

LONDON  
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CHOIR

# Handel: Israel in Egypt



Wednesday 2 November 2016



Cadogan Hall,  
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**Programme: £2**

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Programme designed by Stephen Rickett and edited by Eleanor Cowie

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Wednesday 2 November 2016  
Cadogan Hall

# Handel: Israel in Egypt

Mark Forkgen *conductor*

Mary Nelson and Raphaela Papadakis *soprano*

William Towers *counter-tenor*, Nathan Vale *tenor*

Michael Craddock and Brian McAlea *bass*

London Concert Choir

Counterpoint *period instrumental ensemble*

There will be an INTERVAL of 20 minutes after Part 1

**George Frideric Handel**  
(1685–1759)

# Israel in Egypt

**A Sacred Oratorio**



## The Composer

Born Georg Friederich Händel in the German town of Halle, the Baroque composer and musician lived and worked for most of his life in England where he became naturalized and changed his name to George Frideric Handel. A virtuoso organist with an extraordinary gift for improvisation, he composed a wide range of keyboard and orchestral as well as choral music. But his greatest passion was Italian opera: beginning with his early career in the Hamburg opera house he created more than forty operas during his lifetime and helped to make this art form popular in England. In the 1730s, however, the London public's enthusiasm for *opera seria* began to fade, audiences dwindled and rival companies competed with each other not only for the best singers but also for subscribers.

Handel saw his way forward in a musical form with which he had become acquainted in his formative years in Italy: Italian oratorio was a surrogate for opera, especially in Rome where during periods such as Lent theatres had to stay closed. These oratorios were staged performances of sacred works with a narrative, presented as a sequence of arias and recitatives by solo singers accompanied by orchestra. Handel adopted this Italian art form and developed it in his own way, drawing on the English choral tradition of anthems and ceremonial odes and the German tradition of the Passion which uses the chorus as character. Combining the operatic style of arias and recitative with a prominent role for the choir as part of the drama or the narration, Handel created a new genre, the English oratorio.

One defining feature of Handel's oratorios came about almost by chance: *Esther*, a work composed in 1718 and revived for a performance in London in 1732, was originally conceived as a masque. But when the Bishop of London objected to the staging of this sacred drama in a public theatre, Handel

decided to present the work in a concert performance, without staged action or costumes, thus establishing a practice that would define the art form he would excel in for the rest of his life. Handel died in London in 1759 and was buried at Westminster Abbey, with three thousand mourners paying their last respects to a composer much loved in his adopted country.

## Israel in Egypt

*Israel in Egypt*, today one of the most popular works in the choral repertoire and one of Handel's best-loved oratorios, second only to *Messiah*, was not a success with its first audience at the King's Theatre, Haymarket, on 4 April 1739. At that time Handel was still identified with Italian opera, and his London public expected the performance to include brilliant arias for solo singers. Instead, *Israel in Egypt* took the audience by surprise with the chorus taking the lead role in presenting both drama and narration, including recitatives, but no recognizable characters.

The story told is that of a people, the Israelites and their rescue from captivity in Egypt, the collective protagonist being appropriately represented by the collective forces of the choir. But this lack of individual characterisation and virtuoso display disappointed part of the audience, who felt overwhelmed by the succession of mighty choruses with only a limited number of arias for solo singers. Furthermore the text, compiled by Handel himself or, according to other sources, by Charles Jennens, his librettist for *Saul* and *Messiah*, was taken entirely from the Old Testament of the Bible. This had never been done before, and some listeners felt uneasy about the use of the Scriptures in a secular setting for the purpose of entertainment.

Moreover, the work presented at the premiere was very long and consisted of three parts instead of the two that constitute most present-day performances, including tonight's. Part One was the forty-minute long 'Lamentation of the Israelites for the death of Joseph', adapted from Handel's 1737 *Funeral Anthem for Queen Caroline*, an opening that proved too sombre for a very long evening that also included two organ concertos performed by Handel himself in the two intervals. A letter published in the *London Daily Post* shortly after the premiere of *Israel in Egypt* proves that part of the audience did indeed recognize the astonishing range of styles on display in Handel's oratorio and appreciated his bold orchestration, his word-painting abilities and his grandiose handling of double choruses. But the majority of the concert-going public remained unimpressed, even when Handel modified his oratorio for subsequent performances by shortening it, cutting the entire first part and introducing Italian arias.

*Israel in Egypt* was not popular and saw only a few performances during Handel's lifetime. It was not until the centenary celebrations of the composer's birth that the audience, among them Joseph Haydn, truly appreciated the greatness of this unusual choral work, unique amongst Handel's oratorios in its starring role for the choir. Haydn reportedly burst into tears at the end of the performance and declared: 'He is the Master of us all'.

Composed in only four weeks in 1738, *Israel in Egypt* is remarkable for the most extensive borrowing from other music in any of Handel's works. The practice of reusing one's own material from previous works, but also the music of other composers, was not unusual during the eighteenth century. The angular motif opening the chorus 'They loathed to drink', for example, is taken from one of Handel's own organ fugues. Handel reuses it three years later in the chorus 'And with his stripes' from *Messiah*. Astonishingly, the exact four-note motif can be heard again in the Kyrie of Mozart's Requiem. And yet *Israel in Egypt* is quite extraordinary in the extent of unacknowledged borrowing. Handel liberally uses music by Italian composers of the previous generation and reworks their material for his own purposes. The most blatant example is the chorus 'Egypt was glad' which relies almost entirely on a canzona by the German seventeenth-century composer Johann Kaspar Kerll.

