requiem*, and Haydn's *Mass in Time of War* in both Augsburg and London.

A finalist in the Young Songmakers' Almanac and winner of the 2005 AESS English Song Competition, Nathan is a committed recitalist. He has appeared at the Wigmore Hall, the Temple Song Series with Julius Drake, the Edinburgh Festival, the Three Choirs Festival, Lille Opera House, the Bath Festival, for the Housman, Gurney, Warlock and Ireland Societies, and a celebration of the life of Eric Sams with Dame Felicity Lott and pianist Graham Johnson. With pianist Paul Plummer, he has made a recording of English songs, entitled 'Love's Voice'.

His operatic engagements have included First Prisoner (*Fidelio*) and First Novice (*Betrothal in a Monastery*) at Glyndebourne, Lurcanio (Handel's *Ariodante*) for the Bolshoi, Belfiore (*La finta Giardiniera*) in Luxembourg and France, First Armed Man and cover Tamino (*The Magic Flute*) for ENO, Mr Buchanan (*Street Scene*, The Opera Group), Oronte (*Alcina*) and Lurcanio (*Ariodante*) for English Touring Opera.

Current engagements include recitals in the Crush Room at Royal Opera House, and the Temple Emerging Artists Series with pianist Audrey Hyland; Britten *Songs from the Chinese* at the Holywell Music Room with guitarist Tina Karen Lo; Evangelist in Bach's *St Matthew Passion* for the London Handel Festival, and Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* at Southwark and Chelmsford Cathedrals.

## Giles Underwood *bass*



After reading Biology at Magdalen College, Oxford, Giles attended postgraduate and opera courses at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he won prizes for English and Contemporary Song. He studied with Susan McCulloch.

Operatic roles include; Don Giovanni, Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Conte Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Tarquinius (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Marcello (*La Bohème*), Aeneas and Sorceress (*Dido and Aeneas*), Bruno (James Macmillan's *Parthenogenesis*), Erimante (Cavalli's *L'Erismena*), Adonis (*Venus and Adonis*), Falstaff (Salieri), Noye (*Noye's Fludde*).

On the concert platform, he has sung with most of the country's major orchestras, particularly The Academy of Ancient Music and The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. He has performed in recital at Wigmore Hall and the Purcell Room. He has appeared at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, The Temple Festival, The Oxford Lieder Festival, Three Choirs Festival and The Royal Albert Hall.

His appearances with London Concert Choir include the performance of Britten's *War Requiem* in Salisbury as well as the Brahms *German Requiem*, the Beethoven *Mass in C* and Handel's *Messiah*.

As a proponent of contemporary music, he has premiered works by James Macmillan, Judith Bingham, Adam Gorb, Richard Peat, Paul Mealor and Edward Dudley Hughes, in whose opera, *The Birds*, he created the role of Hoopoe at the Buxton Festival. He was in the original cast of *The Full Monteverdi*; a groundbreaking interpretation of Monteverdi's Fourth Book of Madrigals, which ran for 88 performances and is now a successful film.

Giles is a regular contributor for BBC Radio 3, and his latest CD recording is of Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostris* on the OpusArte label. Recent performances include *The Yonghy Bonghy Bo*, a new commission by Giles Swayne, Bach's *St John Passion* in Scotland and Germany and Noye in Britten's *Noye's Fludde*.

Giles is also much in demand as a teacher and vocal coach at the University of Oxford, where he teaches individual singers and runs performance classes. He is a Vocal Studies Lecturer at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and is Director of Music at University College, Oxford.

# London Concert Choir

London Concert Choir, founded as the Brompton Choral Society in 1960, now has around 150 members of a wide range of ages and is notable for its unusually broad musical repertoire. With Music Director Mark Forkgen the choir regularly appears at all the major London concert venues and in cathedrals and churches in and around the capital, as well as visiting destinations further afield. In 2011 a performance of Verdi's *Requiem* with the Augsburg Basilica Choir in the Royal Festival Hall was followed by a joint concert at the Augsburg Peace Festival. The most recent tour was to Italy in July 2014, when LCC performed Haydn's oratorio *The Seasons* with Southbank Sinfonia in the Basilica di San Francesco, Assisi.

To celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2010 the choir sang Britten's *War Requiem* at the Barbican with Southbank Sinfonia and in Salisbury Cathedral with Dorset Youth Orchestra. Since then Southbank Sinfonia have also joined with LCC in Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* at the Royal Festival Hall, and for a concert of French music at the Barbican. Major works in earlier seasons include Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the English Chamber Orchestra and Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

On a smaller scale, LCC has sung rarely-heard settings of the Russian Orthodox liturgy, and Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*. Performances of Baroque music include Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *St Matthew Passion*.

