

Out of the Deep ... and up to the Heights?

On Saturday 28 March 2020, in a parallel universe, Escafeld Chorale gave a concert here in Holy Trinity Church, Millhouses. The choir sang four works – two each by the much maligned Antonio Salieri and the Anglicised German Georg Friederich Händel – and the choir's then Associate Soloist, Sarah Leffler, performed three solo items, songs by Clara Schumann, Henri Duparc and Herr Händel himself. If there was an underlying strategy to the choice of the choir's programme, it might be summarised as the classic 'game of two halves'. The first half's Salieri – his *Requiem in C Minor*, followed by the chant-like psalm setting 'De Profundis Clamavi' – was penitential, a contemplation of death and an appeal for mercy and redemption. This then gave way to the second half's celebratory excitement in the performance of two of Handel's Coronation Anthems, 'The King Shall Rejoice' and the ever-popular 'Zadok the Priest'. The concert was, you will be pleased to note, a great success.

Meanwhile, of course, in the universe we actually inhabit, none of that happened. A fortnight before that concert was due to take place, the decision was taken to 'close down' the choir temporarily (that 'temporary' state would last for 18 months before we eventually got to rehearse again in person) in the light of increasingly troubling revelations about the novel form of coronavirus sweeping the world. We all became very familiar with the term 'lockdown', and for the best part of two years our society has been struggling with the impact of this virus on so many aspects of our lives. It is only really in the last couple of months that we have been encouraged to contemplate 'getting our lives back', even though there are still many who don't quite share our government's zeal for declaring the whole Covid experience to be something we just have to live with.

Consequently, the idea of revisiting our scheduled March 2020 concert and performing it two years after the event is, shall we say, a bitter-sweet thing to contemplate. The first half of the concert – identical to that planned previously – now takes on a greater poignancy, an act of remembrance for us as a choir, specifically for members who have died in the past two years, but more broadly as a lament for the losses we have all shared in, to a greater or lesser extent, in these extraordinary times. And there is an accidental fortuitousness to the performance of Handel's Coronation Anthems this year, when we are celebrating the 70th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne (even though, to be precise, her coronation wasn't until June 1953). It is our sincere hope that, as you share this journey with us tonight, you too will find in this

music an opportunity to reflect on what has been lost and an opportunity to rejoice in our shared hopes for the future.

Resuming face-to-face rehearsals after such a long gap, with fewer members and also observing Covid precautions, has been quite a challenge. But what we lack in numbers, we make up for in enthusiasm, and we are delighted to be singing again.

Remembering Roger Dunn and Rosalie Nicholson

David Roger Dunn was an early victim of Covid-19 who died in May 2020. Always known as Roger, he was born in Chesterfield, studied at Leeds and Sheffield and after a brief time with BP became a Maths teacher and later Headteacher in Sheffield, at Abbeydale Grammar, Abbeydale Grange and Gleadless Valley Schools. He was always interested in music, particularly in singing, beginning as all tenors do, as a boy soprano with 'O for the wings of a dove'. He joined Escafeld Chorale in 2008 and very much enjoyed the wide range of music, whether requiems, spirituals or modern musicals.

Rosalie Nicholson had almost reached the age of 90 when she sadly died in late 2020 after a short illness. She was one of Escafeld Chorale's longest continuous members, and never missed a rehearsal or concert until she was hospitalised. Rosalie was a talented soprano and had been an early soloist for Escafeld Chorale. She was widowed young and raised her two children alone. After her memorial service, her sons provided us with a recording of her beautiful singing voice which is available to listen to on our website.

The collection in aid of St Luke's Hospice is in memory of Roger, being the chosen charity of his family.

Antonio SALIERI (1750–1825)

There can be few composers whose posthumous reputation has suffered the way that Salieri's has. There are composers whose views and opinions tarnish their reputations in ways that, for some listeners, consequently tarnish their music. Wagner might be an example. There are other composers whose work we listen to whilst recognising that their behaviour in life was, to say the least, reprehensible. Gesualdo, who murdered his wife and her lover when he discovered them *in flagrante delicto*, still gets a hearing despite the melodramatic events associated with his life, at least in part because of the emotionally tortured music he produced after that key event. However, Salieri appears to have done nothing wrong during his lifetime to merit the stain on his reputation that started to spread even before his death. The trigger for this was of course the alleged part Salieri might have played in the death of Mozart in 1791. In the first 50 years of his life, Salieri was a popular and extremely successful composer in Vienna, primarily of operas – 37 of them were staged during his lifetime. He was a great favourite of the Hapsburg Emperor Joseph II, who made him *Kapellmeister* of the Imperial Court chapel and attached choir school in 1788, a post he retained until 1824, just before his death. He was a respected and influential teacher. Amongst those he gave lessons to we find Beethoven, Schubert, Hummel, Liszt and Mozart's youngest child, Franz Xaver Wolfgang Mozart.