However, the greatness of *Israel in Egypt* does not rest on the invention of other composers, but on the ingenious way in which Handel transforms his material and shapes it into a masterpiece that could almost be called a choral opera. His masterly choral writing encompasses a wide range of styles: homophony, polyphony, recitative-like choruses, fugues and double choirs are all used to express different moods.

One of the most outstanding aspects of *Israel in Egypt* is the way in which Handel shapes the music to illustrate the words. Handel's orchestration is bold: he uses a large orchestra including trumpets, drums and three trombones to make sure that the orchestra plays an equal role even in the big polyphonic choruses. The Old Testament story of the Exodus from Egypt provides the drama for Handel's imaginative transformation of an extraordinary story into a powerful musical spectacular.



## Overture

This is the prelude to the 'Lamentation of the Israelites for the death of Joseph', the first part of *Israel in Egypt* as it was performed at its premiere, for which Handel reused his 1737 *Funeral Anthem*.

## Part One: Exodus

The text of Part One derives from the Book of Exodus and three Psalms. It tells the Biblical story of the Israelites in Egypt who, after the death of Joseph, fell into servitude and were not allowed to leave the land. Their cries were heard by God, who sent Moses to deliver them from oppression. The Pharaoh's hold over the Israelites only weakened after ten plagues befell the Egyptians, and Moses was finally able to lead his people out of the land. Pursued to the Red Sea by the Pharaoh's army on horseback, Moses miraculously parted the sea and led the Israelites to safety over dry ground. When the army tried to follow, the waters closed over them and they drowned. The first part ends with Israel in awe of their God and his might.

### Recitative (Tenor)

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph; and he set over Israel taskmasters to afflict them with burdens, and they made them serve with rigour.

*Exodus 1:8,11,13*

### Counter-tenor solo and Chorus

And the children of Israel sigh'd by reason of the bondage, and their cry came up unto God. They oppressed them with burdens, and made them serve with rigour; and their cry came up unto God.

*Exodus 2:23; 1:11,13*

A tenor recitative introduces the story of the Israelites' hardship under a new Egyptian king. A brief elegiac counter-tenor solo leads into the first chorus which interweaves the crying of the Israelites to God in slow ascending phrases with the faster, edgier description of the oppression. The repeated word 'sigh'd' followed by a rest, doubled in the strings, is an example of Handel's word-painting. The polyphonic contrast of the two elements – plaintive crying and harsh servitude – in both choirs throughout the movement ends in all voices joining forces to ensure that their 'cry came up unto God'.

### Recitative (Tenor)

Then sent He Moses, His servant, and Aaron whom He had chosen; these shew'd His signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. He turned their waters into blood.

*Psalms 105:26,27,29*

### Chorus

They loathed to drink of the river. He turned their waters into blood.

*Exodus 7:18; Psalm 105:29*

The tenor explains that God has heard his people and instructed Moses to turn the river into blood. The angular fugal writing for the chorus with its awkward intervals, dissonances and descending chromatic lines vividly depicts the revulsion felt by the Egyptians.

### **Air (Counter-tenor)**

Their land brought forth frogs, yea, even in their kings' chambers. He gave their cattle over to the pestilence; blotches and blains broke forth on man and beast.

*Psalm 105:30; Exodus 9:9*

This is the only solo aria in the first part. It evokes the plague of the frogs with hopping rhythms in the orchestral introduction and throughout the counter-tenor's comically disgusted acknowledgement that the frogs even invaded the king's chambers. The aria then lists plagues that followed with the same grim humour and the movement ends with the orchestra still imitating the frogs hopping away.

### **Double Chorus**

He spake the word, and there came all manner of flies, and lice in all their quarters. He spake; and the locusts came without number, and devoured the fruits of the ground.

*Psalm 105:31,34,35*

The brilliant illustration of a particular text by music continues in this double chorus which alternates between the solemn, weighty declaration 'He spake the word', first sung in unison by all the low voices, and the quiet, fast and whirring lines of the high voices evoking the plagues of flies and lice. The strings underline this with restless buzzing sounds. The interspersed thunderous 'He spake the word' reiterates on whose orders this happens, until finally, worst of all, locusts devour the crops, as all voices state in communal dismay.

### **Double Chorus**

He gave them hailstones for rain; fire mingled with the hail ran along upon the ground.

*Psalm 105:32; Exodus 9:23,24*

The harmless pitter-patter of the first raindrops in the opening chords of the movement soon escalates into pounding rain represented by the full orchestra. Brass and timpani support the two choirs' powerful representation of the battering hailstones. Echoing each other first in full phrases, then in horrified shouts of 'fire' and 'hail', the choirs sing of lightning strikes and hailstones running along the ground, illustrated by the bass voices' long runs underlying the other voices' exclamations.



