



**JOHN JOUBERT**

St Mark Passion

Missa Wellensis

Locus iste

**WELLS CATHEDRAL CHOIR**

**MATTHEW OWENS**

# John Joubert (b. 1927)

## St Mark Passion, Missa Wellensis & Locus iste

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Peter Auty *Narrator – tenor*  
Benjamin Bevan *Jesus – baritone*  
Richard May *cello*  
David Bednall *organ*

Christopher Sheldrake *Judas – baritone*  
Craig Bissex *Pilate – baritone*  
Iain MacLeod-Jones *Centurion – tenor*

Wells Cathedral Choir  
Matthew Owens *conductor*

About Wells Cathedral Choir & Matthew Owens:

*'The Choir of Wells Cathedral [... is] one of England's best-kept secrets [...] an album full of unexpected delights.'*  
Classic FM

*'Seamlessly blended by choirmaster Matthew Owens, who has cultivated a bright, gleaming sonority'*  
BBC Music Magazine

### **Missa Wellensis**, Op. 174 (2013)

1. Kyrie	[4:21]
2. Gloria	[4:22]
3. Sanctus	[3:10]
4. Benedictus	[2:29]
5. Agnus Dei	[3:40]

### 6. **Locus iste**, Op. 175 (2013) [4:10]

### **St Mark Passion**, Op. 180 (2015)

7. At the House of Simon the Leper	[7:53]
8. The Upper Room	[10:47]
9. Gethsemane	[10:43]
10. The Praetorium	[8:56]
11. Golgotha	[9:19]

Total playing time [69:56]

*World premiere recordings*



John Joubert  
(Photography: Graham Boulton)

### **John Joubert: Choral Works for Wells Cathedral**

With his total of opus numbers rapidly approaching the 200 mark, John Joubert's creative output covers all musical formats, ranging from opera to instrumental solos. A constant thread throughout his seventy-plus years of composing has been the English choral tradition, with which he first became acquainted as a schoolboy in South Africa.

Joubert was born in Cape Town on 20 March 1927 into a family of Huguenot and Dutch descent, and was educated at the Diocesan College in Rondebosch. The director of music there was Claude Brown, a former assistant to Sir Ivor Atkins at Worcester Cathedral, and therefore in direct contact with Sir Edward Elgar. John once told me how proud he was of this link he had with the great composer.

During his late teens John Joubert had something of a creative crisis, juggling aspirations to become either a painter or a composer. Composition lessons with W.H. Bell, who had taught at London's Royal Academy of Music (RAM) until emigrating to South Africa in 1912, helped decide him, and he won a Performing Rights Society scholarship for himself to study at the

RAM. Joubert made the journey to London in 1946. His composition teachers included Theodore Holland, Howard Ferguson, and Alan Bush, and the move to London opened up a whole glittering world of opera- and concert-going to him, hearing performances from the world's greatest artists.

In 1950 he was appointed to the University of Hull (living in an apartment which was later taken over by the university's librarian Philip Larkin – Joubert grumbles ironically that the blue plaque now commemorating the poet makes no acknowledgement of himself), where he remained as lecturer until 1962, when he moved to the University of Birmingham, with its prestigious music department under the professorship of the legendary Anthony Lewis.

Over the years, he moved from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer, and eventually to Reader in Music. A brief sabbatical in 1979 saw him spending time as visiting professor at the University of Otago in New Zealand.

John Joubert took early retirement from the University of Birmingham in 1987, since when, a little tuition at Birmingham Conservatoire and some private coaching aside, he has been able to devote himself entirely to composition. Much choral music has resulted – including the oratorio *Wings*

of *Faith* (premiered by Ex Cathedra during the nationwide 'Joubertiade' celebrating his 80th birthday in 2007), the Rochester triptych *Blest Glorious Man*, and *An English Requiem*, a counterpart to the Brahms German Requiem, premiered with a libretto by Nicholas Fisher at the Gloucester Three Choirs Festival in 2010. In addition, Joubert saw the completion and triumphant premiere and recording of his lifetime labour of love, the opera *Jane Eyre*.

