

Davide penitente

W A Mozart

Mirjams Siegesgesang

Franz Schubert

Hiob

Overture in C major

Fanny Hensel



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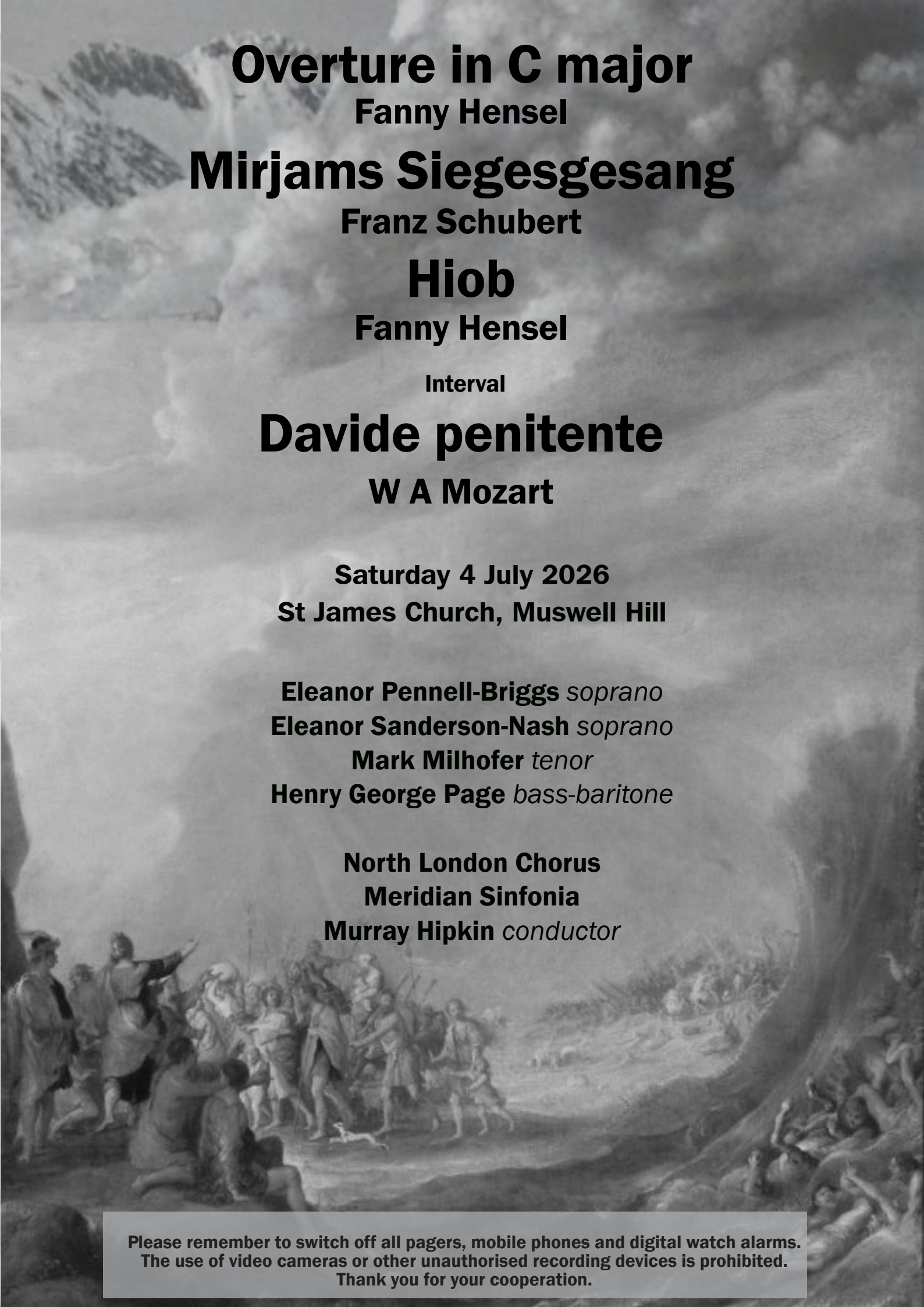
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Interval

Davide penitente

W A Mozart

Saturday 4 July 2026

St James Church, Muswell Hill

Eleanor Pennell-Briggs *soprano*

Eleanor Sanderson-Nash *soprano*

Mark Milhofer *tenor*

Henry George Page *bass-baritone*

North London Chorus

Meridian Sinfonia

Murray Hipkin *conductor*

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FANNY HENSEL

OVERTURE IN C MAJOR

Fanny Hensel (nee Mendelssohn) (1805-1847): Overture in C major (1832) for Orchestra

The *Overture in C major* is Fanny Hensel's only purely orchestral composition. Unlike her brother, Felix, who was an accomplished violinist, and despite being an excellent pianist herself, she did not play any orchestral instrument. Perhaps for this reason she claimed not to feel confident in developing orchestral musical ideas instrumentally and concentrated on lieder and chamber music. Yet the cheerful effusiveness of the overture's accomplished arrangement of a multiplicity of interrelating themes and its use of varied keys suggest otherwise, and that she was being characteristically self-effacing. It may also have been that both her social status and the paternalism of her time meant she would have no opportunities for performing in or conducting orchestral works, whereas her smaller pieces were regularly performed by herself and other, often eminent musicians at the family's regular Sunday morning (Sonntagmusiken) concerts which she was herself responsible for organising.

Scored for a small orchestral instrumental ensemble of strings, woodwind, horns, trumpets and timpani, the overture is in conventional sonata-allegro form. It opens with a short, lyrical andante initiated by horns, followed by a call and response exchange between woodwind and strings. The two sections unite, moving in a flourish of unison strings to a powerful allegretto di molto balancing classical clarity with a passionate



romanticism. The allegro then builds through bassoons and lower strings to a further call and response, this one strident, between trumpets and horns, moving through sequences of playful variations before cheerfully

bringing the work to a ringing, chromatic climax involving the whole orchestra.

Paul Filmer

FRANZ SCHUBERT

MIRJAMS SIEGESGESANG

Franz Schubert (1797-1828): Mirjams Siegesgesang, D 942 (1828)

The final years of his tragically short life were amongst Schubert's most intensely creative. In 1828 alone, before he died on November 19, he had written several works which have come to be considered masterpieces: the three final piano sonatas, the fabulous, heart-wrenching String Quintet, the F-minor Fantasy for Piano Duet, his Mass in E flat and the songs subsequently published as *Schwangesang* (Swan Song).

Alongside these works he also composed *Miriam's Song of Triumph*, for soprano, chorus and piano, which he doubtless intended to orchestrate. This was done posthumously on his behalf by his friend Franz Lachner, producing the version on which this evening's performance will be based. The text was provided by the dramatist Franz Grillparzer, another close friend of Schubert, and was based on the account in Exodus 15:20-21 of the flight of the Israelites from their exile in Egypt, during which 'Miriam the prophetess...took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea'. The final clauses, echoing as they do Handel's wonderful chorus from *Israel in Egypt*, give us a clue to the seemingly anomalous appearance of this rather extravagant cantata amidst the major instrumental, chamber and orchestral works and lieder that Schubert was composing at the same time.