## **Chorus**

He sent a thick darkness over all the land, even darkness which might be felt.

*Exodus 10:21,22*

The stillness of this movement and the sparse accompaniment by strings and bassoons create a sensation of uneasiness and fear. Strangely modulating, unresolved harmonies emphasize the unsettling atmosphere. The voices answer each other in short phrases as if unable to see one another in the darkness.

## **Chorus**

He smote all the first-born of Egypt, the chief of all their strength. *Psalm 105:36*

The graphic word-painting in this chorus relies on a rhythm suggesting the fatal blows, first in the orchestral accompaniment while the choir develops a subject and counter-subject. Then, at a crucial point in the movement, the voices themselves join forces to turn their sharply accentuated words into deadly strikes.

## **Chorus**

But as for His people, He led them forth like sheep: He brought them out with silver and gold; there was not one feeble person among their tribes.

*Psalm 78:52; 105:37*

In complete contrast to the previous chorus describing the final, devastating plague, this chorus turns to the children of Israel, now freed from oppressive rule. A pastoral atmosphere is created by the gently descending melodic line on 'He led them forth like sheep', presenting God as the caring shepherd who looks after His flock. After a brightly shining section illustrating the words 'silver and gold' the chorus ends with the homophonic reassurance of the strength of His chosen people.

## **Chorus**

Egypt was glad when they departed, for the fear of them fell upon them.

*Psalm 105:38*

Two contrasting ideas characterize this chorus: the Egyptians's relief at the Israelites' departure, represented in simple legato melodic lines, and the reason for it: the terror spread by the plagues, illustrated by panic-stricken syncopated rhythms underlaid by trombones.

## **Chorus**

He rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up.

*Psalm 106:9*

A short choral recitative with orchestral accompaniment sets the scene for the Israelites' miraculous escape, twice repeating a strong declamatory section in

which Moses orders the sea to part, followed by a hushed one that states in awe that the sea actually dried up.

### **Double Chorus**

He led them through the deep as through a wilderness.

*Psalms 106:9*

A grand fugue depicts Moses leading his people through the sea. The melodic line, first in the basses, then in the tenors, slowly climbs but plunges down a minor seventh on the word 'deep', only to work its way up again. The hasty flight of the Israelites through the parted sea is represented by the counter-subject of a succession of fast descending phrases on the words 'as thro' a wilderness' accompanied by lively strings. This chorus leads straight into the next one, as if the Egyptians were following hot on their heels.

### **Chorus**

But the waters overwhelmed their enemies, there was not one of them left.

*Psalms 106:11*

A powerful dramatic chorus depicts how the pursuing army drowns in the sea. Pounding timpani and whirling strings support the chorus in homophony. Long drawn-out notes on 'overwhelmed' evoke the mighty surge that builds up to collapse over them. The chorus ends by reiterating the enemy's total destruction.

### **Double Chorus**

And Israel saw that great work that the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord,

### **Chorus**

And believed the Lord, and His servant Moses.

*Exodus 14:31*

A recitative delivered by a double choir expresses wonder at the Lord's deed but also fear. The recognition of God's awe-inspiring might is further developed in a grand fugue that brings Part One with its high drama to a calm close.

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**INTERVAL – 20 Minutes**

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## Part Two: Moses' Song

An extended song of thanksgiving for the miraculous rescue, the second part of the oratorio is less dramatic, apart from moments when the crossing of the Red Sea is remembered. Exuberant choruses praising the Lord are interspersed with solo arias and duets. Once again the text derives from the Book of Exodus.

### Double Chorus

Moses and the children of Israel sung this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying: I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. *Exodus 15:1*

An energetic orchestral introduction leads to a grand choral recitative with orchestra preparing for the exhilarating fugue that follows. Three different elements, a chorale-like 'I will sing unto the Lord', an exuberant 'He hath triumphed' with excited melismas emphasizing the word 'gloriously', and a fast and energetic depiction of 'the horse and his rider' galloping and tumbling into the sea are interwoven in a contrapuntal manner. The chorus builds to a crescendo of jubilation that ends with the full orchestral forces, including the mighty trombones, underlining the sense of triumph while the timpani vividly evoke the tumbling horses.

### Duet (Soprano I & II)

The Lord is my strength and my song; He is become my salvation. *Exodus 15:2*

After the excitement of the previous chorus, this lyrical and reflective duet, accompanied by strings and continuo, is a chance to hear the virtuoso singing that Handel's public expected.

### Double Chorus

He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation: my father's God.

### Chorus

And I will exalt Him. *Exodus 15:2*

A chorale-like, solemn recitative for two choirs whose last words lead into the next chorus, an old-style fugue on the words 'I will exalt him'. The voices come together in the centre of the movement to solemnly declaim 'He is my father's God' before continuing the fugal theme.

### Duet (Bass I & II)

The Lord is a man of war: Lord is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea; his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea.

*Exodus 15:3,4*

Framed by extended orchestral music with a vigorous rhythm, this duet celebrates God's power to destroy the enemy. The two voices try to outdo

each other in evoking once more how the Pharaoh's chariots were cast into the sea and drowned, with long descending melismas on the word 'drowned'. In another remarkable instance of word-painting the descending phrase 'hath He cast into the sea,' sung by the first bass, is then picked up and continued in its descent by the second bass.

