

# NEWBURY CHORAL SOCIETY

Conductor: JONATHAN FINNEY

## **J.S. Bach – MAGNIFICAT Mozart – MASS IN C MINOR**

SATURDAY DECEMBER 14th, 1985

at 7.30 p.m.

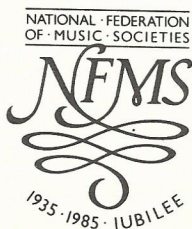
CORN EXCHANGE, NEWBURY

### Soloists:

ALISON CHARTLON-WEST and UNA BUCHANAN ..... Soprano  
MARY HODGES ..... Contralto  
ROLAND VERNON ..... Tenor  
GRAHAM STONE ..... Bass

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Leader : SARAH REED



## MAGNIFICAT IN D

*J.S. Bach*

In setting the Magnificat text, Bach followed the prevailing convention of dividing Mary's canticle into a series of self-contained numbers, contrasted in scoring and style. Since the middle of the 15th century settings of the Magnificat in several differentiated parts had increasingly been written. This tradition Bach continued, but in so doing transcended all previous similar compositions.

The Magnificat was probably composed in 1732-33 as a revised and truncated version of the E flat Magnificat of 1723. The later version was transposed to the key of D major so that Bach could use the colourful, if limited, brass of his time. To balance this brass group he enlarged the woodwind section also.

There are twelve sections, and the festive character of the Magnificat is immediately apparent from the first moment. Bach uses the largest orchestra available, with 3 brilliant trumpets. The choral texture is enhanced by being in five parts with divided sopranos, rather than the usual four. There then follows the first solo "Et exultavit spiritus meus" (number 2). There are solo pieces for each of the five principals, plus a duet and trio. "Quia respexit" (number 3) reveals the first of many examples of the use of musical figures interpreting particular words and emotions; we see the 'lowliness of the handmaiden' represented in the descending melodic line. In number 5 "Quia fecit mihi magna" we hear 'faith' and its strength reflected in the continual cello *ostinato* figure. The deceptively simple siciliano duet "Et misericordia" (number 6) is full of strained chromatic harmonies depicting those that fear God. The tenor aria "Deposuit potentes" (number 8) follows the vengeful mood of the previous chorus. It is musically made up of precipitous rising and falling scales, representing the 'exalted' humble and meek, and the mighty being 'put down'. "Esurientes implevit bonis", with its unresolved close, wittily illustrates the 'rich being sent empty away'.

The choruses show a similar concern for exactly reflecting the text. "Omnes Generationes" is the second chorus and the first of the three fugues which stand like pillars in this Magnificat, a sort of musical trinity. The others are numbers 7 and 11, but each is very different from the others, drawing inspiration as they do from the words. "Omnes Generationes" is a realistic representation of adoring generations, of pressing multitudes praising Mary. The opening four-note motif is heard 44 times during the chorus — presented in rapid ascending sequence through all the notes of the scale — representing all of mankind, and the climax is reached when all the voices push forward, tumbling over each other, all singing the opening motif on the same note.

Number 7 — "Fecit potentiam" — is the central fugue and central movement, and in its scoring it recalls the festive nature of the opening. The music aptly falls apart at "dispersit" as the proud scatter, panic-stricken, before the dissonant explosion on the word "Superbos" and the scathing final Adagio. The five-part "Sicut locutus est" with its clear outlines and confident fugue is a portrayal of faith in the promise to 'Abraham' and his seed forever'. With "Sicut erat in

principio" (number 12) we find Bach copying the convention that goes back to Monteverdi, of recalling the opening music 'As it was in the beginning,' with its festive power, to bring the music to a close. This return highlights the wholeness and cohesion of the complete work, with its music continually dominated by the sentiments of the text. This is combined with a musical coherence achieved through the alternation of groups of two or three solo numbers with the three massive fugues, contained as they are between the music of the opening and its reprise which closes the Magnificat. Thus the whole Magnificat is welded into a single musical, architectural and textual whole, portraying Bach's faith and belief in a single God.

