

Royal *f*ree
Music Society

*Hampstead
Sinfonietta*

Spring Concert



Saturday 30th March, 7.30pm

St Mark's Church

Programme

Bach: Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

Bach: Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden

Mozart: Symphony No. 29 in A Major

Interval

Boyce: Symphony No. 4 in F Major

Vivaldi: Beatus Vir

The Hampstead Sinfonietta is conducted by Andrew Rochford

The Royal Free Music Society is conducted by Benjamin Wolf

Soloists:

Susanna Hurrell (soprano)

Rose Martin (mezzo-soprano)

Matthew Pochin (tenor)

Benjamin Seifert (baritone)

Welcome

Dear Audience

Welcome to St Mark's Church and our Spring concert 2019! Tonight, the choir will be singing *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* from J.S. Bach's Cantata BWV 147 followed by *Lobet den Herrn* (Praise the Lord), also by Bach, and finally Vivaldi's *Beatus Vir* (Blessed is the man). The choir is conducted by Benjamin Wolf and we are joined by our wonderful soloists, Susanna Hurrell, Rose Martin, Matthew Pochin and Benjamin Seifert. The orchestra, conducted by Andrew Rochford, will be performing *Symphony No. 4 in F Major* by Boyce and *Symphony No. 29 in A Major* by Mozart.

As ever, we would like to express our thanks to Benjamin Wolf, our musical director, for all his hard work, determination and patience in teaching us these beautiful pieces, and to our accompanist Gill Cracknell for her exceptional skills during our weekly rehearsals. Our thanks also go to the musicians who have come to play in the Hampstead Sinfonietta and particularly to Andrew Rochford, Nick Roberts and Ellie Wood for their help organising the orchestra. As ever, our thanks are extended to the parish of St. Mark's and to the Reverend William Gulliford for allowing us to perform in this beautiful venue, and to you, the audience, for coming to support us.

Please make a note of our future concert dates to be found towards the back of this programme, and, if you would like to join the performers rather than the audience, we are always happy to welcome new members. All details are on our website: www.royalfreemusicsociety.org.uk.



Diana Parkinson and Lucinda Sturgis,
Co-Chairs, Royal Free Music Society Choir

Programme notes

by Benjamin Wolf & Andrew Rochford

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

J.S. Bach (1685—1750)

This short choral favourite was composed in 1723 as part of Bach's cantata *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben* ("Heart and Mouth and Deed and Life"), although it has become extremely popular as a stand-alone piece. The original German text ("Jesus bleibet meine freude") was later replaced for English choirs with stanzas attributed to Robert Bridges, the first of which reads "Jesu, joy of man's desiring, Holy wisdom, love most bright; drawn by thee, our souls aspiring, soar to uncreated light." The choir melody is a chorale – sung homophonically (i.e. with all sections of the choir singing a single melody rather than interweaving different melodies) and without huge vocal leaps – but in between there is a graceful instrumental solo line.

Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden

J.S. Bach (1685—1750)

This is a more challenging example of Baroque choral music. It is attributed to J.S. Bach, although the score emerged decades after his death and some scholars doubt the attribution. It is a triumphant setting of Psalm 117 ("Praise the Lord, all ye nations; and praise him, all ye peoples. For his mercy and truth watch over us for ever"). The first section ("Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden") is richly contrapuntal and imitative, with the main melodic motive passed around the voices of the choir. Imitation between parts continues in the faster second section ("und preiset ihn, alle völker"). The third section ("denn seine Gnade und

Wahrheit”) is, slower, richer and mostly homophonic (the four voice parts singing their words together). The work concludes with a dance-like Alleluja in triple time.

Symphony No. 29 in A Major (K. 201)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791)

Allegro moderato; Andante; Menuetto; Allegro con spirit

Symphony No. 29 was written in Salzburg when Mozart was just nineteen years old. It is one of his most popular symphonies with engaging melodies and a delicate balance between grace and energy. The symphony exemplifies Mozart’s ability to draw the maximum colour and expression out of a very small orchestra composed of a few strings and pairs of oboes and horns.

The first movement begins quietly, without the more usual loud chords or fanfare. The opening theme consists of an octave drop which reappears at the beginning of the Finale and is followed by a sequence of eight notes leading to a second octave drop. This theme is repeated in a rising sequence and then shared between various sections of the orchestra. The Andante and Menuetto feature dotted and double-dotted rhythms that are characteristic of the French style of overtures and considered to convey stateliness, nobility, and even godliness. The Finale has a motif that resembles the call of a hunting horn and a development section described by Einstein as ‘the richest and most dramatic Mozart had written up to this time’.

Symphony No. 4 in F Major

William Boyce (1711 – 1779)

Allegro; Vivace ma non troppo; Gavot (Allegro)

The eight symphonies of William Boyce are probably the most well-known of his compositions. They were written over a 21-year period and intended as either an ode to a vocal or stage work or as an overture.