It seems unlikely then, to say the least, that such a man would have been so motivated by a bitter rivalry with his younger contemporary to contemplate slipping Mozart a dose of poison that would lead to his premature death. Yet as early as 1830, a mere five years after Salieri's death, the Russian poet and playwright Pushkin produced a short verse drama, 'Mozart and Salieri', in which the older man poisons his rival in a green-eyed rage. Over the decades that followed, the narrative was repeatedly rekindled: in 1897, Rimsky-Korsakov produced a short chamber opera, based on Pushkin's text; nearer to our own time, of course, there is Peter Shaffer's dramatic hit from 1979, *Amadeus*, and its even more popular film version from 1984, both of which underscore this tale of a jealous nonentity seeking revenge on a divinely inspired if rather potty-mouthed genius. It is true that in the last 20 years of his life, Salieri was regarded as 'yesterday's man'. As Beethoven's work rose to prominence in Vienna, Salieri described the musical developments thus: 'Eccentricity and confusion of genres

replaced reasoned and masterful simplicity.’ He was fully aware that he had lived beyond his time.

However, one of the happier consequences of the popularity of Shaffer’s play is that it has generated a greater interest in Salieri’s music, which has been performed and recorded more in the past 30 years than in the first 160 years after his death. Perhaps, then, we could take a little time to listen to and re-evaluate this music. After all, pretty much all amateur choirs in the mould of Escafeld Chorale perform Mozart’s *Requiem* (we last sang it in 2008), and professional performances recur season after season. Whilst we cannot with absolute confidence say that tonight’s is the first performance ever of Salieri’s *Requiem* in Sheffield – that archive of information does not exist – there is a good chance that that is the case. None of us would claim that his *Requiem* is the equal of Mozart’s (any more than one might claim that Salieri’s music in general comes close to Mozart’s), but neither does it deserve the neglect it has suffered in the past two centuries. The proof, I suppose, is in the listening.

Requiem in C Minor (1804) to be followed without a break by Psalm Setting: ‘De Profundis Clamavi’ in F Minor (1815)

Salieri’s *Requiem* is an oddity amongst his compositions in that it does not appear to have been a response to a commission or created to mark the passing of a great figure in the society of his time. Instead, he seems to have written it for himself, designated for his own funeral. Evidence makes it clear that he wrote it in 1804, when he was in his mid-50s. Its first performance was in June 1825 in Vienna, six weeks after Salieri’s death. Given Salieri’s role as Imperial Kapellmeister, he could surely have performed it in the two decades between its composition and his death, without compromising his desire to have it performed posthumously, but his ecclesiastical music does not seem to have been widely disseminated during his lifetime, Salieri preferring instead to see it as being only ‘for God and my Emperor’. All this makes the *Requiem* an intensely *personal*, indeed an intensely *private* work. He promised the autographed score to a Moravian nobleman, Count von Haugwitz, and he wrote to Haugwitz before his death: ‘When Your Excellency receives this letter, God will have called the writer to himself. Together with this letter will be the original [manuscript] of my Requiem, as promised, of which I make you a gift, asking for it in exchange only that it be performed in your private chapel in prayer for my soul.’

Salieri’s *Requiem* is in seven sections, and in large measure the texts he selects are familiar and conventional. Its scale suggests a sense of grandeur but Salieri’s

treatment of the text suggests rather a sense of restraint, which fits with what we know of his view of church music in general: that it is essentially solemnly functional rather than theatrical (not what we might expect from Salieri the famous opera composer, but then his liturgical music was, for him, a different animal altogether). It is for full SATB chorus, with four soloists and (in the original manuscript) a substantial orchestra. This is, in other words, a big work, typically lasting around 35–40 minutes in performance.

1. Introit: Requiem aeternam/Kyrie eleison

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, Et lux perpetua luceat eis. Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Sion, Et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem. Exaudi orationem meam: Ad te omnis caro veniet. Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine. Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

(Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. A hymn, O God, becomes you in Zion, and a vow shall be paid to you in Jerusalem. Hear my prayer: All flesh shall come before you. Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon them.)

Kyrie, eleison! Christe, eleison! Kyrie, eleison!

(Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us.)

The running together of the 'Introit' of the Requiem and the 'Kyrie' of the Mass was a common strategy in late-18th/early 19th-century church music, since in traditional liturgical usage the music of the Kyrie follows the Introit without any break. Salieri unifies these sections by musical means. After a brooding C minor introduction, the basses present the major theme of this movement, a rising and falling arch, before all four voices join in *forte* with 'Et lux perpetua'. The pattern is repeated, led by the tenors before a short instrumental conclusion. The middle section of this movement changes tempo to a brisk *Allegretto*, and the key changes from a dark C minor to a sunny E \flat major for 'Te decet'. A restrained pause precedes the return of C minor and a modified reiteration of the 'Requiem aeternam' section, extended this time by the 'Kyrie' section, which makes much of *piano* and *forte* contrasts in all four voices.