Part of the myth that has long surrounded Schubert's life and career holds that his genius was recognised by only a small, select group of friends; that he died poor, partly and



ironically because he composed so prolifically and with such charming facility that he could not be compared with the great artists who were his immediate predecessors and near contemporaries – Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Liszt – who struggled, as befits the Romantic image, to give satisfactory expression to their art. Such a view is as much myth about these composers as about Schubert, but combined with the conviction that he had died too early to justify his gifts to the full, there was clearly substance enough to it at the time to warrant Grillparzer's much quoted epitaph for the monument to Schubert, erected in Vienna's Währing Cemetery in 1830: 'Here the art of music buried a rich possession, but even fairer hopes'. Many of these fairer hopes were, in

fact, realised by the lengthily delayed posthumous performance and publication of so many of his major works, to the extent that one French critic remarked, in the early 1860s, that Schubert seemed to be one of the most interesting and prolific of contemporary composers!

Yet Schubert was able to make a comfortable enough living in the densely textured and intensely competitive Viennese musical culture of his time, and was well enough known and respected to be invited to perform some of his own work to the musically distinguished guests assembled at Baron von Esterhazy's drawing room concerts, where he would certainly have become familiar with Handel's music. In the absence of large concert halls in Vienna, other than designated opera theatres, most

public concerts were held in large private homes and gardens or in the meeting rooms of restaurants and taverns and many were organised through subscription by the prestigious Society of the Friends of Music, to the directorate of which Schubert was himself elected in 1826. Beneath these in the cultural hierarchy were numerous concerts of relatively light social music, small pieces which, much to Schubert's frustration, interested his publishers much more than his larger-scale instrumental and orchestral works: waltzes, polonaises, marches, piano duets and vocal ensembles, amongst which were more than a hundred male quartets and mixed choruses. He so excelled at composing music of this kind that concerts of it were often referred to as Schubertiades. Most of the pieces composed for such occasions would have been written to commission from individual or group performers participating enthusiastically in the part-song subcultures then in vogue and it is amongst them that Miriam's triumphal song belongs, at least in part. But it reflects also the fact that music on sacred themes had been important to Schubert throughout his creative life: as a young chorister at the Imperial Chapel he had been taught by Salieri, had applied unsuccessfully in 1826 for the post of Deputy Court Kapellmeister, and had composed six masses as well as more than 40 other liturgical and sacred works.

Like so many of the songs, in contrast to the *lieder*, which are usually through-composed, *Miriam's Song* is strophic, occurring in more or less

regular verses. Grillparzer sustains the narrative by combining rhyming couplets of various metric lengths with looser verse forms, thereby structuring it through different dramatic emphases, reinforced by the shifting tempi and dynamics of Schubert's score. Some of the writing is homophonic, tending to block chords with all parts singing the same words simultaneously, with textual colour and variety added by occasional imitation and variation between voices. But this piece stands out from the majority of Schubert's work in this genre for the sheer narrative strength of its theme and the force of the composer's engagement with its changing moods. The work is divided loosely into six narrative sections, each of which is opened and interspersed by the soprano soloist who sets the specific scene before leading and orchestrating the chorus in its elaboration and development. Musically, the sections are differentiated by their time signatures, the opening and closing passages both being set in a strict *allegro giusto*, almost martial in the first but opening out in the last into a fugal elaboration which communicates clearly the Israelites' grateful sense of liberation and freedom following their escape from Pharaoh's drowned cavalry. The second section slows to a more moderate *allegretto*, signifying Miriam's emergence, strong-armed and with blazing eyes ('Stark dein Arm, dein Auge Glut') shepherding her people out of Egypt through the path that opens between the parting crystal walls of the sea and delivering them onto the further shore. The third part, marked *allegro agitato*,

challenges this optimism, sounding the alarm of the escapees as the horses and riders of Pharaoh's troop, horns blaring, steel weaponry gleaming, appear in hot pursuit. The section ends with the increasing noise and gales of a gathering storm, announced at the opening of the fourth section, in a surprising *allegro moderato*, as the wrath of the Lord ('der Herr in Seinem Grimme'), comes to collapse the towers of seawater and drown the entire pursuing army: horses, riders and chariots. The penultimate, fifth passage of the song moves away from the preceding *allegro* for a sombre reflection, marked *andantino* in the traditional sense of slower than *andante*, echoing the now calm sound of the sea which has forced Pharaoh and his troops into an abyss beneath its surface from which they can never rise. The celebratory *allegro* returns to bring the story to its joyful conclusion.

Paul Filmer

Mirjams Siegesgesang

Rührt die Cymbel, schlägt die Saiten
 Lasst den Hall es tragen weit,
 Gross der Herr zu allen Zeiten.
 Heute gross vor aller Zeit.
 Gross der Herr zu allen Zeiten.
 Heute gross vor aller Zeit!

Aus Egypten vor dem Volke
 Wie der Hirt, den Stab zur Huth,
 Zogst du her, dein Stab die Wolke,
 Und dein Aug' des Feuers Gluth.
 Zieh' ein Hirt vor deinem Volke,
 Stark dein Arm, dein Auge Gluth.

Und das Meer hört deine Stimme
 Thut sich auf dem Zug, wird Land,
 Scheu des Meeres Ungethüme
 Schau'n durch die krystall'ne Wand.
 Wir vertrauten deiner Stimme,
 Traten froh das neue Land.

Doch der Horizont erdunkelt,
 Ross und Reiter löst sich los,
 Hörner lärmern, Eisen funkelt,
 Es ist Pharaon und sein Tross.
 Herr, von der Gefahr umdunkelt,
 Hilflos wir, dort Mann und Ross.

Und die Feinde mordentglommen,
 Drängen nach, den sichern Pfad,
 Jetzt und jetzt. Da horch! Welch Säuseln!
 Wehen, Murmeln, Dröhnen, horch! Sturm!
 'Sist der Herr in seinem Grimme,
 Einstürzt rings der Wasser Thurm.

Mann und Pferd,
 Ross und Reiter
 Eingewickelt, umspinnen,
 Im Netze der Gefahr,
 Zerbrochen die Speichen ihrer Wagen,
 Todt der Lenker, todt das Gespann.

