Heathfield Choral Society

Camerata of London

Claire Lees ***soprano*** **Gary Marriott** ***tenor***

Nick Gee ***bass***

Brian Newman ***conductor***

Josef Haydn

CREATION

Saturday 20th May 2017

PROGRAMME

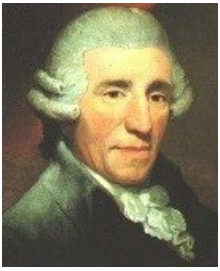
Registered charity No. 295293

Programme

1. The Representation of Chaos [Orchestra]
2. In the beginning [Bass & Chorus]
3. Now vanish before the holy beams [Tenor & Chorus]
4. And God made the firmament [Bass recit.]
5. The marv'lous work behold amazed [Soprano & Chorus]
6. And God said: “Let the waters be gathered together”
7. Rolling in foaming billows [Bass solo]
8. And God said: “Let the earth bring forth grass”
9. With verdure clad the fields appear [Soprano solo]
10. And the heavenly host proclaimed [Tenor recit.]
11. Awake the harp [Chorus]
12. And God said: “Let there be lights” [Tenor recit.]
13. In splendour bright is rising now the sun [Tenor]
14. The Heavens are telling the glory of God [Chorus]
15. “Let the waters bring forth abundantly” [Sop. recit.]
16. On mighty pens [Sop. solo]
17. And God created great whales [Bass recit.]
18. And the angels struck their harps [Bass recit.]
19. Most beautiful appear [Trio]
20. The Lord is great [Trio and chorus]

INTERVAL

21. And God said: “Let the earth bring forth” [Bass recit.]
22. Straight opening [Bass recit.]
23. Now heaven in fullest glory shone [Bass solo]
24. God created man in His own image [Tenor recit.]
25. In native worth [Tenor solo]
26. And God saw everything that it was good [Tenor]
27. Achieved is the glorious work [Chorus]
27a. On Thee each living soul awaits [Trio]
27b. Achieved is the glorious work [Chorus]
28. Introduction [Orchestra] In rosy mantle appears [Tenor recit.]
29. By Thee with bliss [Adam *(Bass),* Eve *(Sop.)* and Chorus]
30. Our duty we have now performed [Adam and Eve]
31. Graceful consort! [Adam and Eve]
32. O happy pair [Tenor recit.]
33. Sing the Lord ye voices all [Chorus]



Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) was born in Austria, and became one of the most prolific and prominent composers of the Classical period. Haydn wrote 107 symphonies in total, as well as 83 string quartets, 45 piano trios, 62 piano sonatas, 14 masses and 26 operas, amongst countless other scores.

The son of a wheelwright and a local landowner's cook, Haydn had such a fine voice that at the age of five he entered the Choir School of St Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. His ethereal treble tones lasted until he was 16, a fact noticed by the Habsburg Empress, Maria Theresa, who uttered her famous criticism: "That boy doesn't sing, he crows!". Haydn left the choir in memorable fashion - snipping off the pigtail of one his fellow choirboys - and was publicly caned.

By the 1770s, Haydn's music had become distinctive and boldly individual. His reputation spread rapidly throughout Austria, and commissions began arriving from abroad. 1790 saw the death of Prince Nicholas Esterházy, Haydn's employer since 1762. Haydn moved to Vienna and accepted an invitation from the great German-born violinist and impresario, Johann Peter Salomon, to visit England (1791-1792), where he found himself adored.

Prince Anton Esterházy , the next prince, died in 1795, and his successor, Nicholas II, requested Haydn's return to Esterháza. A lover of church music, Nicholas set Haydn the task of composing a new setting of the mass every year. In 1804, Haydn retired from Esterháza, and illness effectively prevented him from any further composition. During May 1809, Napoleon reached Vienna, but Haydn stayed in the city, guarded respectfully by two of the invader's sentries. On 31 May 1809 Haydn died peacefully in his sleep.

CREATION - *Notes by John Bawden*

The oratorio as a musical form appeared briefly in seventeenth century Italy, but was soon eclipsed by the much more popular operas. It was Handel who resurrected the oratorio from obscurity, transforming it from little more than an extended cantata into a powerful choral music-drama that was soon to dominate public music-making in eighteenth and nineteenth century England. The succession of masterpieces that Handel wrote inspired many later composers, notably Haydn and Mendelssohn. During his first visit to London, Haydn attended one of the great Handel festivals held in Westminster Abbey and was completely overwhelmed by the experience, as a result of which he resolved to write an oratorio himself that would be worthy of Handel's supreme examples. In 1796, inspired by what he had heard whilst in London, Haydn set to work on the score, which was not completed until 1798, by which time he was sixty-six. 'I was never so devout as during that

time when I was working on The Creation,' he observed. The work received its first public performance in 1799 and was immediately recognised as a supreme masterpiece, receiving many performances all over Europe.

