

Saturday 24 September 2022
Downing Place URC

Haydn's *Nelson Mass*

1. *Kyrie*
2. *Gloria*
3. *Qui tollis*
4. *Quoniam*
5. *Credo*
6. *Et incarnatus*
7. *Et resurrexit*
8. *Sanctus*
9. *Benedictus*
10. *Agnus Dei*

Cambridge Philharmonic Chorus & Chamber Orchestra
Come & Sing Chorus

Conductor: Harry Sever
Leader: Alice Poppleton

Soprano: Esther Mallett
Mezzo-soprano: Milette Gillow

Tenor: Samuel Kibble
Bass: Michael Ronan

Missa in Angustiis (Nelson Mass)

Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809)

Haydn, in his role as resident composer at the Eisenstadt court, had to provide one new mass each year for the annual name-day of Princess Esterházy, Maria Hermenegild, the wife of Prince Nikolaus II. In total there are six such masses, the *Nelson Mass* being the third of these. The title 'Nelson' only dates from some time after a repeat performance of the work in 1800 in Vienna in the presence of Horatio Nelson and Lady Hamilton. This may have been as part of a celebration of Nelson's victory in the Battle of the Nile in 1798. The mass itself had, however, been completed before the battle took place.

Nelson had previously been in Naples where he was fêted as 'saviour of Europe'. The Admiralty had ordered him to return to England after they learned of his liaison with Lady Hamilton, but he took a deliberately circuitous route through Europe with the Hamiltons, via Austria and Germany, visiting the Esterházy palace en route, where he met Haydn.

Haydn himself never used the title *Nelson Mass*. He later catalogued the work as a *Missa in Angustiis*, a 'mass in times of distress'. This surely wouldn't have been a reference to the mood of the music which was, after all, written to celebrate the name-day of a princess! Haydn had befriended Nelson in Vienna and maybe the mass could have been construed by him, after the fact, as a celebration of military victory following a period of acute international anxiety. Without it being too fanciful an interpretation, the music can be viewed in this way. It starts with a dramatic D minor *Kyrie eleison* ('Lord have mercy on us'), accompanied by martial declarations by trumpets, and then progresses with military interventions from the timpani in the *Gloria*, via gradually more gentle movements towards a final, delightfully joyful D major *Dona nobis pacem* ('Grant us Thy peace'). The initial apparent 'distress' is eventually overcome.

The mass is distinctive in the way that the solo and ensemble sections are closely integrated, rather than the usual separation of aria and chorus. Only in the G major *Agnus Dei* are the four soloists heard without the choir. The soprano soloist, in particular, has a demanding role in the *Kyrie*, and introduces the *Gloria*, the *Quoniam tu solus*, the *Incarnatus*, and the *Benedictus*.

Esther Mallett (soprano)



Esther Mallett studied at The Guildhall School of Music and Drama supported by scholarship and the VEC Acorn Trust, and English National Opera on their Opera Works programme. Prior to this she read music at Oxford University where she held a choral scholarship. She enjoys a diverse performing career on the operatic stage and concert platform, and made her TV debut in Season 4 of *The Crown* (Netflix) as an opera singer. Whilst at the GSMD, Esther was selected by Graham Johnson for his Song Guild, performed a role in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the prestigious Opera Course department,

and coached contemporary repertoire with Jane Manning, Lana Bode and Judith Weir. She made her professional debuts with West Green House and the Tête-à-Tête festival whilst still studying. Passionate about community music-making, Esther has collaborated with ENO Baylis on schools' singing projects and with Bristol-based composer Mark Lawrence on four community operas in the South West.

Milette Gillow (mezzo-soprano)



Milette Gillow is currently on the Preparatory Opera course at the Royal Academy of Music under the tutelage of Alex Ashworth and Iain Ledingham. An experienced oratorio soloist, Millette regularly performs in sacred works including a recent Royal Academy Bach Soloists concert at Wigmore Hall. As a recitalist, she holds a particular fondness for 20th Century English Song, and was Very Highly Commended in the RAM English Song Competition 2020.

She recently performed two 45-minute recital programmes at Wigmore Hall *For Crying Out*

Loud! series together with duo partner Max Bilbe. Her operatic experience includes Fairy/Mustardseed cover (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Royal Academy Opera), Sorceress (*Dido and Aeneas*, LUU Opera Society), Lola (*Cavalleria Rusticana*, West Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra), and Sally (*A Hand of Bridge*, Wolfson College Oxford). Millette is also a keen conductor, having directed both the Chamber Choir and the unauditioned Symphonic Choir at the University of Leeds.

Samuel Kibble (tenor)



Samuel Kibble is a member of the Opera School at the Royal Academy of Music. He is generously supported by the CHK Foundation Award, John Talbot Collender Award, Clemence Trust, Norfolk Opera Trust and the Norfolk and Norwich Operatic Fund. Recent operatic roles include Gherardo in *Gianni Schicchi* (Puccini) and Torquemada in *L'heure espagnole* (Ravel) with Royal Academy Opera, and Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Rossini) with Clonter Opera. Samuel performs regularly as a soloist on the concert platform. Recent performances include Beethoven's *Symphony No 9* (arr. Liszt) at the Royal Academy of Music, Bach's *St*

John Passion (arias) with the English Baroque Choir, Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* in Norwich and Bach's *Cantata 198 'Trauerode'* with Masaaki Suzuki as part of the Royal Academy of Music's *Bach the European* series. He is an approved singer for the Josephine Baker Trust.

Michael Ronan (bass)



Northumbrian bass-baritone Michael Ronan is an up-and-coming artist praised for his commanding voice and stage presence. He has recently finished a season at Glyndebourne Festival Opera performing the role of Monsieur Barbu in Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* and covering the roles of Colline in Puccini's *La Bohème*, and Harvey in Ethel Smyth's *The Wreckers*. He is currently a member of Royal Academy Opera where he is the recipient of the Sainsbury Award and is generously supported by The Countess of Munster Musical Trust. Michael saw recent success as the winner of the Royal

Academy of Music's 2022 Bicentenary Prize with his performance described as 'outstandingly moving'. Some concert highlights include Christus in Bach's *Matthäus-Passion* under the baton of Trevor Pinnock, a run of performances of contemporary composer David Haladjian's *Missa de Lumine* with the Walliser Kammerorchester in Siders, Switzerland, and working alongside pianist Benjamin Mead, Michael has also performed in an acclaimed recital of Clara Schumann lieder at Wigmore Hall with the Academy Song Circle.