2. Sequenz: Dies Irae

Dies irae, dies illa, Solvet saeculum in favilla, Teste David cum Sibylla. Quantus tremor est futurus, Quando iudex est venturus, Cuncta stricte discussurus!

(This day, this day of wrath shall consume the world in ashes, as foretold by David and the Sibyl. What trembling there will be when the judge shall come to weigh everything strictly!)

Tuba mirum spargens sonum Per sepulcra regionum, Coget omnes ante thronum. Mors stupebit et natura, Cum resurget creatura, Judicanti responsura. Liber scriptus proferetur, In quo totum continetur, Unde mundus judicetur. Judex ergo cum sedebit, Quidquid latet apparebit. Nil inultum remanebit. Quid sum miser tunc dicturus? Quem patronum rogaturus, Cum vix justus sit securus?

(The trumpet, scattering its awful sound across the graves of all lands, summons all before the throne. Death and nature shall be stunned when mankind arises to render account before the judge. The written book shall be brought in which all is contained, whereby the world shall be judged. When the judge takes his seat all that is hidden shall appear. Nothing will remain unavenged. What shall I, a wretch, say then? To which protector shall I appeal when even the just man is barely safe?)

Rex tremendae majestatus qui salvandos salvas gratis salva me, fons pietatis.

(King of awful majesty, you freely save those worthy of salvation. Save me, fount of pity.)

Recordare, Jesu pie, Quod sum causa tuae viae: Ne me perdas illa die. Quaerens me, sedisti, lassus; Redemisti crucem passus; Tantis labor non sit cassus. Juste Judex ultionis, Donum fac remissionis Ante diem rationis. Ingemisco tanquam reus, Culpa rubet vultus meus; Supplicanti parce, Deus. Qui Mariam absolvisti, Et latronem exaudisti, Mihi quoque spem dedisti. Preces meae non sunt dignae, Sed tu, bonus, fac benigne, Ne perenni cremer igne. Inter oves locum praesta, Et ab hoedis me sequestra, Statuens in parte dextra. Confutatis maledictis Flammis acerbis addictis, Voca me cum benedictis. Oro supplex et acclinis, Cor contritum quasi cinis, Gere curam mei finis.

(Remember, gentle Jesus that I am the reason for your time on earth: do not cast me out on that day. Seeking me, you sank down wearily, you saved me by enduring the cross: such travail must not be in vain. Righteous judge of vengeance, award the gift of forgiveness before the day of reckoning. I groan as one guilty, my face blushes with guilt; spare the suppliant, O God. You who did absolve Mary and hear the prayer of the thief have given me hope,

too. My prayers are not worthy, but You, O good one, show mercy, lest I burn in everlasting fire. Give me a place among the sheep, and separate me from the goats, placing me on your right hand. When the damned are confounded and consigned to keen flames, call me with the blessed. I pray, suppliant and kneeling, a heart as contrite as ashes; take You my ending into your care.)

Lacrimosa dies illa, Qua resurget ex favilla Judicandus homo reus. Huic ergo parce, Deus: Pie Jesu Domine: Dona eis requiem. Amen.

(That day is one of weeping, on which shall rise again from the ashes the guilty man, to be judged. Therefore spare this one, O God, merciful Lord Jesus: Give them rest. Amen.)

The 'Dies irae' sequence is the longest movement of the work, though it is episodic in structure with contrasting sections. The initial 'Dies irae' is full of drama, with contrasts of loud and softer passages, and also of staccato and more flowing lines, rising to a *fortissimo* climax. A fanfare heralds the 'Tuba mirum' section and further contrasts of staccato and legato passages. If one were being uncharitable (or at least, uncharitably comparing Salieri's work with Mozart's in this setting), the music here may appear rather less dramatic than the words it depicts. Still, there is no denying the contrasts in the next short section, where the emphatic 'Rex tremendae' is answered by the almost pleadingly tender 'Salva me'. The solo voices, kept back until this point, enter at the tender plea 'Recordare Jesu pie'. Interestingly, Salieri does not give the soloists independent lines, as though they were individual 'characters'; rather they sing as a quartet, essentially as a contrast to the forces of the choir. This again highlights how Salieri saw this work as devotional, rather than 'theatrical' in its impact. There are brief interjections from the choir: at 'Ingemisco' they act as a kind of personalised 'chorus', the guilty voice of 'everyman'; next they echo the solo quartet at 'Supplici', begging to be spared; at 'Confutatis' their voices describe the day of judgement, contrasting with the quartet who appeal to be called amongst the blessed. Finally, at the 'Lacrimosa' the choir takes over the texture entirely: these are not individual voices but the pleas of all mankind. The closing 'Dona eis requiem' takes us back to the brooding C minor of the work's opening.

3. Offertorium: Domine Jesu Christe

Domine, Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae, libera animas omnium fidelium defunctorum de poenis infernet de profundo lacu. Libera eas de ore leonis ne

absorbeat eas tartarus, ne cadant in obscurum; Sed signifer sanctus Michael repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam, Quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semini eius.

