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MUSIC *in* Peebles

presents

‘THE CRUCIFIXION’

by

John Stainer



STRATHCLYDE UNIVERSITY CHAMBER CHOIR

Directed by Alan Tavener

Thomas Athorne (tenor), Thomas Stevenson (bass)

David Hamilton (organ)

Strathclyde University
**CHAMBER
CHOIR**

2021/22 SEASON
Peebles Old Parish Church
Tuesday 12 April 2022 at 7.30 pm





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PROGRAMME

Approx.
duration
(minutes)

Sir John Stainer (1840-1901)

'The Crucifixion', for tenor, bass, chorus & organ (1887) 70

1. And They Came to a Place Named Gethsemane (*tenor recitative*)
– text from Mark 14:32
2. The Agony (*tenor and bass solo and chorus*)
– including text from Mark 14:46, 53, 60, 61–64, 15:1, 15–16
3. Processional to Calvary (*organ solo*) and
"Fling Wide the Gates" (*chorus and tenor solo*)
4. And When They Were Come (*bass recitative*) – text from Luke 23:33
5. **HYMN: The Mystery of the Divine Humiliation**
6. He Made Himself of No Reputation (*bass recitative*)
– text from Philippians 2:7–8
7. The Majesty of the Divine Humiliation *tenor solo*
8. And As Moses Lifted Up the Serpent (*bass recitative*)
– text from John 3:14–15
9. God So Loved the World (*chorus or quartet a cappella*)
– text from John 3:16–17
10. **HYMN: Litany of the Passion**
11. Jesus Said, 'Father, Forgive Them' (*tenor and male chorus recitative*)
– text from Luke 23:34
12. So Thou Lifest Thy Divine Petition (*tenor and bass solo duet*)
13. **HYMN: The Mystery of the Intercession**
14. And One of the Malefactors (*bass solo and male chorus*)
– text from Luke 23:39–43
15. **HYMN: The Adoration of the Crucified**
16. When Jesus Therefore Saw His Mother (*tenor solo and male chorus*)
– text from John 19:26–27, Matthew 27:45, Mark 15:34
17. Is It Nothing to You? (*bass solo*) – text from Lamentations 1:12
18. The Appeal of the Crucified (*chorus*)
19. After This, Jesus Knowing That All Things Were Now Accomplished
(*tenor and male chorus recitative*) – text from John 19:28, 30, Luke 23:46
20. **HYMN: For the Love of Jesus**

Sir John Stainer (1840-1901)

‘The Crucifixion’, for tenor, bass, chorus & organ (1887)

The Crucifixion is an oratorio for Easter, retelling the passion of Christ through music. John Stainer’s scored the work for tenor and bass soloists with choir and organ and was, in many ways, deliberately straightforward so it could be performed widely by both professional and amateur church musicians.

John Stainer was born in Southwark and entered the world of church music as a boy chorister at St Paul’s Cathedral. His keyboard skills were already excellent, thanks to the opportunities he had to practise on a small chamber organ in his family home, and during his chorister years he took organ lessons at St Sepulchre’s Church in Holborn. At age sixteen, he moved to Worcestershire to take up the position of organist at

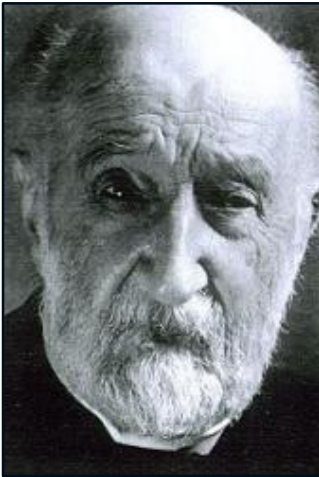


St Michael’s College, Tenbury, a newly established specialist school for Anglican church music. From here he progressed to Magdalen College, Oxford, and enrolled as a student whilst conducting his duties as choirmaster and organist.

He composed large amounts of liturgical music, directed numerous ensembles and eventually obtained his doctorate and became an examiner for degree candidates. In 1872 he returned to St Paul’s Cathedral where, as organist, he raised standards and overhauled many of the traditions around choral music and liturgy. Throughout the latter decades of his career Stainer was endowed with a host of honorary teaching, adjudication and leadership positions. His music education advocacy and academic achievements were significant; he published treatises on music theory and organ technique and was a trailblazer in

the study of Medieval and Renaissance music. During his retirement years, Stainer enjoyed travelling to the restorative climes of Italy. He died in Verona on Palm Sunday in 1901.