A new stimulus since the completion of *Jane Eyre* has been Joubert's involvement with Wells Cathedral in Somerset. He led a masterclass in composition at Wells Cathedral School in June 2013, delivering some pithy but always constructive observations, and he had two new works, the **Missa Wellensis**, Op. 174 and the motet **Locus iste**, Op. 175 premiered in the Cathedral on 16 June that year, as part of the festival *new music wells* where he was composer-in-residence. Joubert's relationship with Wells came to a climax on Palm Sunday 2016, his 89th birthday, when the Choir of Wells Cathedral under its director Matthew Owens gave the premiere of his **St Mark Passion**, Op. 180 in a liturgical setting. The work was given a repeat performance on Palm Sunday the next year.

These new recordings therefore preserve for all time the rewarding results of this relationship between a veteran composer, Wells Cathedral Choir, and indeed the youngsters at the Cathedral School.

All three works performed here reveal characteristics which have always been features of Joubert's choral style: an inevitability of rhythmic underlay in his word-setting, with music virtually bouncing off the text: and an expressive use of tonality, texture, and tessitura, gradually creating tension and eventually bringing about an emotional release which just seems so 'right'.

#### **Missa Wellensis**, Op. 174

Commissioned by *Cathedral Commissions* for Wells Cathedral Choir, this 'Short Mass' (it has no 'Credo') is resourcefully written for unaccompanied SATB chorus, the various parts often divided.

The 'Kyrie', as so often in Joubert's settings of the text, makes an urgent, appeal, here in block chords in the key of B-flat minor. There is a shift to F major for 'Christe eleison', solo soprano moving gradually into modal territories, before a sturdy return to 'Kyrie'.

The 'Gloria' begins in the warm, confident key of A major, modulating swiftly to the even brighter F-sharp major. The opening lines are repeated between soprano and alto (in fourths) and tenor and bass, and SATB soloists contribute to 'Domine Deus'.

One of the endearing, listener-friendly aspects of John Joubert's compositional style is the use of memorable, easily-identifiable motifs, such as the little descending scale which we hear for 'Domine Fili unigenite' (itself a subconscious reminiscence of 'Qui propter nos homines' in the 'Credo' of Joubert's *Missa Beati Ioannis*, composed in 1962).

The returning word 'Gloria' underpins 'Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris', and exultant word-repetitions build to a triumphant 'in Gloria Dei Patris' before all the excitement subsides into a pianissimo F-sharp major 'Amen'.

The 'Sanctus' returns us to the bleak, B-flat minor key-signature with which the Mass had opened, the sombre, dense textures here far removed from what one would expect in a paean of praise. Joubert moves to the relative major (D-flat) for a 'pleni sunt coeli' florid in triplet movement, fugal and sequential, moving towards a

blazing 'Osanna'.

Various warm-sounding keys are explored in the 'Benedictus', with the chorus sustaining chords under solos in succession for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. The 'Osanna' this time is surprisingly subdued, ending on a C-sharp major chord. Often Joubert's final chords are in second inversion, something which creates an airborne lightness to his conclusions.

Quietly reflective, the 'Agnus Dei' is in the long-prepared key of B-flat major, with a serenely rocking, almost lullaby-like 'dona nobis pacem' bringing the Mass to a calm, settled ending.

#### **Locus iste**, Op. 175

Another commission from *Cathedral Commissions* for Wells Cathedral Choir, this unaccompanied motet takes as its text lines from the Gradual of the Mass for the Dedication of a Church.

Joubert's setting opens with a G-based tonality fluctuating between minor and major. Voices are divided, the texture is dense. Melodic lines ascending from the depths are answered in descending inversions, all of this giving structural cohesion as the lines gradually rise. This

miniature is a fine example of the composer's expressive use of tonality, texture and tessitura before it at last comes to an end on a comforting, quietly solid G major chord.