(Lord Jesus Christ, king of glory, deliver the souls of all the faithful departed from the pains of Hell and the bottomless pit. Deliver them from the jaws of the lion, lest hell engulf them, lest they be plunged into darkness; but let the holy standard-bearer Michael lead them into the holy light, as once you promised to Abraham and to his seed.)

Hostias et preces tibi, Domine laudis offerimus tu suscipe pro animabus illis, quarum hodie memoriam facimus. Fac eas, Domine, de morte transire ad vitam. Quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semine eius.

(Lord, in praise we offer you sacrifices and prayers, accept them on behalf of those who we remember this day: Lord, make them pass from death to life, as once you promised to Abraham and to his seed.)

The Offertorium begins with a brisk 2/4 rhythm and a bright C major, before breaking into a fugal passage at ‘Quam olim Abrahae’ – a familiar and conventional strategy at this point in the text. The ‘Hostias’ section, in 3/4, slows the tempo right down, as the choir offers sacrifices and praise to God. Finally the fugal ‘Quam olim Abrahae’ returns to round off the movement in joyful affirmation.

4. Sanctus

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth! Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua. Osanna in excelsis!

(Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts! Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!)

In all Requiems, the ‘Sanctus’ is a hymn of praise, though composers often differ in terms of whether this is hushed adoration (Fauré might be a good example) or all-out celebration. Salieri tends towards the latter extreme. We are still in C major, beginning with three swelling iterations of ‘Sanctus’ before the choir begins to tell of the extent of God’s glory. There is another fugal section – again a familiar strategy at this juncture – at ‘Osanna in excelsis’, the different voices throwing the subject to and fro until, after a pause, all four parts sing in unison to emphasise the line. This is the most radiant movement of the piece, echoing with joy.

5. Benedictus

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domine. Hosanna in excelsis!

(Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!)

With the 'Benedictus' the quartet of soloists returns. Once more, this is essentially a conventional strategy in orchestral masses, as a quartet whose statements are punctuated by full choral passages. The movement starts in a sunny A major, underscoring the cheery content of the text. The choir intervenes twice to repeat 'Benedictus'. And as is conventional, the movement ends with a return to the fugal 'Osanna in excelsis' (and a switch from A major to C major) that ended the previous movement, bringing this one, too, to a joyful and emphatic end.

6. Agnus Dei/Communio: Lux Aeterna

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi dona eis requiem. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem sempiternam.

(Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, grant them rest. Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, grant them eternal rest.)

Lux aeterna luceat eis Domine cum sanctis tuis in aeternum: quia pius es. Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine; et lux perpetua luceat eis. Cum sanctis tuis in aeternum: quia pius es.

(Let everlasting light shine on them, O Lord, with your saints for ever: for You are merciful. Eternal rest grant them, O Lord; and let perpetual light shine upon them, with your saints for ever, for you are merciful.)

The linking together of the Agnus Dei and Communio movements of the mass was once more common musical practice in Salieri's time. This is a curious, though not unsatisfactory movement. It begins with a kind of ritualised solemnity as the choir intones the words of the 'Agnus Dei', interleaved with a poignant figure on what would have been the cor anglais (the organ, in tonight's case). The mood of reverence is shifted somewhat by the change from 3/4 to 4/4 and to C major for a short exploration of the words 'Lux aeterna', including a fleeting fugal-type passage at 'Cum sanctis tuis', before repetitions of 'quia pius es' bring this phase of the movement to an end. At this point we return to the music of the very opening of the *Requiem*, with the basses intoning the rise/fall phrase at 'Requiem aeternam'. However, this focus is short-lived, and the movement ends with another brisk imitative entry at the repeat of 'Cum sanctis tuis', before this

in turn gives way to increasingly hushed repetitions of 'quia pius es', which end the movement in reflective stillness.

7. Responsorio: Libera me

Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna in die illa tremenda: quando coeli movendi sunt et terra, dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignem. Tremens factus sum ego et timeo, dum discussion venerit atque ventura ira: quando coeli movendi sunt et terra.

(Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death on that awful day when the heavens and earth shall be shaken and you shall come to judge the world by fire. I am seized with fear and trembling until the trial is at hand and the wrath to come: when the heavens and earth shall be shaken.)

Dies illa, dies irae, calamitatis et miseriae, dies magna et amara valde. Dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignem.

(This day, this day of wrath, of calamity and misery, this great and bitter day. You shall come to judge the world by fire.)

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis.

(Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them.)

Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna in die illa tremenda: quando coeli movendi sunt et terra.

(Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death on that awful day when the heavens and earth shall be shaken.)

