



PROGRAMME





ST GEORGE'S CHURCH, KEMP TOWN,
BRIGHTON

Saturday, 27th October 2001 at 7.30 p.m.

J.S. BACH

MASS IN B MINOR

Esterházy Chamber Choir

Esterházy Ensemble Period Instruments

Leader **Judy Tarling**

Conductor **Nicholas Houghton**

Lesley-Jane Rogers, Soprano

Elizabeth Cragg, Soprano

James Huw Jeffries, Countertenor

John Campbell, Tenor

Julian Clarkson, Bass



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PROGRAMME NOTES

Johann Sebastian Bach (1785-1850) composed the *Mass in B Minor* (BWV232) over a period of 25 years, beginning the year after his arrival in Leipzig in 1723 (with his wife and five children), and finishing the year before his death. Much of the musical material is taken from earlier works, forming a compendium of musical styles employed throughout his Leipzig career. The work was not performed during Bach's lifetime though, the first complete performance taking place in Leipzig in 1859.

These were the busiest years of Bach's life. Within three years of their arrival in Leipzig, Mrs Bach had had several more confinements and they had to install a new two-and-a-quarter-hundredweight iron stove to cater for the extended family: a total of eleven Bachs, including Johann's first wife's sister, Friedelena. On the career front, Johann's workload included Director of Music and Kantor of the Thomasschule, writing music for the Thomaskirche and Nikolaikirche, *Kapellmeister von Haus* at Cöthen (and later to the court of Saxe-Weissenfels), recitalist and inspector of organs. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that he was accused - at a meeting of the Leipzig town council - of 'absenting himself without permission and neglecting the daily singing class, as well as other shortcomings and misdemeanours.' He in turn said of his superiors that they were 'odd, and little interested in music, with the result that I must live with almost constant vexation, envy and harassment...'

The *Mass in B Minor*, rather extravagantly described by the 19th-century Swiss publisher and critic Nageli as "the greatest musical work of art of all times and peoples", retains a unity and symmetry which belies its diverse origins. The tonal focus switches from B minor to D major in a carefully constructed scheme. The material which makes up each movement is perfectly adapted to its place in the setting, from the pathos of the *Crucifixus* and *Et incarnatus* to the bright and strident *Credo in unum Deum*. The overall effect is of a work which does indeed approach Nageli's description.



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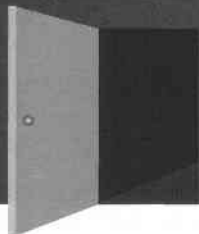
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LESLEY-JANE ROGERS

Soprano

Lesley-Jane Rogers studied singing and piano at the Royal Academy of Music, taking both subjects successfully to postgraduate level, and was awarded three Principal's prizes. She now specialises in oratorio and solo cantatas and is heralded as one of the most versatile soloists of today, with a vast repertoire of several hundred works.



A keen exponent of contemporary music, Lesley-Jane has given many world premières, most notably Ivan Fedele's *La chute de la maison Usher* with the **Ensemble InterContemporain** in Paris's prestigious Cité de la Musique, and, at the sharp end of music technology, Lesley-Jane recently gave two world premières live on the Internet, the occasion also encompassing a simultaneous live webcast from New York. Other contemporary music exploits include performing Ligeti's highly comic *Aventures* and *Nouvelles Aventures* in the presence of the composer, as well as singing the electronic soprano rôle in Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' opera *Resurrection* which was recorded live for Collins Classics. She is also the soprano soloist in Sadie Harrison's *Aster* recorded for Metier, and in Carl Rütti's *Magnificat* and *Alpha et Omega* for ASV, the former CD being awarded "Disc of the Month" by **Classical London**, and the latter CD being awarded "Editor's Choice" in Britain's revered **Gramophone** magazine.

By far the greatest part of Lesley-Jane's concert diary is mainstream solo oratorio work, but she is also in ever-increasing demand as a "vocal concerto" soloist; in particular her affinity with Canteloube's *Songs of the Auvergne*, the Strauss *Four Last Songs*, Mozart's *Exsultate jubilate* and Bach's solo cantata *Jauchzett Gott* makes her a popular choice for this task. For recitals, she works with the pianist **Christopher Ross**, and together they have recently recorded a CD of **Schubert Lieder**, due for release in 2002.

Respected too for her baroque work, Lesley-Jane has sung with various "authentic instrument" groups, and as a founder member of the **Wren Baroque Soloists**, may be heard on their three CDs which champion the music of Caldara, Peerson and Jeffreys, and which have been critically well received.

ELIZABETH CRAGG

Soprano

Elizabeth Cragg was educated at Royal Holloway College, University of London where she studied for a degree in music and won the Driver Prize for Outstanding Performance. She has studied as a postgraduate at the Royal College Music with



Chris. Christodoulou

Elizabeth Robson, where she was awarded a distinction for her diploma and won the Dorothy Silk Prize for Practical Singing. She was a finalist in the Lies Askonas Competition 2001 and was granted a study scholarship by the Countess of Munster Musical Trust.

Elizabeth has worked extensively on the concert platform throughout the UK and abroad. Recent engagements have included Mozart's *Requiem* with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with Trevor Pinnock and The English Concert in Japan, Bach's *B Minor Mass* in Singapore, Fanshawe's *African Sanctus* in the Lichfield Festival with Ex Cathedra, and Handel's *Messiah* at St John's Smith Square.

Elizabeth enjoys work on the operatic stage, and recent and forthcoming performances include Orazio in Handel and Bonocini's *Muzio Scevola* in the London Handel Festival 2001, Pamina in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Susanna in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, both with Staffordshire Opera. In the London Handel Festival 2000, she sang the role of Celia in the UK première of Handel's opera, *Silla*, which has been released as an archive CD recording.

Forthcoming solo engagements include soprano solos in Handel's *Dixit Dominus* with The English Concert under Pinnock in the QEH, Britten's *On this Island* with Roger Vignoles, Handel's *Messiah* with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* with Ex Cathedra.

JAMES HUW JEFFRIES

Countertenor

Born in Canterbury, **James Huw Jeffries** read Music at Magdalen College, Oxford, and furthered his studies at the Royal College of Music and the Britten-Pears School, Aldeburgh. A former Recommended Artist of the National Federation of Music Societies, he was selected by the Koninklijke Christelijke Zangersbond for the 1996 Erna Spoorenberg Solistenpresentatie in The Netherlands. He made his London solo debut in Israel in Egypt at St John's, Smith Square, and now pursues a career, which takes him regularly throughout the UK and also to Europe and North America in opera, concert and recital.



Carsten Bohm

UK Concert engagements have included performances at the Brighton and Edinburgh Festivals, the Barbican Hall, the QEH, the Fairfield Halls, the Brangwyn Hall, Swansea and the Snape Maltings. International concert engagements have taken him to Canada, France, Germany, The Netherlands and the Republic of Ireland. UK operatic engagements have included Gluck's *Orfeo*, Rinaldo, Andronico in *Tamerlano*, Nerone in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and The