#### MASS IN C MINOR (K427)


*Mozart*

The masses and vespers written during Mozart's period of service at Salzburg could be described as his bread and butter. Broadly speaking, they kept well within the well-trod path of tradition, but not the C minor Mass. With its comparatively rich scoring and expressive depth it is in a different category from the previous masses, but it is a category that it shares with that other great but unfinished liturgical work, the Requiem.

The choral movements especially go far beyond the bounds of the earlier masses. This new depth is reflected in the large scoring, despite the absence of clarinets. There are, however, three trombones included — generally a rare feature, but in Salzburg it was common practice for the trombones to play along with the three lower voices.

In the "Credo" and "Gratias" the four-part writing is expanded to five, and the "Qui Tollis" is in eight parts. For "Cum Sancto Spiritu" he wrote a powerful fugue based on the strident figure of the rising fourth. The concluding "Osanna" is a massive eight-part fugue. Such obvious seriousness of intent, even sobriety, in these moments, and the austere and freely contrapuntal "Kyrie," would not have come about had it not been for Mozart's study of J.S. Bach. Once again his creativity had absorbed new stylistic influences, influences which at this time also included Handel; witness the spectacle and opulence in the powerful blocks of massed choral sound alternating with orchestral ritornellos in the "Gloria." In addition, the ostentatious and sparkling "Laudamus te," the sensuous soprano interlude of the "Kyrie" and the virtuosic display of the "Et incarnatus est," reveal the influence on Mozart of the Neapolitan bravura operatic school of writing. It is a style that is full of joy, if not exactly liturgical.

This mass, which is generally purported to have been written in honour of Mozart's new wife, Constanze, but by other commentators as a memorial to his own mother, has elements in it that are capable of supporting both points of view. Within the unity of the whole we hear the legacy of Bach's weight and strictness of counterpoint, established in the very first movement; also the joyous exuberance of Handel and finally the brilliance of the Italians. But it is all Mozart, who created his own direction, his own path, one which would later lead to the Requiem, and eventually to the most powerful of classical liturgical works, Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis."



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## JONATHAN FINNEY

Jonathan Finney graduated from Durham University in 1983. While there he conducted 'The Messiah', Berlioz 'Te Deum', Verdi's 'Requiem', all as Chorus Master to the University Choir. He also acted as singing coach and conductor's assistant to John Wilkes, in a concert performance of Wagner's 'Die Walküre.' Since then Jonathan has conducted Operetta and Oratorio in the South of England. In June 1984 he was placed in the final three of the Sainsbury's Choral Conducting Prize. In addition to his commitments in Newbury, Jonathan was engaged by 'The Opera Players' as Chorus Master for their performances of 'Carmen,' in Essex in Spring 1985. Commencing from January 1986, Jonathan has been asked to assume the Conductorship of a newly formed Chamber Orchestra being founded in West Essex, for young musicians. Jonathan has also had wide practical experience of the orchestral and chamber music repertoire as a violinist in orchestras in Essex and Durham, performing both in the U.K. and Europe.

### UNA BUCHANAN *Soprano*

Una Buchanan was born in Ayrshire, Scotland, and studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow, gaining diplomas in performing and teaching.

After leaving college she joined Scottish Opera, and her many roles with the Company included 'Titania' in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' 'Musetta' in 'La Boheme,' 'Polly' in 'The Beggars' Opera,' 'The Dew Fairy' and 'Gretel' in 'Hansel and Gretel'; 'Papagena' in 'The Magic Flute' and 'Barbarina' in 'The Marriage of Figaro.'

For Scottish Opera-Go-Round she performed the roles of 'Lucy' in 'The Telephone,' 'Susanna' in 'Susanna's Secret,' and 'Thisbe' in 'Cinderalla.'

Una is also involved in light entertainment work, in addition to appearing on the oratorio and concert platforms.

### ALISON CHARLTON-WEST *Soprano*

Before entering the Royal College of Music in 1979, Alison was principal understudy with D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. While at the Royal College she entered the opera school where she was awarded the Royal College of Opera Scholarship, consequently winning scholarships to study in Saltzburg. While at the college Alison sang with Placido Domingo in the R.C.M. Centenary Appeal and broadcast Bach's B minor Mass for Capitol Radio.