Appending a setting of the 'Libera me' to the rest of the Requiem was not a particularly common practice in Salieri's time, though it became so as the 19th century progressed and composers exploited its dramatic and theatrical potential. This is, perhaps, the oddest movement of the work, one that feels in many ways stylistically detached from what has preceded it. (One explanation for this may be that the 'Libera me' is actually from the ritual of the burial service, not the *Missa pro defunctis* itself.) Whatever the reason, the movement is not particularly dramatically embodied, but rather the choir intones the words of the 'Libera me' with a kind of syllabic solemnity, as though to accompany an actual interment, rather than participating in a concert performance. After the words of the 'Libera me', Salieri returns briefly to the words (though not the previous musical setting) of a fragment of the 'Dies irae'. The solo quartet alternate

chanted and sung fragments of the 'Requiem aeternam' before the choir brings the work to a forceful if pleading close, in one final plea for deliverance.

If you feel the urge to applaud at this point, please can we ask you to restrain yourselves? Salieri's psalm setting 'De profundis clamavi' follows without a break.

Psalm – De profundis clamavi

De profundis clamavi ad te Domine. Domine exaudi vocem meam. Fiant aures tuae intendentes in vocem deprecationis meae. Si iniquitates observaveris Domine quis sustinebit. Quia apud te propitiatio est et propter legem tuam sustinui te Domine sustinuit anima mea in verbum eius: Speravit anima mea in Domino. A custodia matutina usque ad noctem speret Israel in Domino. Quia apud Dominum misericordia et copiosa apud eum redemptio. Et ipse redimet Israel ex omnibus iniquitatibus eius. Gloria Patri, Patri et Filio, et Spiritu sancto. Sicut erat in principio et nunc at semper et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

(Out of the depths I have cried to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication. If you, O Lord, will mark iniquities: Lord, who shall stand it? For with you there is merciful forgiveness: and by reason of your law, I have waited for you, O Lord. My soul has relied on his word: my soul has hoped in the Lord. From the morning watch even until night, let Israel hope in the Lord. Because with the Lord there is mercy: and with him plentiful redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.)

Salieri wrote two versions of the 'De profundis' text (Psalm 130: 1–8), of which the F minor setting is the later. The text has a familiar place in almost all Judaeo-Christian liturgies. In the Catholic tradition within which Salieri wrote, it was one of seven 'penitential psalms' recited on Fridays during Lent. Salieri's composition, performed tonight in an edition by the British composer and arranger Tim Knight, is a very simple though remarkably beautiful thing. Over a walking bass part, female and male voices alternate in a chant-like melody, taking one verse of the psalm each in turn. From a *pianissimo* opening, the volume rises with each new entry, until all parts join together in a *fortissimo* 'Amen'.

INTERVAL

Drinks will be served at two tables at the back of the church. Please wear a mask if possible, and move away from the tables when you have picked up your drink, to allow as much social distancing as possible.

George Frideric HANDEL (1685–1759)

The process by which the German Georg Friederich Händel metamorphosed into the British George Frideric Handel was a slow and gradual one, but his association with a range of public events in this country in the early 18th century evidently played a part in his ‘adoption’ as a ‘British’ composer. At the end of 1710 he came to London (and had a great success with an early opera, *Rinaldo*) and by 1712 he had decided to settle over here. (He became a British subject in 1727.) Over the years that followed, he was fortuitously placed not just to become commercially successful as a result of the almost insatiable thirst of London audiences for opera in the Italian style. He also created the ceremonial musical events that followed on from the fact that in 1715 the man who had briefly been his employer as Elector of Hanover became King George I, particularly after performances of the ‘Water Music’ in 1717 had set the seal on Handel’s reconciliation with the king. He had several wealthy patrons (as the comments below on both Coronation and Chandos anthems show), but none more so than George and his son George II. There is of course far more to his almost 50 years spent in this country than just public pieces written in honour of British monarchs, but the works being performed tonight show just how embedded Handel’s music became in the ceremonial life of both Stuart and Hanoverian monarchies.

The King Shall Rejoice (Coronation Anthem No. 3) (1727)

The King shall rejoice in thy strength, O Lord.

Exceeding glad shall he be, of thy salvation.

Glory and great worship hast thou laid upon him.

Thou hast prevented him with the blessings of goodness, and hast set a crown of pure gold upon his head.

Allelujah!

As noted above, Handel became a naturalised British subject in 1727, one of George I’s last acts before his death. Handel’s first public musical statement after

that event was to write four anthems for the coronation of George II and his wife Queen Caroline later that year. Handel was, evidently, immensely capable when it came to writing music for great ceremonial events, and for the coronation of George II he seems to have had at his disposal an orchestra of over 150 players and a choir of around 100. These are extrovert works, full of large gestures and dramatic contrasts, designed to fill Westminster Abbey and have a suitably compelling impact on their listeners. 'Zadok the Priest' has been performed at the coronation of every British monarch since George II's time, and it is not unusual for a coronation service to include all four pieces.