### **Double Chorus**

The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.

*Exodus 15:5*

The recollection of the spectacular destruction of the enemy continues in this setting for double choir which adds more descriptive elements to the vivid images evoked by the bass duet. The soft, subdued tone suggests the impenetrable waters that closed over the army. 'They sank to the bottom as a stone' is illustrated by heavy, sinking phrases, present already in the orchestral introduction.

### **Double Chorus**

And in the greatness of Thine excellency Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee.

Thou sentest forth Thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.

*Exodus 15:7*

A choral recitative praises God's greatness, but also suggests that He is to be feared for His powers, a thought developed in the following grand fugue. This starts with the individual voices of one choir alone, accompanied only by continuo, celebrating God's wrath which consumed the enemy 'as stubble'. When the second choir enters the orchestra joins in as well. A densely woven fugue comes to an emphatic homophonic end insisting on the words 'as stubble'.

### **Air (Tenor)**

The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

*Exodus 15:9*

This is the most operatic aria in the oratorio and the only one for a tenor, who takes the role of the enemy boasting about his ability to pursue and destroy the fleeing Israelites. The tenor is given the opportunity to shine with plenty of melismatic phrases and opportunities for embellishment.

### **Air (Soprano)**

Thou didst blow with the wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters.

*Exodus 15:10*

The soprano aria contradicts the confident tenor, telling how the pursuing army became engulfed by the whirling waters, whipped up by strong winds,

represented in both the high voice and the low accompanying instruments by whirling semiquavers.

### **Double Chorus**

Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchest out Thy right hand, the earth swallow'd them. *Exodus 15:11,12*

A grand choral declamation of the might of God by both choirs moving in slow tempo and unified rhythm is followed by a faster fugue. The entry of the different voices is gradual, and the fugal texture takes time to spread out into both choirs. Melismas on the word 'swallow'd' illustrate the sense of the text.

### **Duet (Counter-tenor, Tenor)**

Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth Thy people which Thou hast redeemed; Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation. *Exodus 15:13*

A beautifully lyrical and intricate interplay between counter-tenor and tenor soloist, accompanied by strings, provides a moment of repose and reflection on the mercy of the Lord who has redeemed His people.

### **Double Chorus**

The people shall hear, and be afraid; sorrow shall take hold on them: all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away: by the greatness of Thy arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Thy people pass over, O Lord, which Thou hast purchased. *Exodus 15:14,15,16*

In complete contrast, the staccato strings that open the next dramatic chorus build up tension until the voices come in to declare thunderously 'The people shall hear', followed by the hushed and breathless, almost intimidated 'and be afraid'. The varying sections of this imposing chorus give ample opportunity for word-painting: the long notes on 'sorrow' portray sadness, while the phrasing of 'shall melt away' illustrates the anxious inhabitants of Canaan getting out of the way of the Israelites passing through. 'They shall be as still as a stone' is sung in static unison. The longing to reach the promised land in 'Till Thy people pass over, O Lord' builds to a climax before coming to rest in the final weighty reassurance of being the chosen people.

### **Air (Counter-tenor)**

Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established. *Exodus 15:17*

Accompanied by strings and continuo, the counter-tenor sings of the arrival in the promised land, a moment of grateful relief and rest before the triumphant finale.

### **Double Chorus**

The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.

*Exodus 15:18*

### **Recitative (Tenor)**

For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.

*Exodus 15:19*

### **Double Chorus**

The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.

*Exodus 15:18*

### **Recitative (Tenor)**

And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them:

*Exodus 15:20,21*

### **Solo Soprano & Double Chorus**

Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.

*Exodus 15:21,18*

The majestic declamation of the everlasting reign of God is sung in long-held notes first by all alto and tenor voices contrasted with fast-moving orchestral accompaniment, then by the full choirs in homophony and the full orchestra in triumphant mode. After a brief tenor recitative the chorus breaks into the song of praise 'The Lord shall reign' again.

The tenor then tells of the prophetess Miriam, after which the soprano soloist representing Miriam encourages everybody to sing to the Lord and brings back the theme of 'the horse and his rider', which the two choirs pick up, repeating the exultant chorus from the beginning of Part Two 'I will sing unto the Lord'. The motif that dominates the whole of the second part, Israel's rejoicing over the drowning of the pursuing army on horseback in the Red Sea, thus brings the oratorio to a magnificent close.



## Mark Forkgen *conductor*

This season Mark is celebrating 20 years as the Music Director of London Concert Choir. 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. Mark 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 twentieth-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.

Other highlights this Autumn, in addition to concerts with London Concert Choir, include projects for New Music South West in Bristol and the Bournemouth Festival by Sea, series of American Music and English Choral Music, recording Stephen McNeff's Ensemble Music and, as a pianist, performances of Shostakovich's Second Piano Trio and works by Stravinsky, Bartok and Debussy.

## Mary Nelson *soprano*

Born in Northern Ireland, Mary is an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music where she originally studied.