Miriam's Song of Victory

*Beat the cymbal, strike the strings,
 Let the sound carry into the distance;
 Great is the Lord for all time,
 Great is today for the rest of time.
 Great is the Lord for all time,
 Great is today for the rest of time.*

*Out of Egypt, in front of the people,
 Like a shepherd with a staff for protection
 You came with your staff, the clouds,
 And your eye, the glowing fire!
 Come as a shepherd in front of the people,
 Strong your arm, your eye glowing.*

*And the sea hears your voice,
 It pulls itself away from the line of migrants, it becomes land.
 Fearful of the monstrous sea
 They look through the wall of crystal.
 We trusted your voice,
 We stepped happily onto the new land.*

*But the horizon darkens,
 Horse and rider come apart,
 Horns blare, iron sparks:
 It is Pharaoh and his baggage train.
 Lord, as danger envelops us in darkness,
 We are helpless, with men and horses there.*

*And the enemy, burning with murder,
 Press onwards on a secure path;
 Now, now, listen to that, what rumbling,
 Groaning, murmuring, booming, listen to the storm!
 It is the Lord in his wrath,
 The tower of water all around collapses.*

*Man and beast,
 Horse and rider,
 Are overwhelmed, swirled around
 In a dangerous net.
 The spokes of their chariots are shattered,
 The driver is dead, the horses are dead.*

Tauchst du auf, Pharao?
Hinab, hinunter,
Hinunter in den Abgrund,
Schwarz wie deine Brust.

Und das Meer hat nun vollzogen,
Lautlos rollen seine Wogen
Nimmer gibt es, was es barg,
Eine Wüste, Grab zugleich und Sarg.

Tauchst du auf, Pharao?
Hinab, hinunter,
Hinunter in den Abgrund,
Schwarz wie deine Brust.
Schrecklich hat das Meer vollzogen
Lautlos rollen seine Wogen,
Nimmer gibt es, was es barg,
Frevlergrab zugleich und Sarg.

D'rum mit Cymbeln und mit Saiten,
Lasst den Hall es tragen weit,
Gross der Herr zu allen Zeiten,
Heute gross vor aller Zeit.
Gross der Herr zu allen Zeiten,
Heute gross vor aller Zeit.

*Are you going to emerge from the water, Pharaoh?
Downwards, down,
Down into the abyss,
As black as your breast.*

*And the sea has now completed everything terrifyingly,
Its waves roll silently;
Will it never give up what it has taken?
A wasteland, both grave and coffin in one.*

*Are you going to emerge from the water, Pharaoh?
Downwards, down,
Down into the abyss,
As black as your breast.
And the sea has now completed everything terrifyingly,
Its waves roll silently;
Will it never give up what it has taken?
Sinner's grave and coffin in one.*

*Therefore with cymbals and strings
Let the sound carry into the distance,
Great is the Lord for all time,
Great is today for the rest of time.
Great is the Lord for all time,
Great is today for the rest of time.*

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FANNY HENSEL

HIOB

Fanny Hensel (nee Mendelssohn) (1805-1847): Hiob (Job) (1831) Cantata for Orchestra, Soloists and Choir

Mrs Hensel was an extremely learned musician and played the piano very well...she was a woman of excellent intellect and full of energy.

Charles Gounod

She achieved a level of musical knowledge which few other artists who have dedicated their lives to music could claim.

Ludwig Rellstab

Fanny, three years older than her brother Felix, was inseparable from him until they reached their early twenties. Fanny and Felix learned composition together, showed their work first to each other exclusively and trusted only each other's opinion of it. Together with their siblings Rebecca and Paul they received an excellent education and were culturally privileged as members of a family whose considerable influence on European culture had been sustained since the publication of their paternal grandfather Moses Mendelssohn's treatise *Jerusalem*, in 1784.



One of the most important of post-enlightenment German philosophers, Moses argued that the worldly truth of Judaism was a basis for its compatibility with modernity, taking an assimilationist approach to reform of religious orthodoxy in a debate on Jewish identity that continues to be relevant. Fanny and Felix's father Abraham took Moses's argument further, but in a conversionist direction. He had his young children

baptised as Christians in 1815, converting in turn himself with his wife Lea in 1822, and in 1829 adopting the non-Jewish name of Bartholdy, announcing that 'A Christian Mendelssohn the world would never recognise. Nor should there be a Christian Mendelssohn'. Lea's brother Jakob, who had successfully urged Abraham to convert his children, had changed his own surname from Salomon to Bartholdy – the name of

the former owner of land that he had purchased in Berlin. Rather than replacing the family surname however, Felix decided to append it to the existing one, thereby differentiating the (converted) Lutheran Mendelssohns from the (reformist) Jewish ones but clearly retaining their Jewish identity nevertheless.

By this time, his reputation as a composer growing, Felix was about to

leave for a grand tour to study European music, whereas the trajectory of Fanny's life was becoming quite different. Her parents had recognised her exceptional musical talent, sending her with Felix in 1816 for piano lessons in Paris with Marie Bigot de Morogues, a favourite of Haydn and Beethoven. In Berlin they were taught by the Beethoven interpreter Ludwig Berger and by Carl Friedrich, the Director of the Singakademie, who introduced them to Bach's cantatas. When Fanny was 14, she played all of Bach's Preludes and Fugues from memory as part of the family celebrations for her father's

birthday, only to be reminded by him afterwards that despite her prodigious talents, her primary duties as a woman would be domestic, as a wife and mother. Thus, as Felix embarked on his grand tour in 1829, Fanny remained at home in Berlin and married the painter Wilhelm Hensel, who had fallen in love with her on meeting her seven years earlier. He had been ridiculed then for being slow-witted and tone-deaf and told by Abraham and Lea that he would have to prove he could support Fanny if he wished to marry her. Having achieved this, Wilhelm made it a condition of their marriage that Fanny should

complete at least a page of her own musical composition each day, one that she began immediately to fulfil on the eve of her wedding. Felix had promised to compose her wedding music, but having failed to do so, she composed it herself the night before the ceremony.

Fanny continued to compose, producing an oeuvre of more than 450 works, the majority of which were of chamber music – lieder and piano pieces. The family home in Berlin included in its considerable grounds a so-called garden house, consisting of an auditorium with seating for 300,



Julius Eduard Wilhelm Helfft -

The Music Room of Fanny Hensel

where at regular Sunday morning concerts (Sonntagsmusiken) Fanny was able to perform and conduct her own works, as well as those of other major composers, for family, friends and invited guests – many of them prominent fellow composers and musicians. The years 1830-32 were especially productive: she composed all three of her cantatas in 1831, after having given birth to her son (christened Felix Ludwig Sebastian!) in 1830. Her first cantata, *Lobegesang* (Song of Praise), was composed in celebration of his birth; *Hiob* (Job) was the second, first performed to celebrate her father's birthday. The theme of questioning the apparently arbitrary character and cruelly destructive consequences of some expressions of God's will was a response to the cholera epidemic which struck Berlin during this time. She nursed her family through the outbreak and wrote her third cantata, *Horetzu, Merket auf!* (Listen, Pay Attention!) to mark their survival. Composition of the orchestral *Overture in C major* followed in 1832. It was not until 1846, however, that she was able to begin publishing her works, an endeavour terminated by her death in May 1847 from a paralytic stroke suffered whilst rehearsing

one of Felix's cantatas, *Die erste Walpurgisnacht* for a Sonntagsmusiken concert.

