

Royal *f*ree
Music Society

*Hampstead
Sinfonietta*

The background of the poster is a reproduction of the painting 'The Starry Night' by the Dutch Impressionist painter J.M.W. Turner. The painting depicts a night scene with a dark, swirling sky filled with bright, glowing stars and a large, bright yellow sun or moon. In the foreground, there is a dark, silhouetted cypress tree on the left and a small village with a church spire in the center, all set against a blue, swirling sea or landscape.

Grieg: Two Elegiac Melodies Op.34

Haydn: Symphony No. 88

Haydn: Nelson Mass

St John's Wood Church

Saturday 18th March, 7.30pm

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Programme

Grieg: Two Elegiac Melodies Op.34

Haydn: Symphony No. 88

Hampstead Sinfonietta

Conductor: Andrew Rochford

Lead violin: Tanya Barringer

Interval

Haydn's Nelson Mass

**Royal Free Music Society accompanied by the
Hampstead Sinfonietta**

Conductor: Benjamin Wolf

Soloists: Maud Millar (soprano)

Rose Martin (alto)

Matthew Pochin (tenor)

Benjamin Seifert (baritone)

Welcome

Dear Audience

Welcome to our first concert of 2017 which we are delighted to be sharing once again with the Hampstead Sinfonietta. Tonight, the choir will be singing Haydn's Nelson Mass, conducted by Benjamin Wolf and accompanied by the Hampstead Sinfonietta, with our wonderful soloists, Maud Miller, Rose Martin, Matthew Pochin and Benjamin Seifert. The orchestra will also be performing Grieg's Two Elegiac Melodies and Haydn's Symphony No. 88 conducted by Andrew Rochford.

As a choir, we have all enjoyed getting to know the Nelson Mass, with some movements feeling quite familiar after our recent performance of Haydn's *Creation*. Nonetheless, Haydn's lyrical music can be quite deceptive, and what may seem familiar can actually present a significant challenge. In getting to grips with the piece, many members of the choir recently participated in a very enjoyable masterclass, led by Katie Thomas (soprano soloist and conductor), which we hope will help us to put on an expressive and confident performance for you to enjoy.

We would like to thank Benjamin Wolf for all his hard work and encouragement in helping us to master the piece as well as our exceptional accompanist, Gill Cracknell. Our thanks are also extended to the Hampstead Sinfonietta who have rallied forces once again to assemble a sizeable orchestra for tonight's performance. We would also like to extend our thanks to the Parish of St John's Wood and Father Anders Bergquist for allowing us to perform in this beautiful venue, to our Patrons and to the Williams Trust for supporting us financially, and to you, the audience, for coming to hear us sing.

Diana Parkinson and Lucinda Sturgis,

Co-Chairs, RFMS Choir

Programme notes

by Andrew Rochford and Benjamin Wolf

Two Elegiac Melodies Op.34 (1880)

The Wounded Heart; Last Spring

Edvard Grieg (1843 – 1907)

Despite his miniaturist style of composing, the Norwegian Edvard Grieg is held in similar regard to Sibelius and Dvorak as an inspiration for the upsurge in nationalist music seen across Europe at the end of the 19th Century. He travelled extensively to perform his music, even receiving honorary degrees from both Oxford and Cambridge, despite chronic ill-health.

The Two Elegiac Melodies are transcriptions for a string orchestra of two songs based on texts by Norwegian poet, Asmund Olavsson Vinje. The first Elegiac Melody, "*The Wounded Heart*", begins with two heart-breaking phrases in the minor key and closes with two heart-consoling phrases in the major key. The phrases are repeated through three verses, echoing the original poem which speaks of the wounds of life and their inability to destroy faith. "*Last Spring*" has a beautiful theme that eventually fades away to nothing as the poem reflects on not living to see another spring. Grieg also arranged these two poems for solo piano in 1880 but the string orchestra version stands out as the most representative of the composer's nostalgic sense of home.

Symphony No. 88 in G Major (1787)

Adagio; Allegro; Largo; Menuetto; Allegretto (Trio); Finale: Allegro con spirito

Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809)

Symphony No. 88 was written on Haydn's return to Hungary following his time in Paris, and is one of his most popular works. Between 1757 and 1795, Haydn composed 104 symphonies. The form or style of each of the later symphonies is similar – usually arranged fast – slow – fast – fast with a slow introduction, a minuet and a final movement that is a

dramatic climax to the work. However, these similarities are largely superficial as each of the symphonies is an original blend of character and elegance.