### St Mark Passion, Op. 180

There are many aspects to this work which put it firmly in the line of descent from the two great Passions (St Matthew and St John) by Johann Sebastian Bach: the demanding role for solo tenor as the Narrator (Evangelist in Bach's settings), and the involvement both of the Chorus as representatives of the common people, and the congregation itself, joining in the singing of appropriate hymns selected here from *The English Hymnal*. As Joubert's St Mark was premiered in a liturgical context, this last requirement is especially appropriate.

Another, more subliminal link is Joubert's busy part for a solo cello to underpin the Narrator's narratives, reminding us that the cello is an important continuo partner in the recitatives of Bach's Passions. It was only a few years before the composition of the St Mark Passion that Joubert composed his Cello Concerto, premiered in Shrewsbury by Raphael Wallfisch and the Northern Chamber Orchestra in 2012,

and memories of the work's eloquence inform the restless cello writing here, with angry tremolandi, resonant pizzicato chords, and singing reflections and commentaries.

In addition to the cello there is an important part for organ, supporting the SATB choir, and the five soloists: in addition to the Narrator there are Jesus, Judas and Pilate (all baritones), and the Centurion (tenor).

The Passion begins 'At the House of Simon the Leper', with the anointing of Christ's feet to the indignation of his pennywise entourage. The choral hymn which ends the section, subtly introduced by the organ, is 'Vexilla Regis', and cannot help but remind the listener of Gustav Holst's *The Hymn of Jesus*.

We move directly into 'The Upper Room', the chorus desperately muttering 'Is it I?', much in the manner of the calls of 'Peter Grimes!' in that opera by Joubert's beloved Benjamin Britten. We get another scent of that composer in troubled organ writing which recalls Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*. That aside, listen for the wonderful enharmonic release at 'Kingdom of God'.

'Gethsemane', the third movement, is an extended narrative scena for soloists, cello

and organ, the chorus only eventually entering with 'Drop, drop, slow tears'.

Jesus is taken to 'The Praetorium' for questioning by Pilate, and here the chorus is vicious (just as in Bach's *turbae*) in its lust for the destruction of a man they had adored only a few days earlier. And we end here with the Passion Chorale, 'O sacred head', again a link with both Bach Passions.

The final scene is Golgotha, and after Jesus' death the cello returns to the music of the Passion's very beginning, before the growing triumph in a confident D major of all of us singing 'When I survey the wondrous cross'.

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### Cathedral Commissions

Missa Wellensis, Locus iste, and St Mark Passion were all commissioned by Cathedral Commissions of Wells Cathedral. The scheme, founded in 2006, has commissioned new works by some of the UK's finest composers: Michael Berkeley, Judith Bingham, Jonathan Dove, Gabriel Jackson, John Joubert, Sir James MacMillan, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Tarik O'Regan, Howard Skempton, Sir John Tavener, and Judith Weir, among others.

Why not join this exciting project and receive special benefits as a commissioner? For further details please contact: [administrator@cathedralcommissions.co.uk](mailto:administrator@cathedralcommissions.co.uk) or visit [www.cathedralcommissions.co.uk](http://www.cathedralcommissions.co.uk).

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The Darragh Family Charitable Trust  
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## Texts & Translations

### Missa Wellensis, Op. 174

#### 1. Kyrie

Kyrie eleison,  
Christe eleison,  
Kyrie eleison.

*Lord have mercy,  
Christ have mercy,  
Lord have mercy.*

#### 2. Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo.  
Et in terra pax hominibus  
bonae voluntatis.  
Laudamus te.  
Benedicimus te.  
Adoramus te.  
Glorificamus te.  
Gratias agimus tibi  
propter magnam gloriam tuam.  
Domine Deus,  
Rex caelestis,  
Deus Pater omnipotens.  
Domine Fili unigenite,  
Jesu Christe.  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris,  
Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.  
Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe  
deprecationem nostram.  
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.  
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus.  
Tu solus Dominus.

Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.  
Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

*Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to men of good will.  
We praise You,  
We bless You,  
We adore You,  
We glorify You,  
We give thanks to You  
For your great glory,  
Lord God, Heavenly King,  
God the Almighty Father.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only-begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
You take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us.  
You take away the sins of the world,  
hear our prayer.  
You sit at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.  
For You alone are holy,  
You alone are the Lord,  
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
With the Holy Spirit  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.*

#### 3. Sanctus

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

*Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of Your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.*

#### 4. Benedictus

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.  
Osanna in excelsis.