Although Stainer's compositional output was extensive, the oratorio *The Crucifixion* has become his single most enduring legacy. In the tradition of the masterpiece passion settings by Johann Sebastian Bach, Stainer's work portrays the events leading to Christ's death on the cross. Stainer had encountered Bach's passions as a chorister, singing at the first English-language performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* when he was fourteen. When he came to compose his own passion oratorio at the height of his career in 1887, Stainer drew on many of the elements that make Bach's music so powerful: narrative delivered through solo arias and recitatives, interspersed with choral reflections, rousing crowd scenes and accessible congregational singing.



*Rev. W.J. Sparrow Simpson
(1859-1952)*

The libretto was by William John Sparrow Simpson, an Anglican priest and writer who was educated at St Paul's School, London and, from 1878, Trinity College, Cambridge. As an undergraduate he was awarded the Chancellor's Gold Medal for English verse in a competition judged by Robert Browning before graduating with a first class degree in theology in 1882. That same year, he was ordained deacon, and went to Christ Church, Albany Street in Marylebone, London as curate. He wrote libretti for two choral works by John Stainer; the first, for the cantata '*St Mary Magdalen*', in 1883, the year in which

he was ordained priest. The second, which followed in 1887, was, of course, for the oratorio '*The Crucifixion*', and brings together passages from all four gospels, as well as texts from Philippians and Lamentations.

The premiere performance of *The Crucifixion* was well-received but, in the intervening years, fluctuating musical fashions have not always looked favourably on Stainer's oratorio. Accused of Victorian sentimentality, it has received relatively little attention in concert halls and recording studios. However, Stainer's powerfully accessible choruses and hymns have endured as core repertoire in churches across the nation and are relished during Passiontide services year after year. A great achievement of the work lies in its passages of meditative simplicity. The centrepiece unaccompanied chorus *God So Loved the World* is a sublime movement, deservedly cherished by choirs, but it is certainly not the only moment of outstandingly beautiful simplicity. Other examples include the tenderly uttered unison refrain of the second hymn, "Crucified, I turn to thee, Son of Mary, plead for me," and the evocative tenor and bass chorus which depicts Jesus' seven last words from the cross.

Stainer also attains heights of drama in *The Appeal of the Crucified* with wrenching Bach-inspired cries of "Crucify! Crucify!" The juxtaposition of these extremes lends the work a sense of emotional immediacy. In combination with the participatory element of congregational hymns, this encourages us to engage on a personal level with the story of Christ's final days.

*Programme note by Sarah Maxted,
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STRATHCLYDE UNIVERSITY CHAMBER CHOIR



The Choir

Formed in 1980, the Choir was one of very few chamber choirs in the West of Scotland. It attracts Members from the University and beyond to rehearse and perform a repertoire which ranges from plainsong and renaissance music to the a cappella staples of the 20th century and contemporary works. The Choir has toured widely in the UK and abroad, and undertakes annual periodic mini-residencies in North British Cathedrals, singing the major choral services in place of the regular Cathedral Choir. The Choir has recorded for BBC Radio 2, 3 and 4 (including a live broadcast), and released a CD of romantic Scottish part songs and settings of Robert Burns. In 2010, the Choir completed a five-year project to give the first performances of a series of eleven new communion motets composed by James MacMillan. First heard in the context of the Celebration of University Mass, the Choir also gave the concert debuts of these Strathclyde Motets. Since its recent return to public performance in the Autumn, the Choir has sung liturgies, presented public concerts, and participated in the premiere performances of Nitin Sawhney's *About Us* at the Unboxed Festival in Paisley Abbey.

Director and Conductor

Alan Tavener is a music graduate of the University of Oxford, and an educational research graduate of the University Strathclyde where he was also Director of Music with responsibility for teaching, the promotion of a professional concerts series, and the direction of a wide range of student choirs, orchestras and ensembles (including forming Strathclyde University Chamber Choir). His research interests in the holistic benefits of group-singing activities have also been ongoing, and are currently realised in a project to facilitate supported participative group-singing activities for people with dementia.



Together with Rebecca Tavener, in 1982 Alan founded Cappella Nova, the award-winning professional vocal ensemble which has established an unrivalled reputation as champions of Scotland's unique treasury of medieval and renaissance vocal music (in particular, the music of the 16th century Scottish polyphonist, Robert Carver), as well as being renowned for its performances of contemporary music, having commissioned and premiered more than 100 new works. He has made 15 CD recordings with the ensemble including no fewer than four of the music of James MacMillan, as well undertaking various broadcasts including a series of short films for BBC2 TV. Besides appearances in many British festivals, Cappella Nova has toured worldwide, including Russia, the USA and several European locations.

Alan is also Conductor of the Scottish Plainsong Choir (Cappella Nova's open-access community choir), and leads music classes and choirs for Strathclyde University's Centre for Lifelong Learning. As well as working with established and ad hoc choirs ranging between community choirs and one-off choral workshops, Alan is periodically invited to direct specialist workshops for other organisations, and to work with other established choirs. In 2008, he was invited to direct a master-class for postgraduate Students at the Moscow Conservatoire, and has since led sessions for the Association of British Choral Directors as well as mentoring for its Apprentice Conductors scheme and serving on its Training and Standards Unit.