Symphony No. 88 was written after the Paris Symphonies (Nos. 82 – 87) and before the London Symphonies (Nos. 93 -104). The orchestration is rich (the very presence of trumpets and timpani in a G-major symphony in the 1780s was quite unusual) and the various sections of the orchestra are often used in contrast throughout the symphony.

The symphony assumes the pattern previously described, with a slow introduction followed by an allegro in which the main theme is developed extensively, before the movement ends in a coda based on the main theme. The largo is essentially a set of variations on a simple chorale-like theme first heard in the wind section and then by the strings. Brahms is quoted as saying “I want my ninth symphony to sound like this”; whilst in England this theme went on to become a church hymn.

The minuet and trio in the third movement is more representative of a rustic peasant dance than a Royal Court. The symphony concludes with a sonata-rondo with a long final development section that plays out as a canon between the lower instruments and violins. The finale is considered one of the most cheerful that Haydn wrote.

Nelson Mass (1798)

Kyrie; Gloria; Qui Tollis; Quoniam tu solus; Credo; Et Incarnatus; Et Resurrexit; Sanctus; Benedictus; Agnus Dei; Dona Nobis

Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809)

The Nelson Mass was one of Haydn’s later compositions, more or less contemporaneous with *The London Symphonies*, *The Creation* and *The Seasons*. It was first performed at the Bergkirche in Eisenstadt to celebrate the Name Day of the Princess Esterházy in September 1798, and was probably performed again during Admiral Lord Nelson’s visit to Esterházy in 1800. It is not entirely clear when the nickname ‘Nelson’ was given to the mass, though it was probably in some way a consequence of this visit. Haydn himself gave it the title ‘*Missa in Angustiis*’ (‘Mass in Straited Times’), perhaps as a reference to recent European wars.

The work is a dramatic setting in D-minor, originally scored for strings, trumpets, timps and organ. The first movement – the *Kyrie* – begins forcefully, with a declamatory falling octave in the chorus, before changing to a more lyrical mood introduced by the solo soprano. The second movement is in a lighter mood (marked ‘allegro’, and written in D-major), describing the glory of God in the heavens. As in the first movement, it combines a lyrical solo soprano line with chorus and solo quartet. The next movement – the *Qui Tollis* – is a solo aria (for bass soloist), perhaps demonstrating that this mass was intended as much as a kind of oratorio for public performance as a piece of sacred music for use in a church. It is a slow setting, as befits the text: ‘you who take away the sins of the world, take pity on us.’ Although it begins in a rather remote B-flat major, it ends questioningly on a chord of A-major.

This A-major is the dominant of the D-major that begins the *Quoniam tu solus*, and that returns us to the happy mood of the *Gloria*. In fact, both movements begin with the same motif, though the *Quoniam* includes a complex contrapuntal section for chorus that accentuates the joyful nature of the text: ‘you alone are holy...with the holy spirit in the glory of God the Father’. The next three movements are settings of different sections of the creed: at first, a duet between sopranos/tenors and altos/basses with the words ‘I believe in one God, Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible, born of the Father...’ This is followed by the *Et Incarnatus* (‘born of the Holy Spirit, from the Virgin Mary, and made man’) – a slower and more thoughtful setting for solo soprano and choir, that concludes mournfully with a text describing Christ’s suffering and burial.

The *Et Resurrexit* that follows is a sudden burst of energy that proclaims with triumph Christ’s resurrection and ascension into heaven. The *Sanctus* is an Adagio in D-major, concluding with a vivacious setting of the ‘Hosanna in excelsis’ – a passage that returns at the end of the *Benedictus*, which is written in a more thoughtful D-minor, using solo soprano, chorus and solo quartet. The last two movements are settings of the text of the *Agnus Dei*: in the first place, a slow setting for solo quartet, which pleads to the Lamb of God to give peace to the worshipper. This is followed by a faster setting for chorus, which particularly stresses the word ‘dona’ (‘give’), almost turning a prayer into a demand, and providing a rousing and triumphant ending to the Mass.

The Hampstead Sinfonietta

The Hampstead Sinfonietta

The Hampstead Sinfonietta was formed from the ashes of the Royal Free Medical School Orchestra in the early 2000s and has co-existed with the Royal Free Music Society ever since. The orchestra performs two or three times a year and draws players from across London who are attracted by the opportunity to perform varied repertoire, including choral works which may not be available to more traditional orchestras., as well as chamber works, symphonies and concertos.