Hiob is structured in three movements, each of which sets a verse from the Book of Job in a succinct portrayal of Job's suffering as a test of his belief in God and submission to divine will. It opens and closes with large choruses, separated by a central *Arioso* for the four soloists. The first two movements address the existential questions of the identity of a human being and the character of divine attention to them. In the opening chorus ('Was ist ein Mensch?') sopranos ask the question, which is repeated successively by tenors, altos and basses, before all parts elaborate together the grounds for it: God's interest is such that He attends to and tests people constantly. All voices continue to reiterate the enquiry, interweaving recurrently through a variety of melodic-harmonic variations at a lively tempo before concluding with a deliberately trenchant final restatement of it. The soloists then elaborate the issue further, the alto opening and closing the short second movement by strongly voicing Job's questioning challenge: why does God hide His face and treat him as an enemy ('Warum verbirgest du

dein Anlitz...?'). In succession the other three soloists ground this question by likening Job, and thus human beings, to a leaf and dry chaff which can be so easily driven and pursued by the force of divine will ('Willst du wider ein fliegend Blatt...?'). The tenors then lead the chorus into the final movement's elaborate expression of Job's confident declaration of his faithful reconciliation to the benevolent purpose of God's will through His gifts of life, love and care ('Leben und Wohltat hast du an mir getan...'). This is developed through rich contrapuntal structures by all voice parts elaborating Job's acknowledgment that, although hidden in His heart ('Und wiewohl du solches in deinem Herzen verbirgest'), God's purpose was always to preserve the human spirit. The work closes in a sustained, joyful declamation of this certainty ('So Weiss ich doch, dass du des gedenkest'), taking a comparable choral musical form to the closing question of the first movement, and answering it.

Paul Filmer

Interval

During the 20-minute interval, members of the audience are requested not to enter the performing area.

Libretto

1

Job 7

Was ist ein Mensch, daß du ihn groß achtest und
bekümmerst dich mit ihm?
Du suchest ihn täglich heim und versuchest ihn alle
Stunde.

*What is man, that you make so much of him, and that
you set your heart on him, visit him every morning
and test him every moment?*

2

Job 13

Warum verbirgest du dein Antlitz? Willst du wider ein
fliegend Blatt so eifrig sein und einen dünnen Halm
verfolgen?

*Why do you hide your face? Will you frighten a
driven leaf and pursue dry chaff?*

3

Job 10

Leben und Wohltat hast du an mir getan,
und dein Aufsehen bewahret meinen Odem.
Und wiewohl du solches in deinem Herzen
verbirgest, so weiß ich doch, daß du des gedenkest.

*You have granted me life and steadfast love, and
your care has preserved my spirit.
Yet these things you hid in your heart; I know that this
was your purpose.*

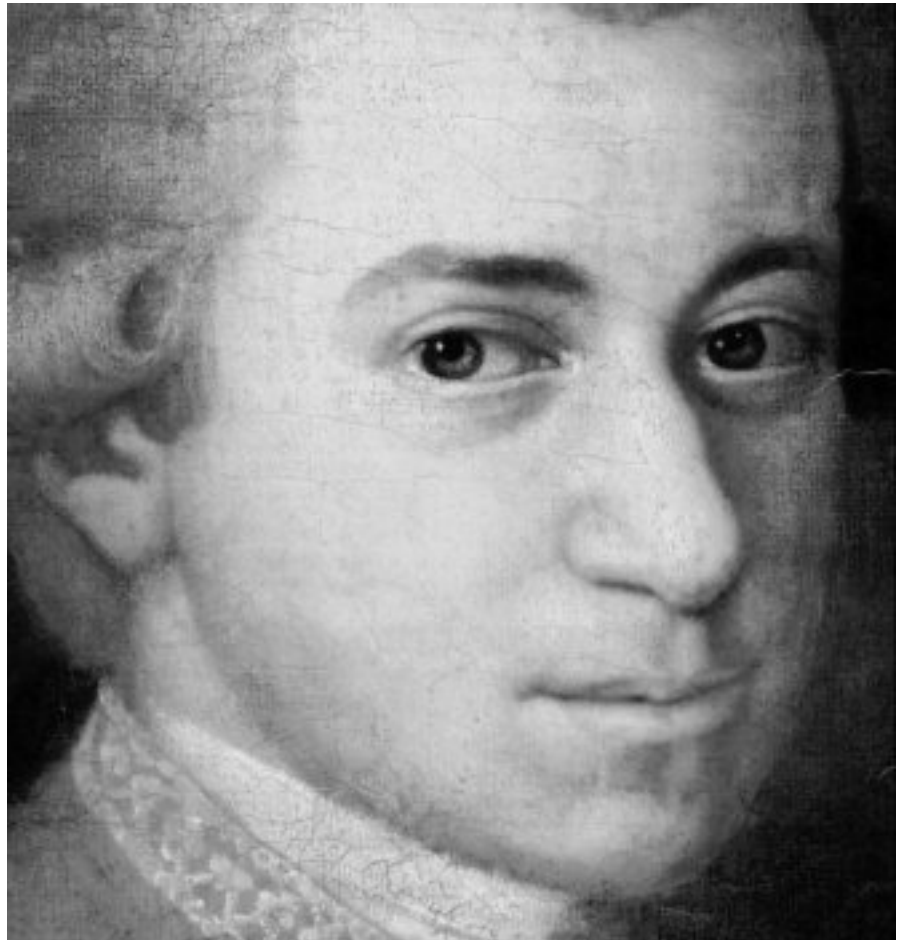
W A MOZART

DAVIDE PENITENTE

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791): Davide penitente K469 (1785)

In January 1785, Mozart accepted a commission from the Viennese Society of Musicians for a choral work to be performed at two Lenten concerts in March of the same year, promising a new setting for a complete psalm. *Davide penitente* was the resulting work, but it took a form quite different from that promised at its commission, reusing music that Mozart had developed three years earlier, at a time of intense creative and personal change which began in the autumn of 1781 following his resignation from the post of organist to the court of the Archbishop of Salzburg, Hieronymus Colloredo. Mozart's father, Leopold, himself a musician at the court, had petitioned the Archbishop for the appointment on his son's behalf.