Whilst Director of Music at Jordanhill Parish Church in Glasgow, Alan formed a community choir and an ecumenical liturgical choir, and recorded a CD of organ works. He is now Director of Music at St Bride's Episcopal Church in Glasgow where he is responsible for playing the organ and directing the Church Choir in a rich programme of liturgical music, as well overseeing a flourishing concerts programme. In association with Music Sacra Scotland, he has also formed and directs a Schola in the Roman Catholic Parish of St Columbkille's in Rutherglen. In 2015 he was awarded the honorary Associateship of the Royal School of Church Music for his "considerable contribution to church music in Scotland, particularly in his ecumenical approach" and, in the 2020 New Year Honours List, the BEM for "services to choral music in Scotland".

Organist

David Hamilton is University Organist at Strathclyde University, home of the new Bach-style organ, built by Orgelbau Kögler. He studied with Stuart Campbell at Glasgow University, Harald Vogel at the North-German Organ Academy and Jos van der Kooy at Zwolle Conservatory in the Netherlands. He was a prizewinner at Royal College of Organists' exams and at the European Organ Improvisation competition.



David is Director of Music at St Mary's Episcopal Church, Hamilton, and teaches at the Music School of Douglas Academy and at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He has performed throughout Europe and in North America, Russia and China, and is a Guest Professor at Shanghai Conservatory.

David Hamilton has undertaken two cycles of Dietrich Buxtehude's complete organ works, one in the west of Scotland and one at the Edinburgh Fringe. On the Divine Art label, he has recorded a Buxtehude CD at Aberdeen University, and a Bach disc at Canongate Kirk, Edinburgh.

Tenor

Thomas Athorne

Thomas Athorne first began singing as a teenager with St Mary's Cathedral Choir, Glasgow. Choral singing has been a huge part of his life ever since, and recently he has been taking on more operatic and solo singing opportunities: chorus member in Cambridge University Opera Society's 2019 production of *'Carmen'*, solo recitals of Finzi's song-cycle *'A Young Man's Exhortation'* at Robinson and Downing Colleges, and soloist in Bach's *B Minor Mass* at Jesus College. He

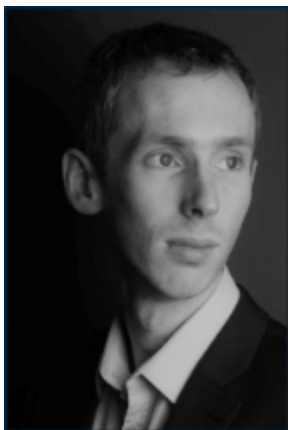


also appeared in the role of Mozart in Rimsky-Korsakov's one-act opera *'Mozart and Salieri'* in a production by Selwyn College Music Society.

He studied Mathematics at Cambridge University, took a PhD at Sheffield University, and now works as a freelance software engineer.

Baritone

Thomas Stevenson



Aspiring baritone Thomas Stevenson trained at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, completing a Masters in Vocal Performance in 2020, and during which time he held a Choral Scholarship at St Bride's Episcopal Church in Glasgow. He has sung in amateur and professional productions of oratorios, operas and choral works since 2010, last year a part of the Chorus in Random Opera's *'Elisir D'amore'*.

He hopes to continue his forays into the professional world of singing for the rest of his life, and is grateful for any opportunities helping to further this pursuit.



MUSIC *in* Peebles
NEXT CONCERT
SAANJH



Friday 29 April 2022 at 7:30 pm | Eastgate Theatre, Peebles

Note that entry to this concert is not included in the 2021/22 season ticket, but season ticket holders are entitled to a discounted price of only £10.



Ankna Arockiam
(mezzo-soprano)



Hardeep Deerhe
(tabla)



Edward Cohen
(piano)

Winners of Chamber Music Scotland's 2022 Under-represented Composers Tour Opportunity, Ankna Arockiam, Edward Cohen, and Hardeep Deerhe created Saanjh (which translates as 'dusk' in Hindi) in October 2020, for St Andrews Voices Festival.

These three highly accomplished musicians call on their eclectic influences to portray a collection of musical scenes, exploring a woman's journey through dusk and the experiences and challenges she faces along the way. Through collaboration, cultures will merge to create an innovative soundscape blending voice, piano and tabla, with elements of improvisation and conversation.

We are very fortunate to have been offered the opportunity to hear this unique performance here in Peebles - don't miss it!

