

Portishead
Choral
Society

Portishead Choral Society

Conductor: Jonathan Palmer

Richard Lennox (Organ)

Eloise Routledge (Soprano)

Paul Badley (Tenor)

Marcus Evans (Bass)

Haydn: *The Creation*

Portishead Methodist Church
Saturday 25th March 2023 at 7.30

PROGRAMME

portisheadchoral.co.uk



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making
music

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PROGRAMME

The Creation (sung in English)

Haydn

When we think of a great artist, we often immediately think of one particular masterpiece. Consider Michelangelo's *Frescoes* in the Sistine Chapel, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, and Mozart's *Requiem*.

With Haydn, many people would automatically think of his oratorio *The Creation*, and these days it is generally agreed that the work is a supreme masterpiece on many different levels. It is always interesting to read accounts of first performances. *The Creation* was an instant success from the moment it was first performed in March 1799 at the Burgtheater in Vienna by about 180 singers and musicians.

What was very significant is the unanimous praise it received within two years, not only in Haydn's native Austria but in England, France, Scandinavia, Germany, Spain, Italy and even Russia where it was an enormous success. When Haydn himself published the full score at Vienna in 1800, the work was engraved with German and English texts, but he fully expected his work to be performed in any other foreign language. The origins of the text that Haydn used for are obscure. It has not survived in its original form, nor is it known who its author was, but it does seem reasonable to accept the commonly-made assertion that it was first intended for Handel. It derives from two sources: the Bible (Genesis and the Psalms) and John Milton's epic poem 'Paradise Lost', whose style and imagery are reworked and imitated by the unknown writer of the libretto.

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. A good example is the opening section where the choir, subdued in a mood of hushed stillness sing: 'and there was', and then suddenly burst out a massive fortissimo chord of C major on the word: 'light'. Even after two hundred years the effect is still immensely powerful. 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.

Haydn's intention was to try and appeal to as wide and as receptive a national public as Handel had done with *Messiah* and he could hardly have succeeded better. The work jumped boundaries and religious barriers. Catholics, Protestants, atheists and Jews were all moved to tears by it. This was a new development in music. In 2023 with our technology, we can communicate and share effortlessly, so it is important to realise that until 1798, music had spread very slowly. Bach was still known only to connoisseurs. Handel was a 'God' in England and slightly known in Vienna due to the efforts of the man who adapted *The Creation's* libretto from an English original, Gottfried van Swieten. Mozart was just becoming popular all over Europe, though not yet in France and England, where his music was almost completely unknown. Then came along *The Creation* and proved to be an instantaneous international hit. Possibly it filled some deep need in people's hearts; at any rate, contemporaries thought so. Perhaps it is once again providing despairing human beings with a sense of Divine greatness seen in typically eighteenth century fashion, through man himself.

'In my whole life I will not hear another piece of music as beautiful; and even if it had lasted three hours longer, and even if the stink and sweat-bath had been much worse, I would not have minded. For the life of me I would not have believed that human lungs and sheep gut and calf's skin could create such miracles. The music all by itself described thunder and lightning, and then you would have heard the rain falling and the water rushing and the birds really singing and the lion roaring, and you could even hear the worms crawling along the ground. In short, I never left a theatre more contented, and all night I dreamed of the creation of the world'.

(An overwhelmed member of the tightly-packed audience after the first performance)

PART THE FIRST

INTRODUCTION – Representation of chaos

RECIT — Raphael

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth; and the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

CHORUS

And the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters: and God said, Let there be light, and there was light.

RECIT — Uriel

And God saw the light that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.

AIR — Uriel

Now vanish, before the holy beams,
The gloomy shades of ancient night;
The first of days appears.
Now chaos ends, and order fair prevails:
Affrighted fled, hell spirits black in throngs;
Down they sink in the deep abyss
To endless night.

CHORUS

Despairing cursing rage attends their rapid fall:
A new-created world springs up at God's
command.