In July 2012 LCC gave the London premiere of Stephen McNeff's opera-oratorio *The Chalk Legend*. Concert performances of operas and musicals have included Gluck's *Orfeo*, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. The choir often gives concerts for charity and has commissioned a number of new works.



**Mark Forkgen**  
Music Director

**James Longford**  
Principal Accompanist

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**Fabyan Evans**  
Chairman

**Tim Thirlway**  
Concert Manager

**Barbara Whent**  
Treasurer

**Stephen Rickett**  
Design and Communications

**Jennifer Greenway**  
Membership

**Eleanor Cowie**  
Publicity

**Simon Livesey**  
Company Secretary

[www.london-concert-choir.org.uk](http://www.london-concert-choir.org.uk)

# Members of London Concert Choir

## Soprano

Hannah Baker  
Gillian Bibby  
Dagmar Binsted  
Mickey Bowden  
Ellie Boyd  
Alison Carpenter  
Amandine Consigny  
Eleanor Cowie  
Rachael Crook  
Gillian Denham  
Susan Deville  
Emma Dixon  
Emily Dresner  
Serena Ede  
Francesca Ede  
Anna Field  
Bethany Finch  
Sarah French  
Lisa Gardner  
Suzanne Gee  
Sonja Gray  
Jennifer Greenway  
Jennifer Hadley  
Emma Heath  
Ruth Hobbs  
Laura Holland  
Jennifer Howe  
Charlotte Hunt  
Christine Ingram  
Anna Isworth  
Jane Joyce  
Roxana Kashani  
Vickie Kelly  
Gemma Kern  
Anna Kosicka  
Frances Lake  
Tracy LeBrun  
Karolina Liedtke  
Susanna Lutman  
Laura Macara  
Elsa Martinez  
Jessica Metcalfe

Jenny Moran  
Stephanie Moussadis  
Catherine Parkes  
Margaret Perkins  
Olivia Purdy  
Jutta Raftery  
Ella Salter  
Ines Schlenker  
Frances Shaw  
Caroline Sheppard  
Imogen Small  
Imogen Smith  
Amy Thomas  
Teresa Tilden  
Natalie Tompkins  
Emily Tuite  
Sacha Wadey  
Francesca Walsh  
Janet Wells  
Belinda Whittingham  
Julie Wilson

## Alto

Heide Baumann  
Helen Beddall-Smith  
Chloe Bridgen  
Frances Cave  
Lucy Charman  
Carys Cooper  
Deborah Curle  
Georgie Day  
Kathleen Dormer  
Rebecca Foulkes  
Georgina Furr  
Annie Gair  
Clare Garbett  
Anna Garnier  
Mary Glanville  
Ruth Grychtol  
Muriel Hall  
Penny Hatfield  
Andrea Hegedus  
Joan Herbert

Sophy Holland  
Anu Holter  
Chrina Jarvis  
Chris Joseph  
Sabine Koellmann  
Joanna Kramer  
Helene Labit  
Lorna Lewis  
Norma MacMillan  
Bridget Maidment  
Anna Metcalf  
Sophy Miles  
Ita Murphy  
Cathy Packe  
Judith Paterson  
Rachel Pearson  
Gillian Perry  
Katja Pluto  
Dubravka Polic  
Katie Prior  
Pippa Ranger  
Tabitha Strydom  
Kate Tranter  
Mary Varney  
Erin Vlasved  
Rachel Vroom  
Gabriel West  
Barbara Whent  
June Williams  
Nathalie Wilson

## Tenor

Andrew Bolan  
David Broad  
Roy Carryer  
Dave Dosoruth  
James Ede  
Fabyan Evans  
Nicholas Hall  
Sam Hansford  
Richard Holmes  
David Ireland  
Carolyn Knight

Ian Leslie  
Ben Martin  
Stephen Rickett  
Tim Steer  
Barry Sterndale-  
Bennett  
Tim Thirlway

## Bass

Colin Allies  
Peter Banks  
Ed Brown  
Richard Burbury  
Henry Cook  
Bill Cook  
Andrew Cullen  
James Finlay  
Richard Gillard  
Nigel Grieve  
Nigel Hartnell  
Martin Harvey  
Graham Hick  
Richard Hughes  
Ian Judson  
Robert Kealey  
Stefan Klaazen  
Simon Livesey  
Angus Macdonald  
Alan Machacek  
Ian Mackintosh  
Alex Morley-Smith  
Christopher Powell-  
Smith  
Morgan Roberts  
Desmond Sandford  
Anthony Sharp  
Ryszard Stepaniuk  
William Tilden  
Tony Trowles  
Dai Whittingham

# Counterpoint

The Counterpoint ensemble was formed in 2000 specifically to work with vocal ensembles. Its membership is drawn from the leading young period instrument specialists living and working in London, players who have performed and recorded with many of the leading British early music ensembles, such as the English Baroque Soloists, the Parley of Instruments, Florilegium, The Academy of Ancient Music and The English Concert. The ensemble uses original instruments or excellent copies made using the latest theories and techniques of historic instrument manufacture. Its members have a great deal of expertise and are therefore comfortable in a wide range of idioms from Monteverdi through to Beethoven.