An experienced oratorio and concert soloist, Mary has performed with the City of London Sinfonia, The King's Consort, the Irish Chamber Orchestra, the Northern Sinfonia, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the English Chamber Orchestra, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, The Halle, The Academy of Ancient Music, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Ulster Orchestra, the Tenerife Symphony Orchestra, The Prague Philharmonic, the Israel Camerata, the Music of the Baroque in Chicago and the Dutch Radio Symphony Orchestra. Engagements have also included performances of *Hansel and Gretel* and Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the BBC Proms and recitals at the Wigmore Hall.



As a company principal with English National Opera, her roles have included Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, Dalinda in *Ariodante*, Atalanta in *Xerxes*, Trash in *The Fairy Queen* (including performances in the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona), and Lucia in the David McVicar production of *The Rape of Lucretia* for ENO and the Aldeburgh Festival, which was also broadcast on BBC2. Other roles include Ismene in *Mitridate* for the Classical Opera Company, Piacere in *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* for The Early Opera Company, Gilda in *Rigoletto* and Micaela in *Carmen* for Castleward Opera and Carolina in *The Secret Marriage* for Opera North.

Conductors she has worked with include Nicholas McGegan, Thierry Fischer, Christian Curnyn, Jane Glover, Richard Hickox, Takuo Yuasa, Paul Daniel, Harry Christophers, Harry Bicket and John Nelson.

With London Concert Choir Mary has appeared in the concert performance of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* and in Handel's oratorio *Judas Maccabaeus*.

Mary is currently a professor of singing at the Royal Academy of Music.



## Raphaela Papadakis *soprano*

London-born soprano Raphaela Papadakis made her professional début at Garsington Opera in 2014, singled out as the “most attractive solo performance” of the show (Financial Times). Since then, she has performed with the Royal Opera House (cover Nymph in *Orfeo*), Independent Opera (Anna in *Biedermann and the Arsonists*), and the Berlin State Opera (cover Branghien in *Le vin herbé*).



Her electric stage presence and superb musicianship lend themselves to a broad range of repertoire, which this summer included *Pierrot Lunaire* in Peckham Car Park (Multi-Story), Mozart concert arias and Strauss lieder with Tom Poster, and her role début as Musetta in *La bohème* (Vivo DArte productions). Plans for the 2016/17 season include creating the role of London for the world première of *And London Burned* by Matt Rogers, recitals with Roger Vignoles, Sholto Kynoch and the Gildas Quartet, and the role of Orestilla in the British première of baroque composer Niccolo Porpora's *L'Agrippina* for Barber Opera.

A Samling, IMA and City Music Foundation Artist, Raphaela made her recital début at Carnegie Hall in 2014, following an Artist Residency at the Banff Centre, Canada, and last summer was a Vocal Fellow at the Stean's Music Institute at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago. She is part of the Countess of Munster's Recital Scheme and a winner of the Making Music Award for Young Concert Artists. Her awards and prizes include First Prize at the Mozart Competition, the Clonter Opera and Audience Prizes, the Maureen Lehane Vocal Award and the York Early Music Festival Prize at the London Handel Festival.

After graduating with a first-class degree in English from Clare College Cambridge, Raphaela studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Janice Chapman, supported by an Independent Opera Voice Fellowship, a Leverhulme Arts Scholarship, the Countess of Munster Musical Trust and JM Finn & Co.

Raphaela is kindly supported by Making Music's Philip & Dorothy Green Award for Young Concert Artists scheme.

## William Towers *counter-tenor*

William Towers read English at Cambridge University and was a postgraduate scholar at the Royal Academy of Music where he was awarded several prizes. 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 performances in the complete Bach Cantata series have been issued on CD.



His oratorio and recital schedule has featured appearances in many major venues and festivals in the UK and abroad, including the BBC Proms, with distinguished conductors such as Sir Roger Norrington, Paul McCreesh, Richard Hickox, Laurence Cummings, Emmanuelle Haïm, Barry Wordsworth, Stephen Layton and Jeffrey Skidmore. Orchestras he has worked with include the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Bournemouth Symphony, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, Gabrieli Consort and Players, Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra, The Sixteen, Le Concert d'Astrée and Netherlands Bach Society. He has sung *Orlando* and *Belshazzar* in the US with Nicholas McGegan and Philharmonia Baroque. He has often appeared with London Concert Choir, notably in *Judas Maccabaeus* and Bach's *St Matthew Passion*.

His opera engagements have included roles at Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Teatro La Fenice Venice, Glyndebourne Festival, Oper Frankfurt, Göttingen Handel Festival, Gothenburg Opera, Linbury Theatre, La Monnaie Brussels, Aldeburgh Festival, Canadian Opera Company, National Theatre Prague, Bolshoi Theatre, Teatro Real Madrid, Bregenz Festival, Opera Theatre Company, London Handel Festival, Music Theatre Wales and at Grange Park.

His recordings include Handel's *Messiah*, Purcell's *Fairy Queen*, Bach's *St. Mark Passion* and Orff's *Carmina Burana* for BBC television.