Wolfgang had previously resigned from Colloredo's court in 1777, intending to establish himself as a freelance composer and musician, and thereby freeing himself from being dependent on a sole patron, as was required of a court musician. He had sought work then in Mannheim and Paris, only to find that the infrastructure for musical commissioning that was required for this was insufficiently developed. His attempts to establish himself were effectively ended when his mother, who had travelled with him, died in Paris in the summer of 1778. Having failed to find work in Mannheim and Munich, he returned reluctantly to Salzburg and the re-appointment that his father had sought for him, to which



the Archbishop had agreed, though with the stipulation that any new works Wolfgang composed, in addition to his court and chapel duties, should neither last too long nor deploy operatic conventions. Mozart had turned down as uninteresting a similar post at the court of Versailles whilst seeking work in Paris a year earlier, which must have made the imposition of such constraints by Colloredo

especially frustrating. Yet despite them, or perhaps to compensate for them, in the following two years Mozart composed some of his most outstanding church music, of which the *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore* and the *Coronation Mass* can be considered the finest examples. Within the structural order of traditional compositional forms, they display the imaginative originality of his mature style.

Mozart's frustrations mounted, however, and he resigned from the Archbishop's court in June 1781, whilst it was in Vienna, writing to his father: "No more Salzburg for me! I hate the Archbishop almost to fury!" He remained in Vienna and married Constanze Weber in August 1782, promising to compose a large-scale mass for her as a wedding present, to be performed in Salzburg on their first visit as man and wife. This was to be the *Mass in C minor*, of which he was able to write to his father on 4 January 1783, that he had "the score of half a Mass...lying here waiting to be finished". He had written earlier that although "for quite a time we have gone to Mass and confession and communion together...I have found that I have never prayed so fervently or confessed or communicated so devoutly as at her side, and it was the same for her". Whilst this may explain Mozart's pious initiative, Constanze was already expecting their first child and Mozart was thus reliant wholly on his own enterprise to provide an income for his prospective family. The Mass, consisting thus far of the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus and Benedictus may well have been 'waiting to be finished' because he was engaged also, more or less simultaneously, with composition of three *Piano Concertos* (K413-415), the *Serenade for Wind Instruments in C minor*, the first of a set of six string quartets that would be dedicated to Haydn and the '*Haffner*' *Symphony*!

The visit to Salzburg duly took place in the autumn of 1783, and the Mass was performed in St Peter's Church on October 23. Presumably Mozart drew from his own earlier works for the missing movements, since it is inconceivable that an incomplete Mass could have been performed in a liturgical setting at that time. He would have had no compunction in doing so, following the parodic convention of *contrafactum* – using music composed previously for other work to set new text – employed by most Baroque composers. Bach and Handel both resorted frequently to this practice, and Mozart had become closely acquainted with the music of both at the Sunday musicales in Baron von Swieten's apartments, adding their contrapuntal techniques to his own galant style, thus extending his musical language into the brilliance characteristic of his late works.

The practice also served him well under comparable pressure at the beginning of 1785, after he had accepted the commission for *Davide penitente* from the Society of Musicians. His father and Joseph Haydn were both visiting Vienna, and Mozart had organised six concerts during which he planned to premiere two new concertos (K466 and 467). From February to March, he is known to have performed in these and four other concerts, as well as giving three further performances and, with his father, playing the violin parts in three of the recently completed 'Haydn'

Quartets at a performance for their dedicatee. During this period he also had to complete *Davide penitente* for two performances that he would be required to conduct on March 13 and 15. He had already told the Society that he would be unable to fulfil his promise of a new Psalm setting, but honoured the contract nevertheless by recycling music from the *Mass in C minor* to a text comprised of ten brief sections from an Italian translation of the Lenten Penitential Psalms of David – hence the work's title. The Mass had not yet been heard in Vienna, and Mozart would surely have hoped that its display of his compositional skills would lead to further commissions. The source of the Italian text is unknown, but is possibly the work of Lorenzo Da Ponte, who had arrived in Vienna in 1783 and was introduced to Mozart shortly afterwards. He had produced libretti for Salieri and other composers, and Mozart suggested he adapt Beaumarchais' *Les Noces de Figaro* for setting by him – the first of their successful operatic collaborations. Already working closely with Mozart by 1785, the resourceful Da Ponte would have been an obvious person to ask for a text to set for a commission that had to be fulfilled in haste.

Following Bach's structure for his *Mass in B minor*, Mozart had organised the completed parts of his own *Mass in C minor* into separate, cantata-style numbers, to which the Italian text could be adapted easily.

He took the Kyrie and Gloria as the basis for *Davide penitente*, adding two arias and a passage for the three soloists before the finale. The work is divided into ten numbers, shared equally between chorus and soloists, and opening with the music of the Kyrie from the Mass – here it is also a chorus ‘Alzai le flebili voci al Signor’ (I lifted my feeble voice unto the Lord), calling penitentially for relief from oppression by pain, the poignancy of the plea made the more emphatic by the soprano soloist’s lovely arpeggios. The second chorus, ‘Cantiam le glorie’ follows the opening number of the Gloria of the Mass in both music and initially exuberant mood to its quieter conclusion. The florid aria for mezzo-soprano that succeeds it – ‘Lungi le cure in grata’ (Now your troubles are afar) – offers a more ruminative interpretation to the music of *Laudamus te*, requiring a particularly subtle virtuosity of the soloist. For the following chorus – ‘Sil pur sempre benigno, O Dio’ (Be favourable always to us, O God) – the sopranos are split, giving almost a keening edge to the mood of the *Gratias* of the Mass, from which the music is drawn. The fifth number – ‘Sorgio, O Signore’ (Rise, O Lord) – as in the *Domine Deus* of the Mass, is a duet alike in mood for both soprano soloists.

Then follows the first of Mozart’s new additions, an impressive aria for tenor soloist – ‘A te, fra tante affanni’ (In the throes of all my anxieties) – which begins in pastoral style, andante, to

gentle woodwind and accompanying strings. An anxious plea for divine pity develops gradually into a more elaborate celebration, allegro – ‘Udisti i voti me’ (You have heard my prayers) – that the plea has been understood, before a return to the gentle calm of the opening. The seventh of the Penitential poems – ‘Se vuoi puniscimi’ (Punish me, if You wish) – opens trenchantly to the music for the *Qui tollis* of the Mass, dividing the chorus into two choirs which present contrapuntal acceptance of the justification for divine punishment, moving to a softer closing prayer for help and forgiveness.

A sombre introduction follows to the second of Mozart’s innovations, the soprano aria – ‘Fra l’oscure ombre funeste’ (Amidst dark and deadly shadows) – which is structured similarly to that for the tenor soloist: an opening andante, here a sombre plea on behalf of the righteous for lightening the darkness of suffering and sorrow, moves to a cheerful allegro celebrating the dawn of salvation. Representation of the different moods through long runs and coloratura expression demand a virtuosity of the soloist that matches the brilliance of Mozart’s composition. Fittingly, the three soloists join for the ninth movement Terzetto – ‘Tutte le mie speranze’ (All my hope rests in You) – taking the music of the *Quoniam* from the Mass and cheerfully interweaving the trio’s complex harmonies over brisk allegro

flourishes from the orchestra, united in celebration of the divine trust which is the reward for penitence.