William Boyce was born in London into a non-musical family but gained a position as a chorister at St Paul's cathedral. He subsequently learned to play the organ and gained a music degree from Cambridge University. In 1755, Boyce was appointed Master of the King's Music and he became organist to the Chapel Royal in 1758. However, he became increasingly deaf during his later years, and much of his music was published after he had retired from public life.

At the time when Boyce was composing, the terms 'symphony' and 'overture' were synonymous and were generally written in either a French or Italian style. Symphony No. 4 has three movements and (loosely) represents the Italian style with three movements: slow(er), fast, slow(er)! The symphony was composed as the overture to *'The Shepherd's Lottery'* a pastoral opera with words by Moses Mendez (1690-1758) which opened at the Drury Lane Theatre in November 1751. The symphony was subsequently performed at the 'Three Choirs' festival in Hereford in 1753.

Beatus Vir (Psalm 111)

Antonio Vivaldi (1678—1741)

*Blessed is the man who fears the lord:
He delights greatly in his
commandments.*

*His seed will be mighty on earth;
The generation of the upright will be
blessed.*

*Wealth and riches are in his house;
And his righteousness endures for ever
and ever.*

*Unto the upright there arises light in the
darkness:*

*He is gracious, and full of compassion,
and righteous.*

Because he will not be moved for ever.

*The righteous will be in everlasting
remembrance.*

He will not be afraid of evil tidings.

*Happy is the man who is full of
compassion and lends.*

*He will guide his affairs with discretion:
His heart is fixed, trusting in the lord;
His heart is established:*

He will not be moved,

Until he gazes at his enemies.

*He has dispersed, he has given to the
poor:*

*His righteousness endures for ever and
ever,*

His horn will be exalted in glory.

*The sinner will see it, and will be
grieved;*

*He will gnash with his teeth, and melt
away.*

The desire of the sinful will perish.

This psalm text has been unusually popular with composers (Vivaldi wrote three separate settings). This popularity may be because of its use in the vespers (evening) service, although it may also be because the words lend themselves readily to expressive and dramatic music. Vivaldi, like his predecessors, took the opportunity to match the character of his music to the mood of each section of this vivid psalm text. In the piece you will hear tonight, he created an extended version for double choir and soloists. Originally the two choirs were probably intended to sing antiphonally (i.e. with the music sung alternately by the two choirs), and

Vivaldi may have had a particular church in mind for the performance in which to do this. The first movement is a strong introduction by the two choirs. The second (“his seed will be mighty on earth”) is a lively and forceful duet for two bass soloists. Following this, the choir sings a short response which echoes the first movement (an effect that returns after each subsequent solo movement).

The third movement (“wealth and riches are in his house”) provides an opportunity for two soprano soloists to demonstrate vocal dexterity, while the fourth (“unto the upright there arises light in the darkness”) is one of the most contemplative of all the movements, inviting us to consider the importance of pity and mercy in Christian theology. The next movement (“happy is the man who is full of compassion”) is suitably joyful, and another opportunity for vocal fireworks, this time from just one soprano. This is followed by another contemplative moment (“The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance”). Strength is the theme of the next movement (“his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord”), in which the antiphonal effect of the double choirs reinforces the stubborn inflexibility of the man of God. Perhaps the most vivid word-painting is reserved for the final solo movement, in which the tenor soloist tells us of the sinner’s anger and gnashing of teeth when he confronts the holiness of the man of God. The final movement is a choral finale, a setting of the concluding text that the church has added to all psalm settings: “Glory be to the father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.”

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 concerts a year and recent performances have included Haydn's *Nelson Mass* and Mozart's *Requiem*. Last November, we performed a new composition by Benjamin Wolf, our musical director, in collaboration with the Zemel Choir. This summer we are looking forward to performing with a French choir at our summer concert. We are also planning a trip in the autumn to sing in Rome. For more information about the choir, 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 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, the USA, Germany and Russia.

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 Mozart's Requiem and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and tours to Italy in 2015 and 2016 and France in 2017.



**The Royal Free Music Society would like to thank
their loyal Patrons:**

**Adrian Cahill, Billy Elkins, Patsy Henley and
David Gluckman**

The Hampstead Sinfonietta

The Hampstead Sinfonietta was formed 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.



Conductor: Andrew Rochford

Andrew 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 at Newham University Hospital, Barts Health NHS Trust; he has a special interest in Clinical Nutrition and has recently been seconded to NHS Improvement as Regional Clinical Director for the Emergency Care Improvement Programme in the South of England.