Current engagements include Unulfo in *Rodelinda* at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, Voice of Apollo in *Death in Venice* for Staatstheater Stuttgart, as well as concerts with the Hanover Band, BBC Scottish Symphony and BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

## Nathan Vale *tenor*

Winner of both First Prize and the Audience Prize at the 2006 London Handel Singing Competition, Nathan Vale attended the Royal College of Music, where he studied with Ryland Davies. He was awarded an Independent Opera Vocal Scholarship to the National Opera Studio, where he was further supported by the Elmley Foundation, English National Opera, the Nicholas John Trust and The Seary Trust. He continues his studies with Tim Evans Jones.



With the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, he has sung Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* conducted by Harry Christophers and Arias in the *St John Passion* conducted by Paul Goodwin and with the RAI Symphony Orchestra, *Die Erste Walpurgisnacht* conducted by Sir Neville Marriner and Theory and Arithmetic in *L'enfant et les sortilèges* conducted by Jeffrey Tate. Other highlights include Evangelist in the *St Matthew Passion* with the London Handel Players conducted by Laurence Cummings and with the Northern Sinfonia under Thomas Zehetmair; Arias in *St Matthew Passion* with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano conducted by Ruben Jais, Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* at the Hong Kong Festival, and Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* with the Bach Choir conducted by David Hill. He is also a seasoned performer with London Concert Choir.

Winner of the 2005 AESS English Song Competition, Nathan is a committed recitalist. He has appeared at the Wigmore Hall, the Three Choirs Festival, the Temple Recital Series with Julius Drake, the Hong Kong Festival, the Housman, Gurney, Warlock and Ireland Societies with Graham Johnson, and the Crush Room Royal Opera House with Audrey Hyland. He has also recorded *Love's Voice* (Songs by Finzi, Gurney, Ireland and Venables) for SOMM CD.

His operatic engagements have included Lurcanio (*Ariodante*) at the Bolshoi Opera and for English Touring Opera, Belfiore (*La finta giardiniera*) for Luxembourg Opera, First Priest and First Armed Man (*The Magic Flute*) for ENO, Oronte (*Alcina*), First Prisoner (*Fidelio*) for Glyndebourne Festival, Grimoaldo (*Rodelinda*) for Iford Opera, and Mr Buchanan in the 2011 revival of The Opera Group's award-winning production of *Street Scene*.

Current engagements include recitals at the Crush Room ROH, *St Matthew Passion* for Laurence Cummings and the London Handel Society, a recording of Van Dieren's *Chinese Symphony* with the BBCNOW for Nimbus Records, and a recording of Quilter songs with pianist Adrian Farmer, also for Nimbus Records.

## Michael Craddock *bass*

Michael Craddock is a London-based freelance singer, who started his musical education with the choir of Trinity College Cambridge, with whom he sang for four years. Whilst studying Mathematics, he found himself in many university productions, including Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona* (Uberto), Milhaud *Le Pauvre Matelot* (L'Ami) and Bernstein *Trouble in Tahiti* (Sam), and was invited back to the University in 2014 to sing the title role in *Don Giovanni*.



His student days now behind him, Michael appears regularly as a soloist, and with choirs such as Polyphony and the Choir of the Enlightenment, and is currently learning with Gary Coward. He is the baritone for the Renaissance consort group The Gesualdo Six, who were St John's Smith Square young artists in 2015-16, and have a busy concert schedule in the UK and further afield.

In addition to performing with the Gesualdo Six, Michael is a founder member of the consort group Amici Voices, with whom he regularly performs the works of JS Bach one-to-a-part. Amici Voices have also recently recorded a disc commemorating the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt, on which he is one of the four singers featured, and the group have this spring given a concert of Bach's motets in Poprad, Slovakia.

Recent operatic performances include Walton's *The Bear* (Smirnov) for Opera Minima and Opera Anywhere, Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Bottom) in Aldeburgh, sharing the role with Matthew Rose, Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* (Dr. Malatesta) for Opera Minima, Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (Yamadori) for Opera A La Carte and Verdi's *La Traviata* (Marchese) for Regent's Opera at the Bermuda Festival. He recently sang the dual roles of Alfio/Tonio in Hampstead Garden Opera's Spring 2016 performances of *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci*, and gave the role of Dandini in *La Cenerentola* for the Bedford Park Festival.

Michael regularly sings with the choir of the London Oratory and in between his vocal engagements he works for a very accommodating barristers' chambers as an accountant. In his spare time he enjoys moving pictures, hopped beverages and cricket.

## Brian McAlea *bass*

Born in Northern Ireland, Brian McAlea graduated from Oxford University in 2015 where he read Music and sang with the Choir of New College under both Professor Edward Higginbottom and Professor Robert Quinney. He is currently studying for a postgraduate degree in Vocal Studies with Robert Dean at The Guildhall School of Music and Drama for which he is kindly supported by The Peter Nutting Charitable Trust, The George Heim Memorial Trust, The John S Cohen Foundation, The Michael James Music Trust and The John Wates Charitable Trust.