The work concludes with a huge chorus – ‘Chi in Dio sol spera’ (Who has faith in God) – supported adagio by brass and timpani, asserting faith as the antidote to fear through increasingly elaborate fugal interchanges to shifting dynamics until interrupted by Mozart’s final innovation, a gloriously showy, echoing intervention by the three soloists. The choir returns for a final restatement of faith in resounding conclusion.

Paul Filmer

1 Coro

Alzai le flebili voci al Signor
alzai a Dio le flebili voci, da mali oppresso.

2 Coro

Cantiam le glorie, e le lodi
e replicamole in cento modi
cantiamo del Signore amabilissimo.

3 Aria

Lungi le cure in grate
ah! Respirate omai
se palpitate assai
è tempo da goder.

4 Coro

Sii pur sempre benigno, oh Dio,
e le preghiere ti muovano a pietà!

5 Duetto

Sorgi, o Signore, e spargi
e dissipa i tuoi nemici,
fuga ogn'un che t'odia, fuga da te!

6 Aria

A te, fra tanti affanni,
pietà cercai, Signore,
che vedi il mio bel core,
che mi conosci almen.

Udisti i voti miei
e già godea quest'alma
per te l'usata calma
delle tempeste in sen.

7 Coro

Se vuoi puniscimi
ma pria, Signore,
lascia, che almeno,
che sfoghi, che si moderi
il tuo sdegno, il tuo furore.
Vedi la mia pallida guancia inferma,
Signore, deh! Sanami, deh!
Porgimi soccorso aita,
Signor, tu puoi.

1 Chorus

*Oppressed by troubles, I raised my lamenting voice to
the Lord.*

2 Chorus

*Let us sing songs of glory, and let us sing praises to
our most beloved Lord, and let us repeat them a
hundredfold.*

3 Aria

*Now your troubles are far away
Ah! At last you can breathe freely
No longer tremble with fear
It is time to rejoice.*

4 Chorus

*Always be gracious to us, oh God, and let our prayers
move you to compassion.*

5 Duet

*Arise, oh Lord,
Scatter and silence your foes
Put all those who hate You to flight.*

6 Aria

*In the throes of all my anxieties
I asked, Lord, for your compassion
You who can see the goodness of my heart
You who know me well.*

*You heard my prayers
And soon my soul enjoyed
The calm You always offer
To a stormy heart.*

7 Chorus

*If you wish, punish me,
but first, Lord,
let your wrath abate
and your fury be tempered.
See my pale, sickly cheek.
Lord, please heal me, please help me.
Lord, it is in your power.*

8 Aria

Fra l'oscure ombra funeste
splende al giusto il ciel sereno,
serba ancor nelle tempeste
la sua pace un fido cor.

Alme belle! Ah si, godete!

Nè alcun fia che turbi audace
quella gioja e quella pace
di cui solo è Dio l'autor.

9 Terzetto

Tutte le mie speranze ho riposto in te.
Salvami, o Dio, dal nemico feroce
che m'insegue e che m'incalza.

10 Cor

Chi in Dio sol spera
di tai pericoli non ha timor.

8 Aria

*Amidst dark and deadly shadows
Shines a clear sky for the righteous man
Even during the storms
His faithful heart brings him peace.*

Beautiful souls! Be happy!

*No one will ever dare disturb
That joy and peace
Which comes only from the Lord.*

9 Trio

*All my hope rests in You.
Save me, oh God, from the fierce foe
Who chases me, hot on my heels.*

10 Chorus

*He who trusts in God alone need never fear such
dangers.*



BIOGRAPHIES



ELEANOR PENNELL-BRIGGS SOPRANO

Soprano Eleanor Pennell-Briggs trained as an oboist at the Royal College of Music and the Norwegian Academy of Music, and then as a

singer at Trinity Laban and with Dennis O'Neill at the Wales International Academy of Voice. Notable performances include the Villa-Lobos *Bachianas Brasileiras* No.5 at Cadogan Hall, Handel's *Messiah* at St John's Smith Square, *The Ultimate Opera Gala* with Welsh National Opera Orchestra, and Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* with both the Orchestre National de Lille and the Cheltenham Music Festival. Eleanor has worked as principal or cover with companies such as the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Teatro Garibaldi (Sicily), Orchestre National de Lille, English Touring Opera and Philharmonie Luxembourg. Eleanor was previously a member of the Royal Opera Chorus and during that time she covered the role of Barena in Janacek's *Jenufa*. The 2025-26 season saw her join the chorus of

English National Opera, perform Mozart's *Solemn Vespers* at Cadogan Hall and Brahms' *Requiem* at the Royal Festival Hall. For the 2026-27 season Eleanor will be enjoying maternity leave but will return for performances with North London Chorus and Highgate Choral Society, and cover the roles of Laetitia / Plaintiff in Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Zoo* / *Trial by Jury* for ENO.



ELEANOR SANDERSON-NASH SOPRANO

Originally from East Sussex, Eleanor graduated from the Master's course at the Royal College of Music with Distinction in 2017 under the tutelage of Janis Kelly and Caroline Dowdle. There she was generously supported by a Martin Harris Award and a

Charles Branchini Award, the Josephine Baker Trust, Friends of Music in Mayfield, The Lake House Charitable Foundation and the Tom Cocklin Memorial Trust. She earned a First Class Honours Bachelor's degree from the Royal Northern College of Music in 2015.

Since completing her studies, Eleanor has performed with English National Opera, Grange Park Opera, English Touring Opera, West Green House Opera, Waterperry Opera and Tête-à-Tête. She was a Young Artist at Opera Holland Park in 2017 and a Swing in Phantom of the Opera in London's West End from 2019-2020.

Most recently, Eleanor sang the role of Josephine in *HMS Pinafore* with English National Opera. Other recent highlights include Papagena in *The Magic Flute* with Wild Arts, Johanna in *Sweeney Todd* with West Green House

Opera, and covering the role of Phyllis in *Iolanthe* with English National Opera.

Eleanor is looking forward to an exciting and busy summer season where she'll perform the role of Raina in *The Chocolate Soldier* (being staged in the UK for the first time in over 100 years) with IF Opera, and Yum-Yum in *The Mikado* with The National Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company. When she's not performing, Eleanor is probably being kept very busy with her two young children at their home in Essex.

www.eleanorsandersonnash.com



MARK MILHOFER TENOR

After a quarter century of singing around the world, Mark Milhofer is at the peak of his vocal powers. A choral scholar at Oxford, he trained at the Guildhall School of Music and then won one of the few places at the Italian Studio in Milan.