In common with opera, and like most oratorios – though not Messiah - The Creation has named characters and is divided into acts and scenes. These consist of sequences of choruses, recitatives and arias. The work begins with an extended orchestral introduction, 'Representation of Chaos.' Parts One and Two then describe the six days of Creation, each of which follows a threefold pattern comprising biblical narrative, descriptive central section and hymn of praise. The three soloists represent the archangels Gabriel (soprano), Uriel (tenor) and Raphael (bass), with the chorus fulfilling an important role portraying angels glorifying their maker. Part Three is devoted entirely to the appearance of Adam and Eve (bass and soprano) who sing of the wonder and perfection of God's newly created world and of their happiness together. Soloists and choir combine for the final uplifting chorus of praise.

The Creation represents a considerable dramatic development over its Handelian predecessors. Haydn's bold use of orchestral colour, his adventurous harmony, exceptional rhythmic and melodic inventiveness, and the work's strong overall unity bring the subject to life with an almost operatic vividness and power. The opening is a good illustration of Haydn's innovative approach. The extended orchestral introduction, itself a departure from the conventional overture, is entitled 'Representation of Chaos' and immediately arrests the listener's attention with its shifting, ambiguous harmonies on muted strings, brass and timpani. In the ensuing recitative Raphael tells us that 'the earth was without form, and void' and this is reflected in the sparse emptiness of the orchestral accompaniment. The choir continues in a mood of hushed stillness, until 'and there was light', at which point there is a sudden, massive fortissimo chord of C major from the now unmuted full orchestra. Even after two hundred years the effect is still immensely powerful. It was evidently totally overwhelming at the time, judging by the following account from one of Haydn's friends: ". . . and at that moment when light broke out for the first time, one would have said that rays darted from the composer's burning eyes. The enchantment of the electrified Viennese was so general that the orchestra could not proceed for some minutes" he wrote.

This is perhaps the most startling dramatic gesture of the whole work, but there are plenty of other equally effective instances of musical word-painting, such as the storm scenes, the wonderful sunrise music and the colourful depiction of various animals and birds. In fact the whole work sparkles with the vitality and unfailing inspiration so characteristic of this remarkable composer, who was still experimenting and still surprising his delighted audiences right up to the end of his life.

Claire Lees (soprano) studies with Yvonne Kenny at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama on the Opera Course. She is a Concordia Artist and is supported by The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, The Kathleen Trust and Help Musicians UK Tutton Award. Prior to this, Claire studied at the Birmingham Conservatoire, where she gained a BMus(Hons).

Notable operatic roles include Pamina, 'Die Zauberflöte', Yum Yum, 'The Mikado', Papagena, 'Die Zauberflöte", Drusilla, 'L'incoronazione di Poppea'. Scene performances roles include Manon, 'Manon', Romilda, 'Serses', Sophie, 'Der Rosenkavalier', Baby 'The Ballad of Baby Doe', Zerlina 'Don Giovanni', and Lisette 'La Rondine' .

Concert appearances include recitals at St James' Piccadilly and St Martin-in-the-Fields as part of the Concordia Recital Series, Songs of Debussy, pre-LSO Platform (Barbican Hall), Howard Goodall's 'Every Purpose Under the Heaven' (Peterborough Cathedral), Haydn's 'Creation' (LSO Come and Sing Day).

She was a finalist in the 2014 Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards at the Wigmore Hall. She was also a finalist in the International Lied Duo Competition in Enschede, winning the Vrienden van het Lied Prize.

Claire has worked with Iain Burnside on his Drums and Guns project in collaboration with the Juilliard School and Royal Irish Academy of Music, performing in Dublin, London and in New York at the Juilliard School. When not singing Claire enjoys long walks, knitting and going to the theatre.

Gary Marriott (tenor) is well-known on the East Sussex music scene in a number of guises. In the operatic world he has performed with Pavilion Opera, Opera South East and Cameo Opera in works as diverse as La Bohème, The Barber of Seville, Don Giovanni, The Magic Flute, Dido and Aeneas, Sweeney Todd, Carmen, The Gypsy Baron, The Mikado, Die Fledermaus and many more.

Gary also has an extensive number of oratorios and religious works in his repertoire, singing regularly with Battle Choral Society, Hastings Philharmonic Choir, Eastbourne Phoenix Choir, Winchelsea Singers and Stonegate Singers. Recent concerts have included such works as: Elijah, The St John Passion, Messiah, Nelson Mass and Mozart's Requiem.