Solo highlights include Handel's *Israel in Egypt* at this year's Oxford Early Music Festival alongside Emma Kirkby and Robin Blaze; Handel's *Messiah* with the Instruments of Time and Truth in the Palau de la Música Catalana, Barcelona, conducted by Edward Higginbottom; the same work with Bristol Choral Society alongside Mark Padmore, and MacMillan's *Seven Last Words from the Cross* with the Britten Sinfonia, conducted by Eamonn Dougan in the Barbican.

Opera highlights include Aeneas in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with Sestina; Dr. P in Nyman's *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For A Hat* with New Chamber Opera, and chorus in both Verdi's *Rigoletto* and Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love* for Nevill Holt Opera earlier this year.

Future highlights include a selection of Brahms Duets for Suzi Digby, Haydn's *The Creation* with Oxford Orpheus, a selection of concerts as a member of the Choir of the Age of Enlightenment and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with New College Choir. Brian will also be travelling to Spain, just before Christmas, to sing Handel's *Messiah* as one of the Gabrieli Consort.

# 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. 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. The choir's broad range was illustrated in its recent summer tour to Krakow, where concerts of unaccompanied Hymns to the Virgin alternated with performances of jazz standards with Mark Forkgen on piano.

In 2014 the choir performed Haydn's oratorio *The Seasons* in Assisi and 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.

LCC celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2010 with memorable performances of Britten's *War Requiem* at the Barbican and in Salisbury Cathedral. Among other major works in recent seasons have been Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the English Chamber Orchestra; Mozart's Requiem with the London Mozart Players; and Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony*, all with Southbank Sinfonia. The symphony was the main work in a Battle of Jutland centenary concert in aid of maritime charities.

Performances of Baroque music with Counterpoint include Handel's *Messiah* and *Judas Maccabaeus*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and *St Matthew Passion* and Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*. Operas in concert performance have ranged from Gluck's *Orfeo* to Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and the London premiere of *The Chalk Legend* by Stephen McNeff. LCC has also performed Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concert* and Will Todd's *Mass in Blue*. The choir often gives concerts for charity and continues to commission new works.



**Mark Forkgen**  
Music Director

**James Longford**  
Principal Accompanist

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**Fabyan Evans**  
Chairman

**Barbara Whent**  
Concert Manager

**Tabitha Strydom**  
Treasurer

**Stephen Rickett**  
Design and  
Communications

**Jennifer Greenway**  
Membership

**Eleanor Cowie**  
Publicity

**Simon Livesey**  
Company Secretary

# Members of London Concert Choir

## **Soprano**

Dagmar Binsted  
Mickey Bowden  
Christine Brown  
Aisling Carroll-Turner  
Alison Carpenter  
Lucy Carruthers  
Caroline Clark  
Beatrice Conchado  
Eleanor Cowie  
Emma Davidson  
Christine Dencer  
Gillian Denham  
Susan Deville  
Emma Dixon  
Serena Ede  
Francesca Ede  
Anna Field  
Sarah French  
Lisa Gardner  
Sonja Gray  
Jennifer Greenway  
Dalia Gurari  
Emma Heath  
Clemence Hermann  
Christine Ingram  
Jane Joyce  
Roxana Kashani  
Vickie Kelly  
Anna Kosicka  
Frances Lake  
Susanna Lutman  
Charlotte Marshall  
Hannah Mason  
Jessica Metcalfe  
Jenny Moran  
Adrienne Morgan  
Delyth Morgan  
Stephanie Moussadis  
Margaret Perkins  
Liz Purchase  
Jutta Raftery  
Ines Schlenker  
Frances Shaw  
Caroline Sheppard

Imogen Small  
Imogen Smith  
Natalie Tompkins  
Emily Tuite  
Francesca Wareing  
Janet Wells  
Belinda Whittingham  
Julie Wilson

## **Alto**

Rachel Adams  
Angela Alonso  
Fionnuala Barrett  
Heide Baumann  
Gesa Brinkmann  
Kate Britten  
Nancy Buchanan  
Frances Cave  
Carys Cooper  
Deborah Curle  
Georgie Day  
Kathleen Dormer  
Stefanie Ettelt  
Rebecca Foulkes  
Clare Garbett  
Anna Garnier  
Elaine Ginsburg  
Mary Glanville  
Ruth Grychtol  
Muriel Hall  
Penny Hatfield  
Joan Herbert  
Tina Holderried  
Anu Holter  
Denise Howell  
Chrina Jarvis  
Chris Joseph  
Sarah Knight  
Sabine Köllmann  
Joanna Kramer  
Lorna Lewis  
Liz Lowther  
Norma MacMillan  
Bridget Maidment  
Adrienne Mathews

Corinna Matlis  
Catherine McCarter  
Anna Metcalf  
Sophy Miles  
Rebecca Moulton  
Naomi Nettleship  
Cathy Packe  
Judith Paterson  
Rachel Pearson  
Gillian Perry  
Dubravka Polic  
Theresa Rogers  
Pamela Slatter  
Tabitha Strydom  
Alicia Suriel  
Kate Tranter  
Rachel Vroom  
Gabriel West  
Barbara Whent  
June Williams  
Nathalie Wilson  
Rosie de Saram