Career highlights include working with Franco Zeffirelli on *Pagliacci* in a Greek Amphitheatre in the shadow of the Parthenon; spinning around the stage using two small tables as roller skates in Dario Fo's production of *Il barbiere di Siviglia*; being naked for a movingly staged *Billy Budd* in Turin; learning magic tricks for Menotti's *The Consul*; flying in a pink carriage in Rossini's *Cenerentola*; being blindfolded while singing the Madwoman in Britten's *Curlew River*; dragging up to look like Meryl Streep in Cavalli's *Eliogabalo*; shepherding real goats in Monteverdi's *Ulisse* in Geneva; being hideously blinded in George Benjamin's *Lessons in Love and Violence* in Zurich and singing inside a haystack in Purcell's *King Arthur* in Berlin and Vienna.

Mark's busy concert schedule often includes Bach's *Passions*, Handel's *Messiah*, Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* and *War Requiem*,

Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*. Recital programmes often promote new CD releases, including *Tosti: The Song of a Life*, Benjamin Britten's *Complete Folk Song Settings*, (Marco Scolastra, piano) and his double album called *Enrico Caruso – His Songs* (also with Scolastra), recorded in Caruso's own house. It includes all nine of the songs written by Caruso and 39 of the 90 songs that Mark has so far discovered that were written for and dedicated to him. A recital programme of a selection of these songs has been performed in Carnegie Hall and many venues in Europe. He has also published the music for Caruso's own songs, now available together for the first time.



HENRY GEORGE PAGE BARITONE

Henry George Page is a singer, composer, conductor and accompanist. He currently maintains roles as Bass Scholar St Olave's,

Hart Street and as a Lay Clerk at Manchester Cathedral. He sings with the acclaimed Kantos Chamber Choir and has worked on recordings for Signum, Delphian and Chandos Records.

Henry studied at the University of Manchester and the Royal Northern College of Music, where he won the Patricia Cunliffe Composition Prize, the Gold Medal as a composer and the Emmanuel Prize as an accompanist. He originated principal roles at the Grimeborn and Tête à Tête opera festivals, and participated in world premieres of works by Judith Bingham, Paul Mealor, Roxanna Panufnik, Mark Simpson and Sir James MacMillan. A lively animateur and conductor, Henry is currently

musical director of the Maia Singers and Saddleworth Musical Society.

This season has included solo commitments for Saint-Saëns's *Christmas Oratorio* with the Cholmeley Choral Society, Handel's *Messiah* for Saddleworth Male Voice Choir and *Rusalka* with the RLPO Opera Chorus of which he is a founder member. In September Henry returns to RNCM to complete an Advanced Diploma in Vocal Studies with Hilary Summers and Quentin Hayes.



MURRAY HIPKIN CONDUCTOR

Murray Hipkin studied at York University, the Guildhall and the National Opera Studio before joining English National Opera (1983–1988 and 1995-present) where he has conducted *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *The Gondoliers*, *Kismet*, *Carousel*, *Chess* and *Man of La Mancha*. As répétiteur and assistant conductor he has worked on numerous productions over 37

seasons, most recently *HMS Pinafore* and the UK premiere of Du Yun's *Angel's Bone* in Manchester. In 2013 he played the solo piano in the ENO film of *Death in Venice* and recently played the solo piano in *The Turn of the Screw*, *Albert Herring* and appeared onstage in *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* and *The Magic Flute*. In 2022 he appeared as Music Supervisor in the Sky/ENO series *Anyone Can Sing*.

Elsewhere he has conducted *La bohème* (Surrey Opera, Opera Box); Salieri *Falstaff*, Haydn *La vera costanza*, Mozart *Apollo and Hyacinth*, Gluck *Le cinesi* (Bampton Classical Opera), and worked for Opéra de Lyon, La Monnaie, Opera Factory, Scottish Opera and Opera Brava.

Other highlights include assisting the composer John Adams both for the C4 film *The Death of Klinghoffer* and for *Nixon in China* at the Proms and in Berlin; *Pierrot Lunaire* with Björk at the Verbier Festival and *Sweeney Todd* for Bergen National Opera. In 2009

Murray completed an eight-month sabbatical from ENO as Musical Director of *The Sound of Music* at the London Palladium. In 2023 and 2024 he conducted *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Gondoliers*, *The Mikado*, *The Sorcerer* and *The Yeomen of the Guard* at the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival in Buxton and in spring 2024 he worked on the Deutsche Oper Berlin production of *Nixon in China*. In June this year he stepped in as chorus director for the Groot Omroepkoor for a concert performance of Glass *Akhmaten* at Het Concertgebouw, Amsterdam. He has been with NLC since 2003 and from 2010 until 2023 was also MD of the Pink Singers.

Plans for the 2026/27 ENO season include *Angel's Bone*, *Adriana Mater* (Saariaho), *Breaking the Waves* (Mazzoli) and *Trial by Jury / The Zoo* (Sullivan). In 2025 Murray joined the Board of Trustees of The Choir With No Name.

NORTH LONDON CHORUS

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Helena Beddoe
Naomi Braybrooke
Michaela Carlowe
Jess Cattley

Jenny Cohen
Laetitia Dimitriu
Bernadette Gillespie
Debbie Goldman

Rhona Graham
Amanda Horton
Enid Hunt
Marta Jansa

Susan Kempster
Alison Liney
Ros Massey
Ann Perkins

Verity Preest
Judith Suissa
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Pasco Fearon
Sue Heaney

Elisabeth Hewitt
Keith Maiden
Jeremy Pratt

Nigel Royden
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Norman Cohen
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Shaun Davies

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Claire Durr-Sorensen
Jo Turner

Timpani

Rob Kendell



NLC is a registered charity (no 277544) and is a member of Making Music, The National Federation of Music

NORTH LONDON CHORUS



Photo by Tim Lutton

We are a talented and versatile amateur choir and have established a reputation for performances of a high standard since our first concert in 1977 under the direction of the late Alan Hazeldine. Our musical director since 2003 has been Murray Hipkin. His considerable experience, enthusiasm and skills as teacher and conductor of choral music and opera have enabled NLC to flourish through the development of an exciting and ambitious programme of performances drawn from the choral repertoire of the 16th to 21st centuries, as well as works commissioned from contemporary composers.

The choir benefits greatly from working with our vocal coach Yvette Bonner, who gives all members at least two small-group tuition sessions each year. We are privileged to have as our patrons the renowned operatic soprano Janis Kelly, Professor and Chair of Vocal Performance at the Royal College of Music, and the baroque musicologist and Handel scholar and performer Laurence Cummings OBE, currently music director of the Academy of Ancient Music, both of whom have performed with us.

We give public concerts in Autumn, Spring and Summer at St James Church in Muswell Hill, and continue to explore performing at larger venues in Central London, such as Milton Court at the Barbican Centre and on occasional overseas visits, most recently at the Berliner Konzerthaus and the City Church of St Jakob, Staffauer in Zurich.