'The King Shall Rejoice' is the third of the anthems. Its text (see above) is based on the first three verses of Psalm 21, followed by a declamatory 'Allelujah!' After a lengthy and elaborate introduction the first section ('The King shall rejoice in thy strength, O Lord') is powerfully declamatory, the homophonic texture (the four parts sing the same words at pretty much the same time throughout) underscoring the idea of strength. The second section ('Exceeding glad shall he be, of thy salvation') is gentler, almost conversational, as the four parts pass their phrases to and fro, before it reaches an assertive conclusion. The third section ('Glory and great worship hast thou laid upon him') is a brief but arresting declamation in a bright D major. The contrast to the fourth section, a fugue in B minor ('Thou hast prevented him...') is startling, with elaborate runs in all four parts on the word 'blessing' set against the solid pronouncement of the words 'hast set a crown of pure gold upon his head'. (To avoid any confusion, the line 'Thou hast prevented him' should perhaps be understood as something closer to 'welcomed him' or 'gone before him', rather than our modern meaning of 'prevent'.) Finally there is an arresting and glorious 'Allelujah!' section, a double fugue (that is, one with two different subjects, both developed simultaneously). Before the final two utterances of 'Allelujah!' there is a brief, dramatic pause and the tempo slows rhetorically. At this point, back in 1727, in a moment of pure theatre, the crown itself was placed on George II's head.

Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne (extracts) (1713)

Eternal source of light divine (Section 1 – alto solo): *'Eternal source of light divine/ With double warmth thy beams display/ And with distinguish'd glory shine/ To add a lustre to this day.'*

Let rolling streams their gladness show (Section 5 – alto and bass duet; quartet): 'Let rolling streams their gladness show/ With gentle murmurs whilst they play/ And in their wild meanders flow/ Rejoicing in this blessed day./ The day that gave great Anna birth/ Who fix'd a lasting peace on earth.

Let envy then conceal her head (Section 8 – bass solo; quartet): 'Let envy then conceal her head/ And blasted faction glide away./ No more her hissing tongues we'll dread/ Secure in this auspicious day./ The day that gave great Anna birth/ Who fix'd a lasting peace on earth.

In February 1713, Queen Anne celebrated her 48th birthday. To mark the event, Handel wrote the cantata 'Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne', to words provided by the politician and (very minor) poet, Ambrose Philips. (Trivia fans may wish to note that although he was savaged in verse by the considerably more gifted Alexander Pope, his 'legacy' to the English language is to have been labelled 'Namby-Pamby' by the satirist Henry Carey, thus bequeathing to us a gentle term of abuse that has remained useful to this day.) The 'Ode' was intended to celebrate not just the monarch's birthday, but the recent signing of the Treaty of Utrecht – hence the Ode's recurring references to 'lasting peace'. It's perhaps unduly cynical to think that Handel produced this work to curry favour with Queen Anne, but although there is some doubt as to whether she heard the work performed or not, what is certain is that she granted Handel a 'pension' of £200 a year for life as a result of its composition. The Purcellian opening arioso, 'Eternal Source of Light Divine', has acquired a life for itself independent of the rest of the work, as a stand-alone item for alto and solo trumpet (the latter, tonight, replicated on the organ), in which the soloist welcomes the dawn of a new day. 'Let rolling streams' is a lively duet for alto and bass, an exercise in perpetual motion in which the 'rolling streams' find their musical equivalent. This section ends with an iteration of the couplet that completes all the stanzas of Philips's poem, conflating Queen Anne's birthday with the peace following on from signing the Treaty of Utrecht. (One of the satisfying things about Handel's setting is that these lines, which could have become repetitive by the time of their seventh hearing, are given interestingly varied treatments on each occasion.) Finally in this selection from the 'Birthday Ode' we hear the rumbustious bass solo 'Let envy then conceal her head', before we are reminded once more of the link between 'great Anna' and 'lasting peace'.

Percy GRAINGER (1882–1961)

Percy Aldridge Grainger, by birth Australian but by adoption American, was a fascinating composer, and one who regarded the distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture as essentially meaningless. On a personal level, we might by the standards of today find him difficult to stomach due to his tastes for S&M (not, perhaps, a problem for consenting adults in private) and, in later life, an undiluted racist bigotry (which surely is a problem, in private or public). However, as a composer, his output is a vast, teeming canvas of works of quirky eccentricity and wild experimentation. It might help to consider his music in various ‘strands’. There’s the follower in the footsteps of Grieg, whose music he loved; there’s the folklorist and collector, who was a prominent figure in the English folksong revival of the early 20th century; there’s the explorer of all things Nordic, inspired by Icelandic sagas; there’s the musical iconoclast, inventor of new instruments, particularly electronic ones, and composer of pieces in which chance plays a prominent role; there’s the almost ‘music hall’ performer and populariser, creator of small-scale gems like ‘Mock Morris’, ‘Country Gardens’ and ‘Handel in the Strand’. Any one of these things might have filled the career of another composer; with Grainger, we get them all, and often all at once.