RECIT — Raphael

And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, and it was so.

Now furious storms tempestuous rage;
Like chaff, by the winds are impelled the clouds;
By sudden fire, the sky is inflamed;
And awful thunders are rolling on high.
Now from the floods in steams ascend reviving
showers of rain,
The dreary wasteful hail, the light and flaky snow.

AIR — Gabriel

The marv'llous work behold amaz'd
The glorious hierarchy of heaven;
And to th' ethereal vaults resound
The praise of God and of the second day.

CHORUS

And to th' ethereal vaults resound
The praise of God and of the second day.

RECIT — Raphael

And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear, and it was so.

And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of waters called he seas; and God saw that it was good.

AIR — Raphael

Rolling in foaming billows
Uplifted, roars the boisterous sea.
Mountains and rocks now emerge,
Their tops among the clouds ascend.
Through th' open plains outstretching wide,
In serpent error rivers flow.
Softly purling, glides on
Through silent vales the limpid brook.

RECIT — Gabriel

And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth; and it was so.

AIR — Gabriel

With verdure clad the fields appear,
Delightful to the ravish'd sense;
By flowers sweet and gay
Enhanced is the charming sight.
Here fragrant herbs their odours shed;
Here shoots the healing plant;
With copious fruit the expanded boughs are hung;
In leafy arches twine the shady groves;
O'er lofty hills majestic forests wave.

RECIT — Uriel

And the heavenly host proclaimed the third day, praising God, and saying:

CHORUS

Awake the harp, the lyre awake,
And let your joyful song resound,
Rejoice in the Lord, the mighty God:
For he both heaven and earth
Has clothed in stately dress.

RECIT — Uriel

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day from the night, and to give light upon the earth; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years. He made the stars also.

RECIT— Uriel

In splendour bright is rising now the sun,
And darts his rays; a joyful happy spouse,

A giant proud and glad
To run his measured course.
With softer beams and milder light,
Steps on the silver moon through silent night.
The space immense of th' azure sky,
A countless host of radiant orbs adorns.
And the sons of God announced the fourth day,
In song divine, proclaiming thus his power.

CHORUS

The heavens are telling the glory of God,
The wonder of his work displays the firmament.

TRIO — Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael

Today that is coming speaks it the day,
The night that is gone to following night.

CHORUS

The heavens are telling the glory of God,
The wonder of His work displays the firmament.

TRIO — Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael

In all the lands resounds the word,
Never unperceived, ever understood.

CHORUS

The heavens are telling the glory of God,
The wonder of His work displays the firmament.

PART THE SECOND

RECIT— Gabriel

And God said, Let the waters bring forth
abundantly the moving creature that hath life,
and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open
firmament of heaven.

AIR — Gabriel

On mighty pens uplifted soars
The eagle aloft, and cleaves the air
In swiftest flight to the blazing sun.
His welcome bids to morn the merry lark,
And cooing calls the tender dove his mate.
From every bush and grove resound
The nightingale's delightful notes;
No grief affected yet her breast,
Nor to a mournful tale were tun'd
Her soft enchanting lays.

RECIT — Raphael

And God created great whales, and every living
creature that moveth; and God blessed them,
saying, Be fruitful all and multiply.
Ye winged tribes, be multiplied,
And sing in every tree; multiply
Ye finny tribes, and fill each watery deep;
Be fruitful, grow, and multiply,

And in your God and Lord rejoice.
And the angels struck their immortal harps, and
the wonders of the fifth day sung.

TRIO

Gabriel

Most beautiful appear, with verdure young dorn'd
The gentle sloping hills; their narrow sinuous veins
Distil, in crystal drops, the fountain fresh and
bright.

Uriel

In lofty circles play, and hover in the air,
The cheerful host of birds; and as they flying whirl
The glittering plumes are dyed as rainbows by the
sun.