Highlights of previous seasons include opening the prestigious Viterbo Early Music Festival in Italy, performing Handel's *Israel in Egypt* with Canticum and Mark Forkgen; Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *St John Passion*, *St Matthew Passion*, *Mass in B Minor* and *Magnificat*. They have performed Monteverdi's *Vespers* at St Martin-in-the-Fields as well as Haydn's *Creation* in the final concert of the Chichester Festival with Canticum. With London Concert Choir they have also taken part in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Gluck's opera *Orfeo* and Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and *Christmas Oratorio*.

## Members of Counterpoint

### 1st Violin

Leader: Lucy Russell  
Iona Davies  
Pauline Smith  
Ben Sansom  
Magdalena Loth-Hill

### 2nd Violin

Joanna Lawrence  
Ellen O'Dell  
Felicity Broome-Skelton  
Ellen Bundy

### Viola

Rachel Byrt  
Kate Fawcett  
Geoffrey Irwin

### Cello

Ruth Alford  
Anna Holmes  
Natasha Kreamer

### Double Bass

Timothy Amherst  
Kate Aldridge

### Flute

Katy Bircher  
Eva Cabailero

### Oboe

Hannah McLaughlin  
Geoff Coates

### Bassoon

Zoe Shevlin  
Inga Klaucke

### French Horn

Anneke Scott  
Jo Walters

### Trumpet

David Blackadder  
Philip Bainbridge  
Matthew Wells

### Timpani

Robert Kendall

### Keyboard

Steven Devine

# Supporting the Choir

London Concert Choir is committed to high standards and constantly strives to raise the level of its performances by means of workshops and other special events. The choir is grateful for the financial contribution of all its supporters in helping to achieve these aims, and welcomes their active involvement.

## LCC Supporters

Sue Blyth, Deborah Bono, Simon Cave, Bronwen Cook, Angela Cooper, Dianne Denham, Geoffrey Deville, Karen Evans, John and Judith Greenway, Jeremy Groom, Nicholas and Maureen Halton, Tim Ingram, Miriam Kramer, Mark and Liza Loveday, Jill Marx, Janet and Michael Orr, Jennifer Powell Smith, Michael Shipley, Anthony Smith, Sybil and Nicholas Spence, Ruth Steinholtz, Alison Stone, Jill Tilden, Susan Wheatley, Anthony Willson

For information on helping the choir to maintain its position as one of the leading amateur choirs in London via the Supporters' Scheme, please email:

**treasurer@london-concert-choir.org.uk**

The choir also offers opportunities for targeted giving and for corporate support through sponsorship or programme advertising and enquiries should be sent to the same address.

## Life Friends

LCC is delighted to acknowledge the invaluable contribution made by the following individuals:

Peter Barley, Tim and Patricia Barnes, Anne Clayton, Mr and Mrs Michael Hunt, Sue McFadyen, Gregory and Helen Rose, Nicholas Spence

## Joining the Choir

London Concert Choir welcomes new members, who are invited to attend a few rehearsals before an informal audition. If you are interested in joining the choir, please fill in your details online at **[www.london-concert-choir.org.uk/joinus](http://www.london-concert-choir.org.uk/joinus)**

## Mailing List

If you would like to receive advance information about our concerts, you can join the choir's free mailing list by emailing **[mailinglist@london-concert-choir.org.uk](mailto:mailinglist@london-concert-choir.org.uk)**

The information you provide is subject to the Data Protection Act and as such will be used exclusively by London Concert Choir.

**[www.london-concert-choir.org.uk](http://www.london-concert-choir.org.uk)**



Conductor: **Mark Forkgen**

## **FORTHCOMING CONCERTS**

Saturday 29 November 2014

**St Martin-in-the-Fields**

**Family Christmas Carols  
Advent Carols by Candlelight**

Wednesday 17 December 2014

**St Sepulchre's, Holborn Viaduct**

**Carols for Choir and Audience**

Tuesday 10 March 2015

**Barbican Hall**

**Mendelssohn: Elijah**

Saturday 11 July 2015

**Cadogan Hall**

**Will Todd: Mass in Blue**