‘Handel in the Strand’ (Clog Dance) (version for piano – 1930)

It is this last facet of Grainger’s musical personality that tonight’s pianist, Tom Crathorne, highlights. Grainger was rarely concerned with precise issues of performance practice. ‘Handel in the Strand’ exists in at least four versions made by Grainger (‘dished up’ was how he described this process) over a period of thirty-odd years: initially, in 1911, he wrote it for piano trio. The solo piano version came along in 1930. Later there were versions for string orchestra (1932) and for two pianos (1947). He described it as a clog dance ‘to be played to, or without, clog dancing’. The title he explained as follows: ‘the music seemed to reflect both Handel and English musical comedy (the ‘Strand’ being the home of London musical comedy). In bars 1–16, and their repetitions, I have made use of matter from some variations of mine on Handel’s “Harmonious Blacksmith” tune.’

George Frideric HANDEL

'O Praise the Lord with One Consent' (Chandos Anthem No. 9, extract) (1718)

With cheerful notes (Section 5 – quartet): 'With cheerful notes let all the earth/ to heaven their voices raise!/ Let all, inspired with godly mirth,/ sing solemn hymns with praise.'

Handel became house composer at Cannons, the residence of James Brydges, Earl of Carnarvon (later to become the first Duke of Chandos) from 1717 to 1719, and whilst there he composed a set of anthems which have now become known as the 'Chandos Anthems' (though more recently they've been labelled 'Cannons Anthems', because Brydges wasn't actually Duke of Chandos at the time Handel was resident there). The anthems take their texts from the Psalms, and the fifth movement of the ninth anthem uses lines from Psalm 117, in the version taken from Tate and Brady's metrical psalter, first published in 1696. Written for a quartet of voices, this movement contrasts brisk imitative patterns, in which the voices often work in pairs, with longer, more sustained chordal passages in which there are echoes of the great hymn tune 'St Anne' (usually sung to the words 'O God, our help in ages past'). In this extract one can hear evidence of the writer of operas and oratorios that Handel was to become.

Zadok the Priest (Coronation Anthem No. 1) (1727)

*Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon King.
And all the people rejoiced, and said:
God save the King! Long live the King! God save the King! May the King live
for ever! Amen! Amen! Alleluia! Amen!*

The words of the anthem 'Zadok the Priest', taken from 1 Kings 1:38–40, concerning the coronation of King Solomon at the death of his father David, have been used at every English coronation since the time of King Edgar ('the Peaceful'), who ruled from 959 to 975, though his coronation occurred only in 973. The music Handel wrote has been used at every coronation since 1727, and it is easy to hear why. This is one of the most popular, thrilling and dramatic short pieces of choral music in the repertoire, from the extended introduction to the triumphal 'Allelujah!' with which it ends. The 22 bars of the instrumental introduction generate an extraordinary sense of anticipation, fulfilled in the choir's powerful utterance, 'Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed

Solomon King', delivered in a homophonic declamation by the whole choir. The middle section 'And all the people rejoiced and said' offers a more dance-like texture, still essentially homophonic and syllabic (that is, one note per syllable), ending on the anticipatory dominant chord ('said') that will usher us headlong into the final section. This last part is one of dramatic contrasts. The subjunctive 'God save the King! Long live the King! God save the King!' is delivered homophonically again, all four voices solidly as one; the subsequent 'May the King live for ever!' is repeated four times, consolidated each time by the fact that extra voices are added, from the first utterance just by altos, to the second for altos and tenors, to the third in which basses are added too, until the final version brings in sopranos as well. Contrasting with this, the reiterated 'Amen! Amen! Allelujah! Amen!' gives each part in turn extended semiquaver runs on 'Amen!' before the tempo slows for the final, emphatic 'Allelujah!', bringing this concert to a euphoric end.

Phil Parker – March 2022

We are very grateful to the **Friends of Escafeld Chorale** (Harry Armitage, Olivia Cooke, John Eckford, Shirley Ellins, Jenny and Nick Etherington Dunn, Eve Fawcett, Pam Grayson, Simon Kingsley, Philip Long, and two anonymous Friends) for supporting our work this season and during the pandemic.

Organ: Joshua Stephens

Acknowledged as one of Britain's 'most brilliant and exciting young musicians' (*Leeds Inspired*), Joshua Stephens is the recipient of many awards and prizes. He began his musical career as a treble chorister in Sheffield Cathedral Choir, under the direction of Neil Taylor, who was to later become his first tutor in the organ. As a member of the choir, he participated in numerous engagements external to the daily liturgical routine of the cathedral, including BBC broadcasts, CD recordings, and several international tours.

Joshua is an acclaimed solo recitalist, having given performances at Wells Cathedral, Hereford Cathedral, Liverpool Anglican and Metropolitan Cathedrals, Selby Abbey (Organ Appeal Trust Celebrity Recitals), and Leeds Town Hall (Leeds International Concert Series). He has also collaborated with actress Maxine Peake in Manchester International Festival's *The Masque of Anarchy*, and has participated in numerous masterclasses, most notably with Jacques van Oortmerssen, and Olivier Latry.