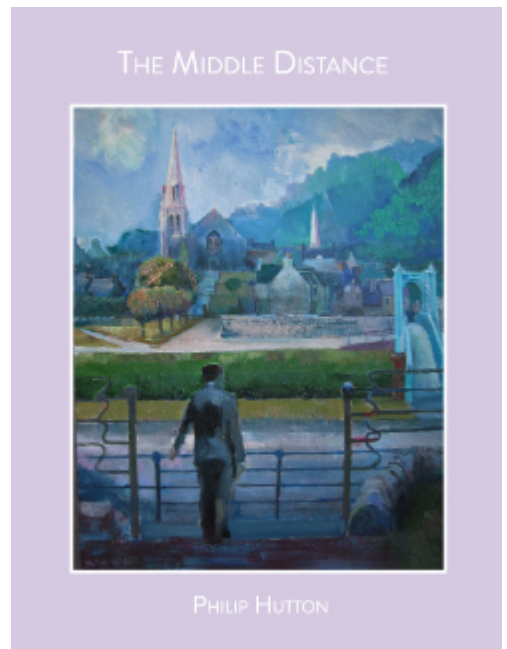
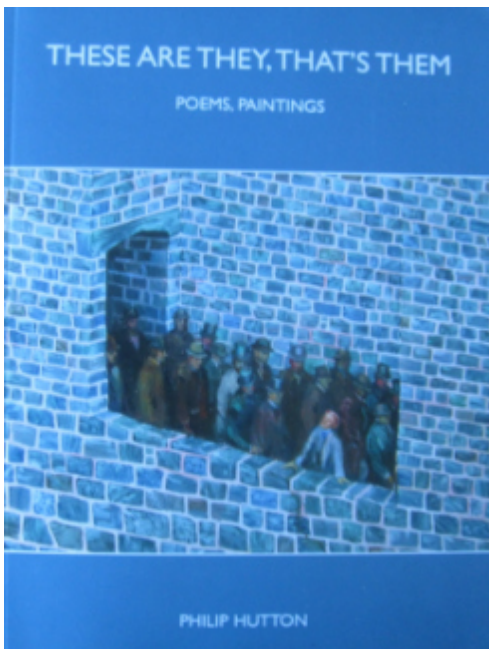
TICKETS: £15 (£10 for Music in Peebles season ticket holders;
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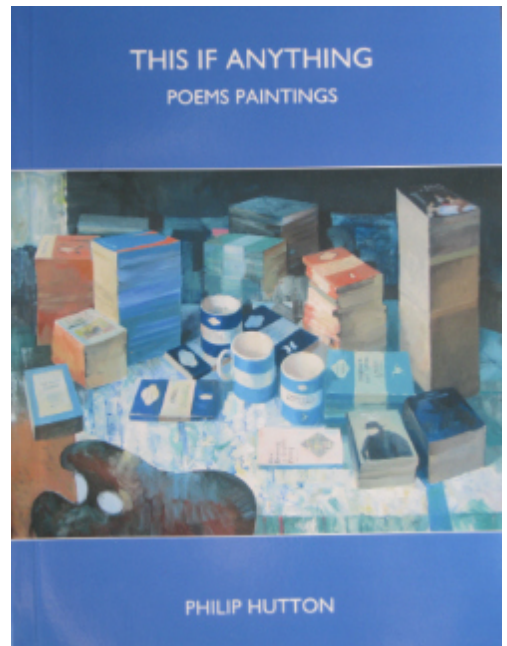
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In its 75th season, Music in Peebles faces unprecedented uncertainty.



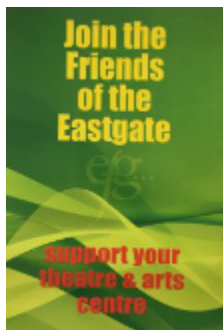
We remain committed to presenting high-quality live concerts. However, until audiences return to pre-pandemic levels, there is no doubt that our ability to maintain the number and quality of concerts will be under pressure.

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MUSIC *in* Peebles

Patron: Gina McCormack

2021-2022 Season

Sunday 5 September 2021 at 7.30pm

CLARE HAMMOND

Tuesday 5 October 2021 at 7.30pm

CARMENCO

Tuesday 2 November 2021 at 7.30pm

JAMES WILLSHIRE

Tuesday 16 November 2021 at 7.30pm

GAIA

Monday 13 December 2021 at 7.30pm

KWON-LIM DUO

Sunday 9 January 2022 at 2.30pm

PATRON'S CONCERT

Sunday 6 February 2022 at 2.30pm

BRODSKY QUARTET

Tuesday 1 March 2022 at 7.30pm

LEON McCRAWLEY

Tuesday 29 March 2022 at 7.30pm

AILIE ROBERTSON

Tuesday 12 April 2022 at 7.30pm

STRATHCLYDE UNIVERSITY CHOIR

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