*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.*

#### 5. Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.  
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.  
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,  
dona nobis pacem.

*Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,  
grant us peace.*

#### 6. Locus iste, Op. 175

Locus iste a Deo factus est,  
inestimabile sacramentum,  
irreprehensibilis est.

*This place was made by God.  
a priceless mystery;  
it is beyond reproach.*

*Gradual for the dedication of a church*

#### St Mark Passion, Op. 180

7. At the house of Simon the Leper  
*Narrator:*

After two days was the feast of the passover,  
and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests  
and the scribes sought how they might take him  
by craft, and put him to death. But they said,

*Chorus:*

Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar  
of the people.

*Narrator:*

And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the  
Leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman  
having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard  
very precious; and she brake the box, and poured

it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said,

*Chorus:*

Why was this waste of the ointment made?  
For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor.

*Narrator:*

And they murmured against her. And Jesus said,

*Jesus:*

Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

*Chorus:*

The royal banners forward go,  
The cross shines forth with mystic glow;  
Where he in flesh, our flesh who made,  
Our sentence bore, our ransom paid.

O cross, our one reliance hail!  
So may thy power with us avail  
To give new virtue to the saint,  
And pardon to the penitent.

To thee eternal Three in One,  
Let homage meet by all be done:

Whom by the Cross thou dost restore,  
Preserve and govern evermore.

*Mark 14:1-9 (King James) &*

*Venantius Honorius Clementianus Fortunatus*  
*(c. 540-c. 600)*  
*(trans. John Mason Neale (1818-66))*

8. The Upper Room

*Narrator:*

And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said,

*Jesus:*

Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.

*Narrator:*

And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one,

*Chorus:*

Is it I?

*Narrator:*

and another said,

*Chorus:*

Is it I?

*Narrator:*

And he answered and said unto them,

*Jesus:*

It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

*Chorus:*

Is it I?

*Narrator:*

And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said,

*Jesus:*

Take, eat: this is my body.

*Narrator:*

And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them,

*Jesus:*

This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

*Chorus:*

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,  
And with fear and trembling stand;  
Ponder nothing earthly minded,  
For with blessing in his hand,  
Christ our God to earth descendeth  
Our full homage to demand.

King of Kings yet born of Mary,  
As of old on earth He stood,  
Lord of Lords in human vesture,  
In the body and the blood;  
He will give to all the faithful  
His own self for heavenly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven,  
Spreads its vanguard on the way,  
As the light of light descendeth  
From the realms of endless day,  
That the pow'rs of hell may vanish  
As the darkness clears away.

*Mark 14:16-25 (King James) &*  
*Liturgy of St James*  
*(trans. Gerard Moultrie (1829-85))*

9. Gethsemane

*Narrator:*

And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples,

*Jesus:*

Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

*Narrator:*

And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; And saith unto them,

*Jesus:*

My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

*Narrator:*

And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said,

*Jesus:*

Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

*Narrator:*

And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter,

*Jesus:*

Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

*Narrator:*

And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him. And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them,

*Jesus:*

Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

*Narrator:*

And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh

Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying,

*Judas:*

Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely.

*Narrator:*

And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith,

*Judas:*

Master, master;

*Narrator:*

and kissed him. And they laid their hands on him, and took him. And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. And Jesus answered and said unto them,

*Jesus:*

Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled.

*Narrator:*

And they all forsook him and fled.

*Chorus:*

Drop, drop, slow tears,  
And bathe those beauteous feet,

Which brought from Heav'n  
The news and Prince of Peace.

Cease not, wet eyes,  
His mercies to entreat;  
To cry for vengeance  
Sin doth never cease.

In your deep floods,  
Drown all my faults and fears;  
Nor let his eye  
See sin, but through my tears

*Mark 14:32-49 (King James) &  
Phineas Fletcher (1582-1650)*

10. The Praetorium

*Narrator:*

And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate. And Pilate asked him,

*Pilate:*

Art thou the King of the Jews?