For the last two summers Alison has sung principal roles at the international Handel Festival of Batiguanò, Italy. As a member of Kent Opera she sang the role of Barberina, and understudy to Constanze in "The Abduction from the Seraglio." Next season Alison will be singing in the English National Opera Company's production of "Die Meistersinger."

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The National Federation of Music Societies, to which this Society is affiliated, subsidises this concert with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain.

The Society acknowledges financial assistance from Newbury District Council and the Royal County of Berkshire.

The Society wishes to express grateful thanks to Mrs. Vosper for the floral displays in the hall.

Members of the audience are reminded that it is illegal to make a tape recording of this performance.

## Bach — MAGNIFICAT

1. Magnificat ..... *Chorus*
2. Et exultavit ..... *Soprano II Aria*
3. Quia respexit ..... *Soprano I Aria*
4. Omnes generationes ..... *Chorus*
5. Quia fecit mihi magna ..... *Bass Aria*
6. Et misericordia ..... *Duet for Alto & Tenor*
7. Fecit potentiam ..... *Chorus*
8. Deposuit ..... *Tenor Aria*
9. Esurientes ..... *Alto Aria*
10. Suscepit Israel ..... *Trio for Sopranos I & II, and Alto*
11. Sicut locutus est ..... *Chorus*
12. Gloria ..... *Chorus*

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*INTERVAL 15 MINUTES*

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Mozart — MASS IN C MINOR K 427 (417a)

KYRIE ..... *Chorus & Soprano*

GLORIA

Gloria in excelsis ..... *Chorus*

Laudamus te ..... *Soprano Aria*

Gratias ..... *Chorus*

Domine ..... *Duet for 2 Sopranos*

Qui tollis : ..... *Double Chorus*

Quoniam ..... *Trio for 2 Sopranos & Tenor*

Jesu Christe - Cum Sancto Spiritu ..... *Chorus*

CREDO

Credo in unum Deum ..... *Chorus*

Et incarnatus est ..... *Soprano Aria*

SANCTUS ..... *Double Chorus*

BENEDICTUS ..... *Quartet and Double Chorus*

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**MARY HODGES** *Contralto*

Mary started her training at the Royal Academy of Music before moving to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, studying with Rudolf Pierney. While at the Guildhall she was awarded the Max Hecht Scholarship, and was the contralto finalist in the Golden Medal competition. Mary's first major appearance was in 'Messiah from Scratch' at the Royal Albert Hall. Since then she has appeared with many choirs, including Birmingham Choral Society and the Oxford Bach Choir. In addition to her experience of the standard oratorio repertoire, Mary's operatic experience has ranged through major roles in works by Purcell, Mozart, Verdi, Wagner and Britten. In recital she has sung music from across the whole range of Lieder, Chanson and English Song.

**ROLAND VERNON** *Tenor*

Roland began singing in many concerts, both as a boy chorister and later as a tenor recitalist. He studied at Cambridge where he had a choral scholarship with King's College, participating in many concerts, tours, recordings and broadcasts. He entered the Royal College of Music in 1983, where he has gained further experience on the concert platform and in the operatic repertoire. In 1984 he sang the role of Alfredo in 'Traviata' in Cambridge. Roland now sings with the Glyndbourne Opera Company, and will continue to do so next year.

**GRAHAM STONE** *Bass*

After leaving school, Graham studied privately with Mollie Petrie in Bristol where he sang in local musical festivals. In addition he sang in the operas 'La Calisto,' 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' 'The Rake's Progress' and 'La Traviata,' the first two with Bristol Intimate Opera. In 1982 he commenced full time studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, with Laura Sarti. While there he has sung in the world premiere of 'The Last Circus' and as Simone in 'Gianni Schicchi.' He recently sang Pistol in 'Falstaff' at Cambridge, a role which he took to Palma in Italy in the First International Arturo Toscanini Conducting Competition. Further engagements include 'Acis and Galatea' in London.

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