Raphael

See flashing through the deep in thronging
swarms
The fish a thousand ways around,
Upheaved from the deep, th' immense Leviathan
Sports on the foaming wave.

Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael

How many are Thy works, O God!
Who may their numbers tell!

TRIO and CHORUS

The Lord is great, and great his might,
His glory lasts forever and for evermore.

INTERVAL OF FIFTEEN MINUTES

RECIT — Raphael

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living
creature after his kind; cattle, and creeping thing,
and beast of the earth, after his kind.
Straight opening her fertile womb,
The earth obey'd the word,
And teem'd creatures numberless,
In perfect forms, and fully grown.
Cheerful roaring stands the tawny lion.
With sudden leap
The flexible tiger appears. The nimble stag
Bears up his branching head. With flying mane,
And fiery look, impatient neighs the noble steed.
The cattle, in herds, already seek their food
On fields and meadows green.
And o'er the ground as plants are spread
The fleecy, meek, and bleating flocks.
Unnumbered as the sands in swarms arose
The hosts of insects. In long dimension
Creeps with sinuous trace the worm.

AIR — Raphael

Now heaven in fullest glory shone;
Earth smil'd in all her rich attire;
The room of air with fowl is fill'd;
The water swell'd by shoals of fish;
By heavy beasts the ground is trod:
But all the work was not complete;
There wanted yet that wondrous being,
That, grateful, should God's power admire,
With heart and voice His goodness praise.

RECIT — Uriel

And God created man in His own image,
In the image of God created He him.
Male and female created He them.
He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and
man became a living soul.

AIR — Uriel

In native worth and honour clad,
With beauty, courage, strength, adorn'd,
Erect, with front serene, he stands
A man, the lord and king of nature all.
His large and arched brow sublime;
Of wisdom deep declares the seat!
And in his eyes with brightness shines
The soul, the breath and image of his God.
With fondness leans upon his breast
The partner for him form'd,
A woman, fair and graceful spouse.
Her softly smiling, virgin looks,
Of flow'ry Spring the mirror,
Bespeak him love, and joy, and bliss.

RECIT — Raphael

And God saw everything that He had made, and
behold it was very good. And the heavenly choir,
in song divine, thus closed the sixth day.

CHORUS

Achieved is the glorious work;
The Lord beholds it and is pleas'd.
In lofty strains let us rejoice,
Our song let be the praise of God.

TRIO

Gabriel and Uriel
On Thee each living soul awaits,
From Thee, O Lord, all seek their food.
Thou openest thy hand,
And fillest all with good.

Raphael

But when Thy face, O Lord, is hid,
With sudden terror they are struck;
Thou tak'st their breath away,

They vanish into dust.

Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael

Thou sendest forth thy breath again,
And life with vigour fresh returns;
Revived earth unfolds new strength
And new delights.

CHORUS

Achieved is the glorious work;
Our song let be the praise of God.
Glory to His Name for ever.
He sole on high exalted reigns,
Hallelujah !

PART THE THIRD

INTRODUCTION — Morning

RECIT — Uriel

In rosy mantle appears, by music sweet awak'd,
The morning, young and fair.
From heaven's angelic choir
Pure harmony descends on ravish'd earth.
Behold the blissful pair,
Where hand in hand they go: their glowing looks
Express the thanks that swell their grateful
hearts.
A louder praise of God their lips
Shall utter soon; then let our voices ring,
United with their song.

DUET — Adam and Eve.

By Thee with bliss, O bounteous Lord,
Both heaven and earth are stor'd.
This world so great, so wonderful,
Thy mighty hand has fram'd.

CHORUS

For ever blessed be His power,
His Name be ever magnified.

Adam

Of stars, the fairest pledge of day,
That crown'st the smiling morn;
And thou, bright sun, that cheer'st the world,
Thou eye and soul of all;

CHORUS

Proclaim in your extended course,
Th' Almighty power and praise of God;

Eve

And thou that rul'st the silent night,
And all ye starry hosts;
Ev'rywhere spread wide his praise
In choral songs about.