*Narrator:*

And he answering said unto him,

*Jesus:*

Thou sayest it.

*Narrator:*

And the chief priests accused him of many things:

but he answered nothing. And Pilate asked him again, saying,

*Pilate:*

Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.

*Narrator:*

But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled. Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. And there was one named Barabbas, who had committed murder in the insurrection. And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. But Pilate answered them, saying,

*Pilate:*

Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

*Narrator:*

But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate answered and said again unto them,

*Pilate:*

What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?

*Narrator:*

And they cried out again,

*Chorus:*

Crucify him, crucify him, crucify him.



*Narrator:*  
Then Pilate said unto them,

*Pilate:*  
Why what evil hath he done? And they cried out  
the more exceedingly,

*Chorus:*  
Crucify him, crucify him, crucify him.

*Narrator:*  
And so Pilate, willing to content the people,  
released Barabbas unto them, and delivered  
Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

*Chorus:*  
O sacred head, sore wounded,  
Defiled and put to scorn;  
O kingly head surrounded  
With mocking crown of thorn:  
What sorrow mars thy grandeur?  
Can death thy bloom deflow'r  
O countenance whose splendour  
The hosts of heav'n adore

In thy most bitter passion  
My heart to share doth cry,  
With thee for my salvation  
Upon the cross to die.  
Ah, keep my heart thus moved  
To stand thy Cross beneath,  
To mourn thee, well-beloved,  
Yet thank thee for thy death.

My days are few, O fail not,  
With thine immortal power,

To hold me that I quail not  
In death's most fearful hour;  
That I might fight befriended,  
And see in my last strife  
To me thine arms extended  
Upon the cross of life.

*Mark 15:1-9 & 11-15 (King James) &  
Paul Gerhardt (1607-76) from a fourteenth-century  
Latin hymn (trans. Robert Bridges (1844-1930))*

11. Golgotha  
*Narrator:*  
And they clothed him with purple, and platted a  
crown of thorns, and put it about his head,  
And began to salute him,

*Chorus:*  
Hail, King of the Jews!

*Narrator:*  
And when they had mocked him, they took off  
the purple from him, and put his own clothes on  
him, and led him out to crucify him. And when  
they had crucified him, they parted his garments,  
casting lots upon them, what every man should  
take. And the superscription of his accusation  
was written over,

*Chorus:*  
THE KING OF THE JEWS.

*Narrator:*  
And when the sixth hour was come, there was  
darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a  
loud voice, saying,

*Jesus:*  
My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

*Narrator:*  
and gave up the ghost. And when the centurion,  
which stood over against him, saw that he so  
cried out, and gave up the ghost, and said,

*Centurion:*  
Truly, truly this man was the Son of God.

*Chorus:*  
When I survey the wondrous Cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

See from his head, his hands, his feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
demands my soul, my life, my all.

*Mark 15: 17-18, 20, 24, 26, 33-34, 37 & 39  
(King James) &  
Isaac Watts (1674-1748)*



Matthew Owens (Photography: Iain MacLeod-Jones)



Peter Auty (Photography: Pippa Wilson)



Benjamin Bevan



Richard May



David Bednall

### **Peter Auty (Narrator – tenor)**

Peter Auty made his professional debut with Opera North in the 1998–9 season, and was a company principal with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, from 1999 to 2002. Since then he has returned to Covent Garden as Malcolm (*Macbeth*) and Arturo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*).

Elsewhere in the UK he has worked with Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Opera Holland Park, Grange Park Opera, Welsh National Opera, English National Opera, and Scottish Opera. His repertoire includes Cavaradossi (*Tosca*), Count Vaudémont (*Iolanta*), Alvaro (*The Force of Destiny*), Turridu (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Canio (*Pagliacci*), Maurizio (*Adriana Lecouvreur*), Macduff (*Macbeth*), Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*), Don José (*Carmen*), Rodolfo (*La bohème*), Italian Tenor (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Duke (*Rigoletto*), Gabriele (*Simon Boccanegra*), Alfredo (*La traviata*), Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*), and the title-role in Gounod's *Faust*.