In this evening's performance, the orchestra is led by Tanya Barringer, with Ellie Wood fixing woodwind and brass players and Nick Roberts managing the music library.

Conductor: Andrew Rochford

Andrew has a variety of musical interests. At school he studied singing with Geraldine Hackett-Jones and started playing the bassoon at the age of 10 under the tutelage of Charles Cracknell, OBE. He has since had tuition from Gareth Newman (London Mozart Players & Royal Academy of Music, and an old pupil of Charles). Andrew has performed solo concerti with Lawyers Music and the Abbots Langley Symphony Orchestra; and when time permits, he plays with the London Charity Orchestra. After leaving school in Canterbury, Andrew completed a degree in Medical Biochemistry at King's College, London. He then studied Medicine at the Royal Free where he was a founding member of the choir in 1995. Andrew trained in London and is a Gastroenterologist and Deputy Medical Director at Newham University Hospital, Barts Health NHS Trust; he has a special interest in Clinical Nutrition.

The Royal Free Music Society

The Royal Free Music Society Choir was formed in 1995 by a group of healthcare professionals working in the Royal Free Hospital. It has grown into a large and vibrant choir with members from the hospital and the local area. The choir performs three or four concerts a year and recent performances have included Handel's *Dixit Dominus*, Mendelsohn's *Elijah* and Vivaldi's *Gloria*. Last year, the choir made its second visit to Genoa, Italy. We also regularly raise funds to support charities such as St Mungo's, the Royal Free Hospital Charity and The Helen Bamber Foundation. For more information, please visit our website: www.royalfreemusicsociety.org.uk.

Conductor: Benjamin Wolf

Benjamin Wolf works as a conductor, pianist, composer, singer and academic. He is Music Director of the Royal Free Music Society, the Zemel Choir, the Wallace Ensemble and the Belsize Square Synagogue. In addition he is a regular conductor of the Quorum chamber choir.

Performances with the Zemel Choir have included appearances at the new European Jewish Choral Festivals, Holocaust memorial services for the Mayor of London, a broadcast for the BBC's Songs of Praise and tours to Europe, Israel and the USA.

Activities with the Wallace Ensemble have included performances at the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room, while the professional choir of Belsize Square Synagogue has been featured on BBC radio and television.

Recent performances with the Belsize choir have included Westminster Abbey's 'Service of Solemn Remembrance and Hope on the 75th Anniversary of Kristallnacht' and performances for the International Louis Lewandowski Festival in Berlin. In February 2015 he conducted

both the Zemel and Belsize choirs at a service at Westminster Abbey commemorating the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Performances with the Royal Free Music Society have included large-scale oratorios such as Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and tours to Genoa in 2015 and 2016.

Soloists

Maud Millar (soprano)

Maud Millar is a graduate of Clare College, Cambridge, where she held a choral scholarship, and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. She currently studies with John Evans.

Maud's concert work includes Stravinsky's *Mass* with the London Symphony Orchestra and Valery Gergiev, Thomas Adès' *Five Eliot Landscapes* under the composer himself and, in her BBC Radio 3 debut, Oliver Knussen's *Trumpets* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. In 2013 she also performed Britten's *Cabaret Songs* at the Barbican and made her debut at the Leipzig Gewandhaus in a programme of Schumann and Mendelssohn Lieder under Peter Schreier. She has performed in concert such operatic roles as Musetta/*La Bohème* at Cadogan Hall and Gretel/*Hansel and Gretel* at LSO St. Luke's.

Maud's operatic work includes Nella/*Gianni Schicchi*, Mademoiselle Jouvenot/*Adriana Lecouvreur* and Miss Ellen/*Lakmé* for Opera Holland Park, Fiordiligi/*Così fan tutte* for Hampstead Garden Opera and the title role in Katarzyna Brochocka's *The Young Wife* for OperaUpClose. In the 2013 season she also created the role of "Bottle" in Will Todd's new opera *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* for Opera Holland Park, a role to which she has returned in the 2014 and 2015 seasons. On the 2014 Signum Records recording of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, which spent several weeks at Number 1 on the Classical Chart, she recorded the roles of Bottle, Humpty Dumpty and Duchess, and thereafter added the role of

Duchess to her 2015 performances. Recent engagements have included Arvo Pärt's *Passio* with the Choir of King's College, Cambridge at Kings Place, *Donna Elvira* for the Ahmadi Music Group in Kuwait, and a transfer of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* to the Linbury Studio at the Royal Opera House.