Soloists

Susanna Hurrell (soprano)

Susanna Hurrell was born in London and trained at the Royal College of Music and the National Opera Studio with Patricia Rozario and Jeffrey Talbot. She was recipient of numerous awards including the Miriam Licette scholarship, Peter Hulsen Orchestral Song, Countess of Munster and Sybil Tutton awards, the RCM English Song, John Kerr English Song and the Dean & Chadlington competitions. In 2013 she was awarded the Grange Park Opera Aria Prize at the Hampshire Singing Competition.



Recent operatic highlights include her debut at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence as Aldimira in Cavalli's *Erismena*, Mélisande in Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* with Norwegian National Opera and for Glyndebourne (cover), the title role in the world premiere of Ravi Shankar's *Sukanya* for the Royal Opera House and London Philharmonic Orchestra, the world premiere of Philip Venables' *4.48 Psychosis* for the Royal Opera at the Lyric Hammersmith, and Rosalinde in Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* for Opera Holland Park.

On the concert platform, Hurrell has performed Britten's *Les Illuminations* with the English Chamber Orchestra, the world premiere of David Oppenheimer's *Deborah* with the Southbank Sinfonia, Handel's *Messiah* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, and Mozart Festival Orchestra; and Bach's *Mass in B Minor* with the BBC Singers.

Rose Martin (mezzo-soprano)

Rose was raised in Kent, starting singing in the Kent Youth Choirs and was later educated at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester and as a choral scholar at King's College London. She trained on The Sixteen's young artist programme, and has sung with a myriad of professional groups, including The Sixteen, The Erebus Ensemble, London Voices, Platinum Consort and the London Contemporary Orchestra. Rose has a busy and varied career consisting of performing, teaching and conducting several workplace and community choirs. Rose enjoys variety and thus her recent musical projects have included singing Monteverdi on Radio 3, recording for Radiohead, and scratching out ceilidh tunes on a (newly learnt) violin.



Matthew Pochin (tenor)



Matthew began his career as a chorister at Hereford Cathedral, where he later became a choral scholar and lay clerk. He went on to study with Marilyn Rees and Buddug Verona Jones at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. He currently studies privately with Gavin Carr.

After several years working as a pastry chef, Matthew moved to South London in 2007 to continue his career as a singer. He has held positions at several churches across the city and currently sings with the choirs of St John's Wood Parish Church and

Belsize Square Synagogue. He also sings regularly with the choirs of HM Chapel Royal, Hampton Court and St Mary-le-Bow in the City of London.

Matthew performs as an oratorio and consort soloist across the UK and Europe. Recent engagements include renaissance lieder by Ludwig Senfl with the Linarol Consort of Viols, *Serenade* for Tenor Horn and Strings (Britten) and *Carmina Burana* (Orff). He gives regular recitals of romantic lieder and English song, including works by Schubert, Schumann, Strauss, Britten, Finzi and Gurney. Matthew has also recorded for the BBC, performing *Nine otpushchayeshi* (Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace) from Rachmaninoff's *All Night Vigil* for a documentary on the composer's life. He can be heard on two upcoming recordings of early English music; the complete 'Sacred Hymnes' of John Amner with the Dublin Consort and Fretwork to be released on Rubicon Classics and a recording of works by Thomas Tallis for men's voices with the Gentlemen of HM Chapel Royal, Hampton Court on the Resonus Classics label.

Benjamin Seifert (baritone)

Benjamin 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.



Benjamin 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.

Benjamin 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*.

Would you consider becoming a Patron of the Royal Free Music Society?

The vital contribution made by our patrons enables our choir to offer subsidised membership to those on low incomes and supports our charitable efforts in the community - singing for St Mungo's charity, for the Royal Free Hospital Charity and in St Mark's Community Carol service.

If you enjoyed tonight's concert and can help the choir flourish, a minimum annual donation of £100 entitles you to free tickets for our concerts. Your name will also be added to our Patrons list and will be on our website.

If you would like to know more, please speak to one of the Chairs or email us at info@royalfreemusicsociety.org.uk.

Singing in tonight's concert

Soprano

Danielle Cahill, Dorothy Connell, Edna Young, Elizabeth Bogard,
Elizabeth Segu, Gillian Cracknell, Jane Hassid, Janet High,
Justine Cohen, Kat Mountford, Mary Goyder, Roszie Omoregie,
Sara Henley, Teresa Elkins, Veronica Soskin

Alto

Diana Parkinson, Emily Hurrell, Emma Dunning, Emma Russell,
Esta Adams, Fiona Brocklesby, Gill Clissold, Jacquie Hamel,
Jane Matheson, Janet Paraskeva, Libby Harris, Lucinda Sturgis,
Mireille Levy, Reshmi Marmion, Shanta Row, Sophie Jackson, Tricia Pank

Tenor

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

Bass

Ashitey Ollennu, Bill Aldridge, David Thomas, David Osborne,
James Kennedy, Kazuhiro Hiraki, Michael McKay,
Nick Jackson, Paul Styles