Abroad he has appeared as Canio, at Teatro Nacional de São Carlos in Lisbon; Don José, at Aalto Musiktheater Essen; and Lensky, at Malmö Opera. Further international engagements include Frankfurt Opera, Netherlands Reisopera, and New Zealand Opera.

In concert he has sung with the London Symphony Orchestra under Sir Colin Davis and Sir Simon Rattle, the Hallé, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under Sir Mark Elder, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Neeme Järvi and Vladimir Jurowski. He has also appeared with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra under Vladimir Ashkenazy, the Bergen Philharmonic under Edward Gardner, and the Royal Flemish Philharmonic under Edo de Waart. He made his recital debut in London in the 2009 Rosenblatt Recital Series and he sang the tenor solo in Havergal Brian's 'Gothic' Symphony at the BBC Proms in 2011.

### **Benjamin Bevan (Jesus – baritone)**

Benjamin Bevan is the youngest of fourteen brothers and sisters who formed a family choir with which he sang in his youth. Having pursued a career as a wine merchant, Benjamin changed direction and won a scholarship to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama to study singing. He made his Royal Opera House debut as Henry Cuffe in Britten's *Gloriana*, returning there to sing Der Sprecher (*Die Zauberflöte*). At The Royal Danish Opera, Benjamin has sung Lescaut (*Boulevard Solitude*) by Henze, a role he also sang at Welsh National Opera. For Scottish Opera he sang Morales (*Carmen*), Riccardo

(*I Puritani*), Marcello (*La Bohème*), and Lescaut (*Manon*). He has also worked with Garsington Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, English Touring Opera, Opera Holland Park, Longborough Festival Opera, Lausanne Opera, Opéra de Dijon, and at Aix-en-Provence. On the concert platform, Benjamin has worked with The English Concert, Bach Collegium Japan, The Hanover Band, the BBC Philharmonic, the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, and the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, among many others. Recordings with London Early Opera, 'Handel in Italy Volumes 1 & 2', on the Signum Classics label were critically acclaimed.

#### **Richard May (cello)**

As one of Britain's foremost cellists of his generation, Richard May pursues an international career as soloist and chamber musician, performing concertos with such orchestras as the Basel Symphony, Ulster and BBC Philharmonic, including appearances at Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, Barbican and Southbank Centres, and at festivals in Salzburg, Berlin, London, and Aldeburgh. He has performed live on television and radio, both nationally and internationally, and recently featured as soloist in works for cello and choir on the

Naxos disc *All Shall be Well*, including the world premiere recording of Roxanna Panufnik's work of the same name, which was chosen as BBC Radio 3 CD of the week.

Following on from winning the BBC TV Young Musician of the Year String Section, his London debut recital at the Purcell Room included the world premiere of Five Duos for cello and piano by Colin Matthews. A recital of Bach Solo Suites in Switzerland gained critical acclaim for 'absolute perfection and virtuosity'. He also gave a televised recital for the series *Solo*, featuring British musicians, and has performed as soloist and chamber musician with Nigel Kennedy as well as recently collaborating with the Brodsky Quartet.

Richard studied in London with Florence Hooton, winning a Scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music, and subsequently with William Pleeth, then later with Thomas Demenga at the Basel Konservatorium. He also won awards to study at Banff, Yale, Prussia Cove, and La Chaux-de-Fonds, with such artists as Paul Tortelier, Aldo Parisot, Ralph Kirshbaum, and chamber music with Andrés Schiff. Past prizes include National Federation of Music Societies Award and EMI Jacqueline du Pré Competition, when *The Times* wrote of the Shostakovich Sonata 'simply one of the most gripping

performances I have heard'.

He was cellist of the Angell Piano Trio for twenty years, who were Ensemble-in-Residence at Aldeburgh and performed worldwide.

Richard teaches cello at Wells Cathedral Specialist Music School and is co-founder/Artistic Director of Encore Music Projects International Summer School. He is an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music and plays an Old English cello of 1789, by William Forster.