In 2014 Joshua completed his undergraduate studies at the Royal Northern College of Music, graduating with a First-Class degree with Honours, as a principal study organist, studying with Darius Battiwalla and Thomas Trotter. After a year as Second Assistant Organist at Wells Cathedral, Joshua was Acting Director of Music at Sheffield Cathedral, having been Assistant Director of Music since September 2018. In this role, he was responsible for training the Cathedral Choirs and directing them in their busy schedule of services, performances and tours. With the Cathedral Choir, Joshua has broadcast live on BBC Radio Three, guest conducted the City of London Sinfonia and performed on national television.

In August 2020, Joshua became founding Musical Director of Steel City Choristers. With the choir, he has performed in diverse community spaces throughout the region, on BBC radio and television, and has guest conducted The Sixteen. Alongside this, Joshua is Musical Director of the Sheffield Chorale, and Organist and Director of Music at St Matthew's Church, Carver Street.

Tonight's soloists



Soprano: Eloise Simpson graduated from the University of Sheffield in 2020 with a Bachelor's degree in Music and has since been a piano, vocal and violin tutor at AS Music School. Alongside this work she also leads an adult vocal group aptly named 'A Load of Old Cobnars' and a baby and toddler group designed to provide infants with music and sensory play.

During her time in Sheffield, Eloise has performed with Sheffield University Chamber Choir, Sheffield University Performing Arts Society, Sheffield Cathedral and many other groups as a conductor, musical director and singer. She has many credits as a musical director with the university, including *Chicago* and the 24-hour production of *Grease*. Unfortunately, her work as a student and musician was abruptly halted with the pandemic but she is eager to jump back into freelance work. Eloise has been lucky enough to work with Escafeld Chorale in the past as a singer and rehearsal accompanist and feels very fortunate to have the opportunity to sing with them again for Nigel's final concert.



Alto: Stephen Henthorn's musical life is closely bound to church music. It began in his local parish church, St Francis Welwyn Garden City, where he sang as a chorister and a young adult. He moved to Sheffield to study at the University in 2011 and joined Sheffield Cathedral Choir as an alto choral scholar, and later became a Lay Clerk, a position he held until 2019. During this time, he was privileged to sing in concerts

around the UK and Europe, including broadcasts on radio and television. Stephen now sings regularly with the Steel City Choristers, who work to bring choral music into diverse communities around Sheffield. In his work life, Stephen teaches and carries out research as an Academic Fellow in the department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering at the University of Sheffield, with a particular interest in wireless communications. He is working on combining this with his musical life by using sound to demonstrate modern communications techniques. Stephen spends the remaining time with his wife, often walking to and from pubs in and around Sheffield and the Peak District.

Tenor: Timothy Peters, BMus (Hons), is a tenor, conductor and composer. In 2022 he was appointed Fellow of the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain. As a tenor soloist, Timothy was an Associate Soloist of Escafeld Chorale, has been featured on BBC Radio 4 and regularly performs for choirs and orchestras in the north of England, including the Exon Singers, Hallam Choral Society and Hallam Sinfonia, Bakewell Choral Society and South Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra, the Chester Festival Chorus and Ensemble Deva, Kantos Chamber Choir and the Northern Ballet Sinfonia Orchestra, in addition to numerous performances as a recitalist. In his day-to-day life, Timothy is a tenor lay clerk at Guildford Cathedral and works at City of London Freeman's School, where he conducts choirs and teaches music production, DJ performance and the composition component of GCSE and A-Level Music. Timothy was appointed musical director of Surrey's LGBTQIA+ Choir, Rainbow Choir, in January 2022. Beyond his professional musical pursuits, Timothy also enjoys jazz piano and trombone performance. If he is not doing something music-related, you may find Timothy outdoors on a walk or run. Alternatively, he may be indoors enjoying a film or sampling real ale.



Bass: Johnny Day's musical education began as a chorister in Lichfield Cathedral Choir under Philip Scriven. As a treble, he performed as a soloist on CD recordings, television broadcasts and for Lichfield Cathedral Chorus in Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*. After completing his A-Levels, Johnny spent a year as Bass Choral Scholar at Hereford Cathedral. His time there included performances in the Sistine Chapel and Buckingham Palace, as well as a papal mass at St Peter's Basilica, Vatican City. Johnny graduated from the University of Sheffield with a BSc in Physics in June 2021. During his undergraduate studies, he was a Bass Choral Scholar at Sheffield Cathedral. Recent solo engagements have included Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* (with Escafeld Chorale) and John Stainer's *The Crucifixion* (St Mary's Church, Worsbrough). Johnny is now studying for an MSc in Energy Engineering with Industrial Management at the University of Sheffield. He enjoys climbing and playing both rugby and cricket in his free time.