Rose Martin (alto)

Growing up in Kent, where there are some excellent youth choirs, Rose developed an obsession for choral singing at a young age. She subsequently fuelled this addiction, going on to study at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, and King's College London, where she was a choral scholar, learning from the expertise of the late David Trendell. At this time she took vocal lessons at the Royal Academy of Music. Rose was an inaugural member of The Sixteen's training programme, Genesis Sixteen, and has since gone on to sing with many of London's professional choirs, founded the Fieri Consort and is a regular member of the Platinum Consort. Rose enjoys a mixed schedule of choral, solo singing and teaching projects.

Matthew Pochin (tenor)

Matthew Pochin (Tenor) began his singing career as a chorister at Hereford Cathedral where he later became a choral scholar and lay clerk. While a student at Cardiff University he also studied at the Welsh College of Music and Drama, where he played Hyllus in a production of Handel's *Hercules*. He continued his career on his return to Hereford, performing oratorios, recitals and several Gilbert and Sullivan operettas.

Matthew moved to South London in 2007 and, in addition to singing regularly at St. John's Wood Parish Church and Belsize Square Synagogue, he also sings at churches across the city, including St. Margaret's, Westminster, St. Columba's, Knightsbridge (Church of Scotland), St. Nicholas', Chiswick, and St. Anne's, Highgate.

Benjamin Seifert (baritone)

Benjamin Seifert (baritone) read Modern Languages at St Peter's College, Oxford. He then trained on ENO's *The Knack* and at the Royal Academy of Music. In 2004 he performed as a soloist in Orlando Gough's *For the Public Good* at ENO and has since sung at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Cadogan Hall, the Purcell Room and the Wigmore Hall.

He has worked with the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company at Buxton, British Youth Opera, Grange Park Opera, Opera Holland Park, Opera by Definition, Tête à Tête Opera and Arcola Opera. Operatic roles include Colas (*Bastien & Bastienne*), Zaretsky (*Eugene Onegin*) Harlekin (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Don Giovanni, the Count, (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Bill Bobstay (*HMS Pinafore*), the Foreman (*Trial by Jury*) and Marcello (*La Bohème*) at the Soho Theatre, winning the Olivier Award for Best New Opera Production. He was recently seen as the Mayor in Pop Up Opera's *Docteur Miracle*, a short excerpt of which was performed live on Radio 3's *In Tune*. Oratorio work includes *Messiah*, Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, Fauré's *Requiem* and the *St Matthew Passion*.

**The Royal Free Music Society would like to thank
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Singing in tonight's concert

Soprano

Alice Butterton, Danielle Cahill, Edna Young, Elizabeth Segu, Henrietta Spalding, Gillian Cracknell, Isle MacLean, Jane Dutton, Jane Hassid, Janet High, Janice Tunny, Justine Cohen, Kat Mountford, Leonida De Montfort, Lucy Swart-Mallett, Maggie Sinclair, Mary Goyder, Rosalind Stewart, Roszie Omoregie, Sara Henley, Sarah Pepperrell, Teresa Elkins, Veronica Soskin

Alto

Annie Sedley, Barbara Bryant, Catherine Haw, Diana Muggleston, Diana Parkinson, Emma Dunning, Gill Clissold, Janet Paraskeva, Jessie Twiest, Katharine Hodgson, Katy Makin, Libby Harris, Lucinda Sturgis, Mireille Levy, Sophie Jackson, Tricia Pank

Tenor

Andrew Rochford, Barbara Foster, Dennis Bury, John O'Shea, Peter Davies, Richard Haydon, Robert Salmon, Sarah Carrier, Wilder Gutterson

Bass

Ashitey Ollenu, Bill Aldridge, Christopher Mason, Gallin Hornick, James Kennedy, Jospeh Marrah, Michael McKay, Nick Jackson, Paul Styles

Playing in tonight's concert

Violin:

Anne Bradley
Annie Askew
Berry Beaumont
Ceri Evans
Eva Gawkowska
James Perry
Martin Fraenkel
Richard Vidler
Sharon Philbey
Stuart Poyser
Tanya Barringer
Varuni Parnavitane

Viola:

Freda Ward
Helen Dodd
Janet Farrell
Jeremy Cook
Juleka Nwankwo
Rosemary Cook

Timpani:

Ellie Wood

Cello:

Milo Anderson
Nicholas Rose
Paul McLoughlin
Tom Martin

Double Bass:

Hilary Wood
Sara Dixon

Flute:

Corinne Bass

Trumpet:

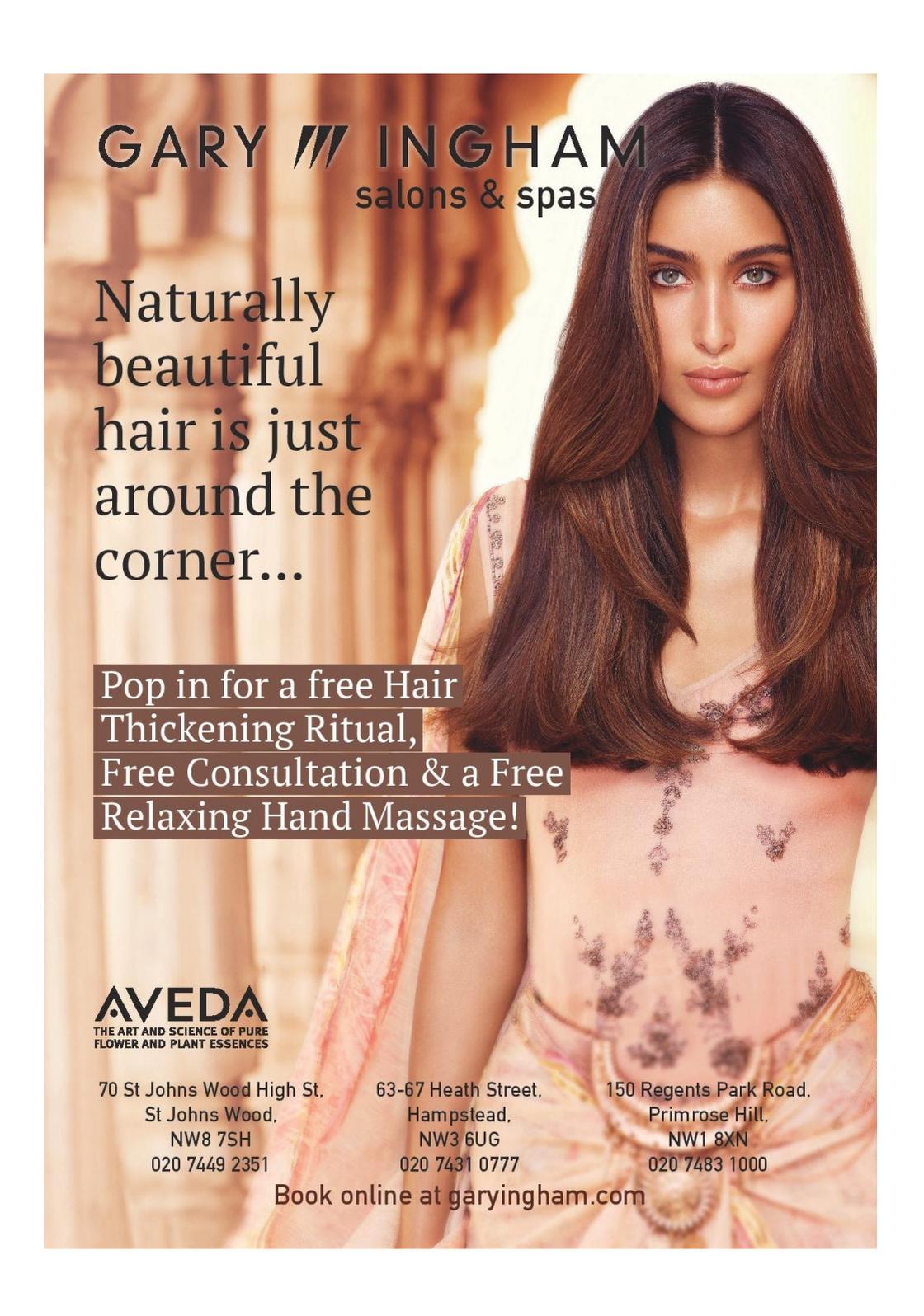
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Future RFMS concerts:

Summer Concert with the Beckenham Big Band, Saturday 24th June 2017.

Autumn Concert: Allegri's Miserere and Mozart's Requiem in D Minor, Saturday 11th November 2017.



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