#### **David Bednall (organ)**

David Bednall is recognised as one of the leading choral composers of his generation and studied for a PhD in Composition with Professor John Pickard at the University of Bristol. He is a Teaching Fellow and Organist of The University of Bristol, Sub Organist at Bristol Cathedral, and conducts The University Singers. He was Organ Scholar of The Queen's College, Oxford, held a number of posts at Gloucester Cathedral, and was Assistant Organist at Wells Cathedral. His teachers included Dr Naji Hakim and David Briggs.

He won prizes in improvisation and

performance at the examination for FRCO and a recording of improvisations with Malcolm Archer received excellent reviews. He has improvised live on radio, and performed extensively in the UK and abroad, including a recital at Notre-Dame de Paris. He also appeared as stunt-organist on *Dr Who*.

His compositions are widely recorded, and the album *Hail, gladdening light* was a *Gramophone* Editor's Choice. The recording of his *Requiem* received similar accolades, and a further recording, *Flame Celestial*, received a *Gramophone* Recommendation. His largest work to date, *Welcome All Wonders*, was commissioned by The Queen's College, Oxford, and their recording on Signum Classics has garnered superb international critical acclaim. The recording of his *Stabat Mater* on Regent with Jennifer Pike (violin) and the Chapel Choir of Benenden School under Edward Whiting was an Editor's Choice in the Awards Edition of *Gramophone* 2016. Recent projects include a BBC Commission for James Gilchrist, Philip Dukes, and Anna Tilbrook, which was premiered in Hull in July 2017.

The boy and girl choristers of Wells Cathedral, Christmas 2015 (Photography: Iain MacLeod-Jones)



### Wells Cathedral Choir

Wells Cathedral Choir was hailed in 2011 by an international jury from *Gramophone* magazine as the greatest choir with children in the world, and the sixth greatest overall. The choir celebrated its 1100th birthday in 2009: boys first sang at Wells Cathedral in 909 and the full choral tradition dates back over 800 years. In 1994 the choral foundation at Wells was enriched by the addition of girl choristers. Today the choir consists of 18 boy choristers, 18 girl choristers and 12 Vicars Choral (the men of the choir). The boys and girls usually sing separately with the Vicars Choral but occasionally come together for larger events and tours.

The choir is at the heart of the worshipping life of the Cathedral, and sings a wide repertoire of music ranging from the Renaissance period to the present day. It sings throughout the cathedral's festival, launched in June 2008: *new music wells*, giving a number of premieres as well as featuring music from the previous forty years. It has premiered works from some of today's finest composers, including Lord (Michael) Berkeley CBE, Judith Bingham, Geoffrey Burgon, Bob Chilcott, Jonathan Dove, Gabriel Jackson, John Joubert, Sir James MacMillan CBE, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies CH CBE (former Master of the

Queen's Music), Tarik O'Regan, John Rutter, Howard Skempton, and Sir John Tavener.

Wells Cathedral Choir broadcasts regularly on BBC Radio 3 and its innovative recordings over the last eleven years for Hyperion Records and Regent Records have won international praise and has had two discs made Editor's Choice in *Gramophone* magazine.

As well as the liturgical musical repertoire the choir performs larger scale choral works in concert, with recent collaborations including the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (Britten *War Requiem*), Jools Holland and his band (*Jools Holland Mass*), Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society (Britten *St Nicolas* and *War Requiem*), Dame Felicity Lott, Dame Emma Kirkby, James Bowman CBE, and Wells Cathedral School Chamber Orchestra (at a royal gala concerts at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and St James's Palace, London). In September 2014 the choristers sang with the Berlin Radio Choir and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle OM, in a performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* at the BBC Proms.

The choir has toured extensively with recent tours to France, Germany, The Netherlands, Hong Kong, and Beijing.



Matthew Owens with John Joubert following the first performance of the St Mark Passion on the occasion of the composer's 89th birthday, 20 March 2016.