Adam

Ye mighty elements, by his power
Your ceaseless changes make;
Ye dusky mists and dewey steams,
That rise and fall thro' th' air;

CHORUS — Adam and Eve.

Resound the praise of God our Lord,
Great his Name and great his might.

Eve

Ye purling fountains, tune his praise;
And wave your tops, ye pines.
Ye plants, exhale, ye flowers, breathe
To Him your balmy scent.

Adam

Ye that on mountains, stately tread,
And ye that lowly creep;
Ye birds that sing at heaven's gate,
And ye that swim the stream;

Eve and Adam

Ye creatures all, extol the Lord;

CHORUS

Ye creatures all, extol the Lord;
Him celebrate, him magnify.

Eve and Adam

Ye valleys, hills, and shady woods,
Made vocal by our song;
From morn till eve you shall repeat
Our grateful hymns of praise.

CHORUS

Hail, bounteous Lord! Almighty, hail!
Thy word call'd forth this wondrous frame,
The heavens and earth Thy power adore;
We praise thee now and evermore.

RECIT — Adam

Our duty we have now perform'd,
In offering up to God our thanks.
Now follow me, dear partner of my life,
Thy guide I'll be; and every step
Pours new delights into our breasts,
Shows wonders everywhere.
Then may'st thou feel and know the high degree
Of bliss the Lord allotted us.

And with devoted heart his bounties celebrate,
Come, follow me, thy guide I'll be.

Eve

O thou for whom I am, my help, my shield,
My all, thy will is law to me;
So God our Lord ordains; and from obedience
Grows my pride and happiness.

DUET — Adam and Eve

Adam

Graceful consort, at thy side
Softly fly the golden hours;
Ev'ry moment brings new rapture,
Ev'ry care is lull'd to rest.

Eve

Spouse adored, at thy side,
Purest joys o'erflow the heart:
Life and all I have is thine,
My reward thy love shall be.

Both

The dew-dropping morn, O how she quickens all!
The coolness of even, O how she all restores!
How grateful is of fruits the savour sweet!
How pleasing is of fragrant bloom the smell !
But, without thee, what is to me
The morning dew, the breath of even
The sav'ry fruit, the fragrant bloom.
With thee is every joy enhanced,
With thee delight is ever new,
With thee is life incessant bliss,
Thine, thine, it all shall be.

RECIT — Uriel

O happy pair! and happy still might be
If not misled by false conceit
Ye strive at more than granted is,
And more desire to know than know ye should.

CHORUS

Sing the Lord, ye voices all,
Magnify his name thro' all creation,
Celebrate His power and glory,
Let his name resound on high.
Jehovah's praise for ever shall endure.
Amen.

Jonathan Palmer (Conductor)



After a distinguished teaching career in a variety of schools, Jonathan decided to retire in 2007 in order to concentrate on his composition, and for eight years was a part-time research student at the University of Bristol. In August 2010 he was awarded the Raymond Warren Prize for Composition. Having studied under Professor Geoff Poole and Professor John Pickard, he completed his PhD in Composition in January 2015, and became a Fellow of Trinity College, London, in Composition.

Over the years he has conducted numerous choral societies and orchestras. His choice of repertoire is varied, from Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Schubert to Vaughan Williams, Bernstein, Gershwin, and Rutter. In 1984, he directed performances of Olivier Messiaen's *Trois Petites Liturgies* at Sherborne Abbey and Clifton Cathedral, and in 2007, conducted a large-scale performance of Orff's *Carmina Burana* with massed choirs at the Colston Hall, Bristol.