On the concert platform Gary relishes performing a diverse repertoire and is particularly fond of English song from Purcell to the present day. He has recently performed with Shirley Carey and friends in Purcell's The Fairy Queen and in Rossini's "Messe Solonnelle" with Winchelsea Singers. In June he will be appearing in Handel's Theodora with Baroque Opera Live in Hastings. Gary is delighted to be singing among friends in Heathfield this evening.

Nick Gee (bass) was born in Cyprus and after studying at the University of Manchester, trained at the Royal Northern College of Music, the Universität Mozarteum in Salzburg, and the Royal Academy of Music. He currently trains with Peter Medhurst. An award winning classical bass-baritone, he has appeared in performances and concerts across the UK and Europe, including venues such as St John's Smith Square, Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral, Schloss Hellbrunn, and Salzburg Cathedral, and has appeared on both BBC Radio and Channel 4. He is principal baritone with Opera Piccolina, performing in venues owned by The National Trust and English Heritage, as well as at privately owned houses including Wilton House, Hatfield House and Arundel Castle. Nick has performed title roles in many works, including *Le nozze di Figaro, Don Pasquale*, *Pagliacci*, *Cosi fan tutte*, *Eugene Onegin*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *La Boheme*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Tosca*, and *Don Giovanni.*

He has a close relationship with Sussex County Cricket Club, having been a member for over twenty years, and recent events have included singing "Sussex by the Sea" on the Hove pitch prior to the NatWest T20 Blast Quarter-Final with Northamptonshire, broadcast live on Sky Sports, and also singing at the club's recent 175th anniversary carol service. Nick is also much in demand as a concert performer. This will be his second concert with Heathfield Choral Society having sung Bob Chilcott's *Wenceslas* with the society in December 2016.

Camerata of London was founded by a diverse group of musicians whose common goal is to bring great live music to as wide an audience as possible. A modern-instrument chamber orchestra with a repertoire ranging from the early baroque to the contemporary, it has performed in London venues including Queen Elizabeth Hall, St John's Smith Square, St Martin-in-the-Fields, St James' Piccadilly, Fairfield Halls, and in community halls and churches throughout the Southeast of England. Membership includes young musicians starting out on their professional careers, together with a core of experienced orchestral and chamber players. Often working without a conductor, the orchestra has developed a strong sense of internal cohesion and musical vision. They also provide high quality musical entertainment for private and corporate functions and parties.

Heathfield Choral Society is affiliated to
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HCS's next concert!

Handel's "Messiah"

Saturday December 9th 2017

7.30pm State Hall, Heathfield

The Heathfield Choral Society was formed in 1945 and now has a membership of around 70 singers drawn from Heathfield and the surrounding towns and villages. They are recognized as one of the most enterprising choirs in the area, performing regularly with professional orchestras and soloists. Their concerts have included a wide variety of sacred and secular works and first performances in the area. In 2009 they gave the first performance in East Sussex of Howard Goodall's work, *Eternal Light,* and in November 2016 performed this work in New York's Carnegie Hall – a great honour for the choir, of whom around 25 were able to take part.

As a founder member of the Eastbourne and District Choirs' Association, the Society has played a pivotal role in extending the work of choirs in the area, by promoting open rehearsals, combined concerts and co-operation between member choirs. The choir supported South Downs Opera's productions of Tosca (2012) and Aida (2015).

The Society's Musical Director is **Brian Newman**. In addition to his work with the Society, he formed and for 20 years directed the Grove Singers of London, a chamber choir noted for its adventurous programming and extensive touring both in this country and throughout Europe, including a performance for the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Colditz Castle. He has been chorus master for Classical Spectaculars and Opera Galas in major concert halls in this country and as a member of the English Concert Singers, has performed in China, Russia, the Baltic States and America. He has written three musicals for children which have been produced in many schools in the South of England and showcased at the Purcell Room in London.

Gavin Stevens (**continuo**) has been accompanist for Heathfield Choral Society since 1999. He works as a teacher of piano and guitar. As a composer, Gavin has written a wide range of works for piano and a growing number of pieces for guitar, among works for other instruments and voices. Gavin gives frequent piano recitals and he likes to include works by 20th century British composers in these concerts alongside his own music and more standard repertoire.

Do you enjoy singing? The Society is looking for new singers, and you would be very welcome to try a couple of rehearsals with us. **There are no auditions!** Please contact Kathy at **membership@heathfieldchoral.org.uk** for more information, or speak to a choir member.

We would like to thank: Colin Harwood, Mike Woodhouse and Steve Fisher for Front of House Management; Nick Howard for Concert Management; Kathryn Dewhurst and Linda Dearsley for Publicity and Advertising.

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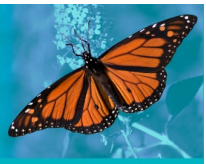

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