(Photography: Jacinth Latta)

### **Matthew Owens (conductor)**

Matthew Owens became Organist and Master of the Choristers of Wells Cathedral in 2005, having previously been Organist and Master of the Music at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh, and Sub Organist of Manchester Cathedral. In addition to being responsible for the 1100-year-old tradition of daily sung worship at Wells Cathedral, Matthew has toured, broadcast, and recorded extensively with Wells Cathedral Choir. He is the Founder Artistic Director of three initiatives at Wells: *Cathedral Commissions*, a scheme which commissions new works from pre-eminent British composers; the cathedral's innovative festival, *new music wells*; and its counterpart, *Early Music Wells*.

Matthew was educated at Chetham's School of Music; The Queen's College, Oxford; the Royal Northern College of Music; and the Amsterdam Conservatorium. Studying with Gordon Stewart, Margaret Phillips, and Jacques van Oortmerssen, he won all the major prizes in the diplomas of the Royal College of Organists. From 1994-99, he was Tutor in Organ at the RNCM and Chetham's, and worked for BBC Religious Broadcasting; he was Conductor of The Exon Singers (1997-2011), and President

of the Cathedral Organists' Association (2010-13).

As Musical Director of the Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society, a chorus of over 150 singers, he has performed the major works of the repertoire with some of the south of England's leading professional orchestras. Matthew has directed choral workshops and summer schools throughout the UK and abroad – including recent visits to Australia, China, Germany, Hong Kong, Luxembourg, New Zealand, and the USA – and has made over thirty recordings as a conductor with major labels including Hyperion, Signum, and Resonus Classics.

As an organist, Matthew has given recitals in Australia, France, Ireland, Spain, Switzerland, New Zealand, the USA, and throughout the UK, including many festival appearances, and is currently performing the complete works of Bach at Wells Cathedral over a series of thirty-six recitals. He has championed new music, particularly of British composers, conducting over 190 world premieres, including works by leading composers ranging from Jools Holland to Sir James MacMillan, and John Rutter to Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. As a composer himself, he is published by Oxford University Press, Novello, and the RSCM.

## Wells Cathedral Choir

### Boy Choristers

Tom Bates  
Henry Dukes (*Deputy Head Chorister*)  
Xavier Hobday-Padamadan  
Alexei James-Cudworth  
Hugh Latta (*Head Chorister*)  
Ozzie Latta  
Ross Lloyd  
James MacGeoch  
Bailey Roberts (*Deputy Head Chorister*)  
Taylor Thompson

### Girl Choristers

Harriet Carlill  
Carla Coombs  
Erin Davies  
Madeline Davis  
Orla Donoghue  
(*Head Chorister, soloist tracks 2 & 4*)  
Cecilia Fawden  
Eliza Green  
Madeleine Hughes  
Eliza Mead  
Beth Mitton  
Jessica Morrell (*soloist tracks 2 & 4*)  
Sophie Morrell  
Harriet Perring  
(*Deputy Head Chorister, soloist tracks 1, 8 & 11*)  
Astrid Rose-Edwards

## Countertenor

John Buckland (*tracks 1-6 only*)  
Simon Clulow  
Aidan Cruttenden (*tracks 1-6 only*)  
Theo Golden  
Stephen Harvey (*soloist tracks 2 & 4*)  
Tim Wilson

## Tenor

Alexander James Edwards (*tracks 1-6 only*)  
Edward Goater (*soloist tracks 2 & 4*)  
Oscar Golden-Lee  
Iain MacLeod-Jones  
Jack Wilde

## Bass

Craig Bissex (*soloist track 8*)  
William Drakett (*tracks 1-6 only*)  
Mike Entwistle (*tracks 1-6 only*)  
Andrew Kidd  
Christopher Sheldrake (*soloist tracks 2 & 4*)  
William White

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Ms Anna Joubert, Mr James Kealey,  
Dr Alex and Mrs Debbie Kolombos,  
Mr Richard Pomeroy, and Mr Andrew John Smith*

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Recorded at 24-bit/96kHz resolution

Cover image: Wells Cathedral Crucifixion Triptych, centre panel,  
oil on linen, 213x183 (2012), by Richard Pomeroy

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