We regularly explore unusual repertoire and styles of performance: in December 2020 (during lockdown) many members participated in the London Handel Festival's

Messiah Reimagined, broadcast live on YouTube, as part of a pre-recorded digital choir. Our first live post-lockdown concert was Britten's *Saint Nicolas* in November 2021, in partnership with Finchley Children's Music Group, with an additional relaxed afternoon performance for families with children and audience members with special needs. We repeated this successful venture at our July 2023 concert *A Night at the Opera*. Our concert in November 2025 included the cantata *Some Corner of a Foreign Field* by the contemporary English composer Cecilia McDowall, who attended one of our rehearsals to discuss her work with us.

Every year we hold a weekend workshop, enabling us to work intensively on vocal technique and choral repertoire under expert specialist tuition. It also includes a relaxed Saturday evening concert of cabaret-style performances of music, song and humour displaying the considerable range and variety of our members' talents.

As a registered charity, one of whose aims is the promotion, maintenance and improvement of public appreciation of choral music, we have been successful in raising funds to help subsidise our work. Through our own concerts and participation in local events we also support a number of other charities.

We rehearse weekly on Thursday evenings from 7.45pm to 10pm at Martin School in East Finchley. We welcome new members and invite interested singers of all voice parts to attend one or two rehearsals prior to auditioning. Details are available at: <https://www.northlondonchorus.org/joining/>.



Friends of NLC

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To mark our 40th Anniversary **Friends of North London Chorus** was launched in the summer of 2017, with a performance by our late **Friends of NLC** patron and renowned soprano Sally Silver.

We would be delighted to welcome more **Friends** to the scheme. Donations support and fund special projects, workshops, new commissions and similar activities within our charitable goals, and will also enable us to provide additional support to members in need who would otherwise find it difficult to sing with the choir.

The suggested donation is £40 per year (you are welcome to give more!) and you are warmly invited to join. Membership of Friends of NLC will entitle you to the following:

- Acknowledgement of your generous support in our concert programme (unless you prefer to opt out).
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If you would like to become a friend of the NLC, please join the scheme via our website

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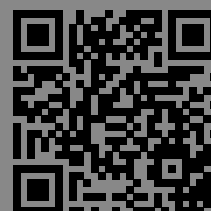
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Try us out before you join!

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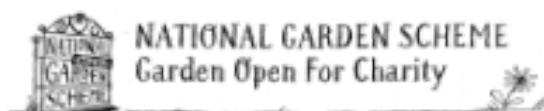
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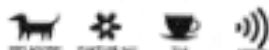
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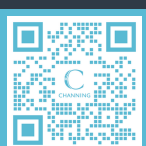


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15 Mar 2014	Schubert <i>Mirjams Siegesgesang</i> Korngold <i>Passover Psalm</i> Mendelssohn <i>Hear My Prayer</i> Bernstein <i>Chichester Psalms</i>	25 Nov 2017	Mendelssohn <i>Die erste</i> , <i>Walpurgisnacht</i> Vaughan Williams <i>In Windsor Forest</i> Dähler <i>Byzantium</i>	3 Dec 2022	Handel <i>Dixit Dominus</i> Charpentier <i>Messe de Minuit pour Noël</i>
14 Jul 2014	Mendelssohn <i>Verleih uns Frieden</i> Brahms <i>Nänie</i> Brahms <i>Ein deutsches Requiem</i>	17 Mar 2018	Haydn <i>The Creation</i> <i>Insanae et vanae curae</i>	22 Apr 2023	Vaughan Williams <i>A Sea Symphony</i>
22 Nov 2014	Beethoven <i>Mass in C</i> Haydn <i>Te Deum</i>	14 Jul 2018	Salieri <i>Requiem</i> Puccini <i>Messa di Gloria</i>	22 Jul 2023	A Night at the Opera Arias and choruses from favourite operas and operettas
21 Mar 2015	Fauré <i>Requiem Mass</i> Kodály <i>Missa Brevis</i> Liszt <i>Die Seligkeiten</i>	17 Nov 2018	Britten <i>The Company of Heaven</i> Haydn <i>Nelson Mass</i>	25 Nov 2023	Bach Magnificat, Gloria in Excelsis Deo. Handel <i>Laudate pueri</i>
16 May 2015	Britten <i>War Requiem</i>	9 Mar 2019	JS Bach <i>St John Passion</i>	16 Mar 2024	Smyth <i>The Prison</i> Beethoven <i>Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt</i> Brahms <i>Nänie</i>
4 July 2015	Handel <i>Acis and Galatea</i>	22 Jun 2019	Rutter <i>Magnificat</i> Vaughan Williams <i>Flos campi</i> Dyson <i>Hierusalem</i>	22 Jun 2024	Verdi <i>Requiem</i>
28 Nov 2015	Bach <i>Magnificat, Christmas Oratorio Parts 1,2,3</i>	30 Nov 2019	Rossini <i>Petite Messe Solennelle</i> Verdi <i>Ave Maria, Va pensiero</i>	23 Nov 2024	Durufé <i>Requiem</i> Poulenc <i>Gloria</i>
12 Mar 2016	Mendelssohn <i>Elijah</i>	27 Nov 2021	Britten <i>St Nicolas</i>	29 Mar 2025	Bach <i>Mass in B minor</i>
11 Jun 2016	Bernstein <i>Mass (Choral Suite)</i> Whitacre <i>Five Hebrew Love songs</i> Copland <i>Old American Songs</i>	9 Apr 2022	Brahms <i>Ein deutsches Requiem, Geistliches Lied</i>	12 Jul 2025	Brahms <i>Schicksalslied</i> Elgar <i>The Music Makers</i>
20 Nov 2016	Verdi <i>Requiem</i>	2 Jul 2022	Cherubini <i>Mass in C minor</i>	22 Nov 2025	Vaughan Williams <i>Dona Nobis Pacem</i> McDowall <i>Some Corner of a Foreign Field</i>
25 Mar 2017	Dove <i>The Passing of the Year</i> Brahms <i>Liebeslieder, Neue Liebeslieder</i>		Bach <i>Cantata 51 Jauchzet Gott</i> Mendelssohn <i>Wie der Hirsch schreit</i>	21 Mar 2026	Dvořák <i>Stabat Mater</i>
1 Jun 2017	Mozart <i>Requiem</i> King <i>Out of the Depths</i>				

Please visit www.northlondonchorus.org for the full list dating back to the first concert in 1977

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Murray Hipkin

Rehearsal Accompanist

Catherine Borner

Vocal Consultant

Yvette Bonner

Thanks to **Nikolas Clarke and the St Genesius Choir** for the generous loan of orchestral material (Mozart) and to **HenselPushers** for providing the score and parts for **Overture in C**.

Many thanks to our team of volunteers who assist us so generously at our concerts.

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