Jonathan was appointed Musical Director of Portishead Choral Society in September 2013. During the 2013-14 season, he directed the choir in Handel's *Messiah*, Gounod's *Messe Solennelle de Sainte-Cécile* and Edward German's *Merrie England*. In the spring of 2014, he composed a special new cantata for the choir to coincide with the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. *Awake the Voice*, a thirty minute work in six movements for chorus, soloists, audience and orchestra, received its first performance in Gordano School, Portishead in December 2014. It was subsequently performed again in December 2018 in Clifton Cathedral in a collaborative Christmas-themed concert with Nailsea Choral Society and Chew Valley Choral Society. He enjoys the challenge of devising imaginative programmes for the concerts, and always tries to combine sacred and secular, familiar and the less-known, old and new, while seizing any opportunity for the audience to participate! In June 2019, the finale of the concert 'From Russia with Love' even required the audience to sing in Russian!

In 2009, he was appointed as a Choral Director for 'Choirs at Sea', and for a time, enjoyed numerous voyages on cruise ships forming choirs from the passengers. However, with the pandemic, he withdrew from that activity, and is now a member of a team of visiting speakers. He plays the cello and particularly enjoys playing chamber music. In his spare time he enjoys maintaining his classic cars, instrument restoration, cooking and travelling.

Richard Lennox (Organ)



Richard joined Portishead Choral Society as their accompanist in September 2016 and has played for their rehearsals and concerts over the past six years. He has recently worked with Weston Operatic Society as their Musical Director for '9 To 5 The Musical' at the Playhouse Theatre in Weston Super Mare, and has played in many concerts around the West Country. He played a return online concert with the international acclaimed bass/baritone Jonathan Viera 'Live from the Steinway Room', recorded on Sunday 30th October 8pm, and still available to view on YouTube and Facebook.

Richard plays all genres of music, which makes him an exciting professional musician. His other accomplishments include accompanying students for their exams (vocalists and Instrumentalists) at dance schools in Epsom and Cheltenham. Last year he had the privilege of accompanying one of the BBC Singers, Jamie W Hall, performing with Weston Choral Society.

Each year Richard has the pleasure of performing at the Royal Albert Hall - a Christian event 'Prom Praise' with the All Souls Orchestra and Choir, playing on their mighty organ and their Steinway piano. He also accompanies their soloists, including Mike Smith, Graham Kendrick, and Jonathan Viera.

Richard has had several interviews with Radio Bristol, and been invited to play his music; they are excellent in promoting his work. Various CDs have been recorded by Richard, with sincere thanks accorded to Chris Emmerson.

Eloise Routledge (Soprano)



Eloise grew up in the UK playing the piano and flute from a young age, before taking up singing whilst completing her Psychology degree. She studied at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, being awarded a grant from the Laura Ashley Foundation and winning the Aneurin Davies Memorial Award, and performing the title role in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

Eloise enjoys concerts and oratorios, performing Handel's *Messiah* at Wells Cathedral and Bristol's Colston Hall, Verdi's *Requiem* at Nottingham Albert Hall, and Brahms' *Requiem* at Birmingham Symphony Hall with the CBSO and City of Birmingham Choir. Other engagements include Mozart's *Requiem*, Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, Handel's *Dixit Dominus*, Purcell's *Hail Bright Cecilia*, Haydn's *The Seasons*, and as guest soloist for Treorchy Male Choir performing in major concert halls across Australia.

Eloise has performed Ginastera's *Cantata Para America Magica* with conductor Hans Leenders and the Percussion Ensemble of Rotterdam Conservatorium, in Rotterdam, and in concerts with Classical Connections, London Festival Opera and Opera Novella in the UK and abroad.

Paul Badley (Tenor)



Paul has sung approximately 25 operatic roles during his career specialising in those of Mozart, Donizetti and Rossini. As a consort singer he has toured with the Tallis Scholars, the Sixteen, the Dunedin Consort, I Fagiolini and the Amaryllis Consort. Oratorio concerts have taken him as far afield as the Singapore Festival and China, as well as Europe.