## **Tenor**

David Broad  
James Ede  
Fabyan Evans  
Bram Frankhuijzen  
David Gilfedder  
Sam Hansford  
Graham Hick  
Richard Holmes  
Jack Johnson  
Carolyn Knight  
Ian Leslie  
Frances Liew  
Ben Martin  
Stephen Rickett  
Christopher Seaden  
Tim Steer  
Barry Sterndale-Bennett  
Tim Thirlway  
Ruth Yeo

## **Bass**

Colin Allies  
Peter Banks  
Richard Burbury  
Henry Cook  
Andrew Cullen  
Chris Finch  
James Finlay  
Richard Gillard  
Martin Goodwin  
Nigel Grieve  
Julian Hall  
Nigel Hartnell  
Peter Haydon  
Richard Hughes  
Ian Judson  
Robert Kealey  
Stefan Klaazen  
Simon Livesey  
Angus Macdonald  
Alan Machacek  
Paul Milican  
Alex Morley-Smith  
Aziz Panni  
Ben Powell Davies  
Christopher  
Powell-Smith  
Bart Puijpe  
Morgan Roberts  
Philip Robinson  
Anthony Sharp  
John Somerville  
Ryszard Stepaniuk  
William Tilden  
Tony Trowles  
Philip Vickers  
Dai Whittingham  
Peter Yeadon

# 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 of 1610* 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*, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and *Christmas Oratorio* and Monteverdi's *Vespers*.

## Members of Counterpoint

### 1st Violin

Leader: Catherine Martin  
Iona Davies  
Persephone Gibbs  
Felicity Broome-Skelton  
Ellen Bundy

### 2nd Violin

Lucy Russell  
Liz McCarthy  
Hailey Willington  
Kate Agostino

### Viola

Stefanie Heichelheim  
Joanne Miller  
Alexis Bennet

### Cello

Joe Crouch  
Chris Suckling  
Anna Holmes

### Bass

Tim Amherst  
Kate Aldridge

### Oboe

Hannah McLaughlin  
Gail Hennessey

### Bassoon

Zoe Shevlin  
Hayley Pullen

### Trumpet

Richard Fomison  
Richard Thomas

### Trombone

Phil Dale  
Tom Lees  
Andrew Lester

### Timpani

Robert Kendall

### Harpichord

James Longford



# Supporting the Choir

London Concert Choir is committed to high standards and works to raise the level of its performances by means of workshops and other special events. However it is not possible for us to promote our concerts with professional performers of the required calibre unless we receive income from sources other than ticket sales. We greatly appreciate the financial contribution of our regular supporters in helping the choir to maintain its position as one of the leading amateur choirs in London.

For information on joining the Supporters' Scheme, please email:  
**[treasurer@london-concert-choir.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@london-concert-choir.org.uk)**

The choir also offers opportunities to sponsor soloists or orchestral players and for corporate support through sponsorship or programme advertising.

Enquiries should be sent to the same address.

## LCC Supporters

Sue Blyth, Deborah Bono, Simon Cave, Bill and Bronwen Cook, Angela Cooper, Dianne Denham, Geoffrey Deville, Karen Evans, John and Judith Greenway, Jeremy Groom, Nicholas and Maureen Halton, Tim Ingram, Ian Judson, Miriam Kramer, John Laing Charitable Trust, Mark Loveday Trust, Jill Marx, Janet and Michael Orr, Jennifer Powell Smith, Michael Shipley, Sybil and Nicholas Spence, Ruth Steinholtz, Jill Tilden, Clare Ford Wille, Anthony Willson, Clare and Philip Ziegler

## Life Friends

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

Peter Barley, Tim and Patricia Barnes, Anne Clayton, Bill Cook, Mr and Mrs Michael Hunt, Mark Loveday, Sue McFadyen, Gregory and Helen Rose, Nicholas Spence, Rachel Vroom

## 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**

## **FUTURE CONCERTS**

**Saturday 26 November 2016**

St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, WC2

**4.00pm: Advent Carols by Candlelight**

**7.30pm: English Music for the Season of Advent**

**Thursday 15 December 2016, 7.30pm**

Holy Trinity Sloane Square, SW1

**Carols for Choir and Audience**

**Wednesday 29 March 2017, 7.30pm**

Barbican Hall, Silk Street, EC2

**Rachmaninov: The Bells**

**Tchaikovsky: Polonaise from Eugene Onegin**

**Borodin: Polovtsian Dances**

**Tchaikovsky: Fantasy Overture - Romeo and Juliet**

**Thursday 13 July 2017, 7.30pm**

Cadogan Hall, Sloane Terrace, SW1

**A Night at the Opera**

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



St  
Martin  
in  
the  
Fields



**Saturday 26 November, 2016**

**London Concert Choir**

*Conductor:* Mark Forkgen

*Organist:* James Longford

**4.00pm Advent Carols  
by Candlelight**

Tickets £16, £12, £7

**7.30pm English Music  
for the Season  
of Advent**

*with tenor* Benjamin Clark

Tickets £29, £25, £22, £16, £9

London Concert Choir is a company limited by guarantee  
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Registered Charity number 1057242.

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

**Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 4JJ**

**Box Office 020 7766 1100 Online: [www.smitf.org](http://www.smitf.org)**