This year's engagements include Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Seasons and Creation*, and Britten's *St. Nicolas*. CD recordings as a soloist include Rachmaninov's *Vespers with Tenebrae*, and Mozart's *Requiem* with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

Paul was vocal coach and singing teacher at Selwyn College Cambridge and currently teaches at the RWCMD (Junior dept). He is also involved in choral conducting and is MD of Melksham and Steeple Aston Choral Societies.

Paul lives in Shropshire with his wife, the soprano, Angela Kazimierczuk. In his spare time he enjoys walking and cycling in the hills, and dancing with Leominster Morris.

Marcus Evans (Bass)



Marcus Evans is a baritone with a wide range of musical interests but with particular experience in Oratorio, English Art Song, Light Opera, Grand Opera, and Lieder. As well as developing his singing under the tutelage of Christopher Jennings in Clevedon, Marcus has participated in master classes given by noted vocal coaches Angela Hickey, Mary King, Louise Horrocks, and Sarah Walker.

He has given various public performances including recitals of Victorian music, English art songs, German lieder, and musical theatre. He has also appeared for local choirs and choral societies in Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Creation* and *Nelson Mass*, and Faure's *Requiem*.

Marcus lives in Portishead with his wife and 2 young sons. When not singing he is a keen croquet player ranked in the world top 50, and also enjoys running, football, and chess.

Next Concert

Portishead Choral Society

Jonathan Palmer (conductor), Alexander Robinson (tenor)

Saturday 10th June 2023 in Gordano School Hall, BS20 7QR

A concert of music to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III on 6th May.

“BRITISH MUSIC FOR A SUMMER’S EVENING”

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*

Anglo-African composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912) was just 22 and had recently graduated from the Royal College of Music, London, when he completed ‘Hiawatha’s Wedding Feast’. He drew on African musical influences and the work was widely performed in both Britain and the United States. But in dire financial need, he sold his copyright for 15 guineas, and was near-penniless when he died.

Handel: *Coronation Anthem ‘The King Shall Rejoice’*

Coronation music was one field in which Handel reigned supreme. Composed for King George II on 11th October 1727 and regularly performed ever since, we will attempt to recreate the ceremony of the occasion.

English songs for tenor voice by Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Britten and Ian Venables

A concert not to be missed!

New members welcome – for more information, please see our website portisheadchoral.co.uk, contact a member, or email contact@portisheadchoral.co.uk.

Portishead Choral Society

President: Pamela Rudge, GRSM(Hons), ARCM

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Future Concerts

“BRITISH MUSIC FOR A SUMMER’S EVENING”, Saturday 10th June 2023 in Gordano School Hall.

A concert of music to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III on 6th May.

New members are always welcome, with no audition! For more information, please see our website portisheadchoral.co.uk, contact a member, or email contact@portisheadchoral.co.uk. Rehearsals are at Portishead Methodist Church on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm.

Members of the choir are available to sing at weddings, funerals, and other events – please see our website, contact a committee member, or email contact@portisheadchoral.co.uk.

Clevedon Choral Society – Haydn’s *Nelson Mass*, 13th May 2023 at 7.30pm, St John’s Church, Queens Road, Clevedon, BS21 7TH; for more information visit www.clevedonchoralsociety.org.uk

Nailsea Choral Society - Summer Concert, 3rd June 2023 at 7.30pm, Holy Trinity Church, Church Lane, Nailsea - for more information visit www.nailseachoral.org.uk

Acknowledgements

The society is affiliated to Making Music, the charity that represents and support amateur choirs, orchestras, and music promoters throughout the United Kingdom.

The society is grateful for the sponsorship and hosting of our website by 34sp.com, who provide free website hosting for registered UK charities.

Programme notes by Jonathan Palmer.

Cover image: ‘The Pillars of Creation’, NASA/ESA/Hubble Legacy Archive/C Buck.