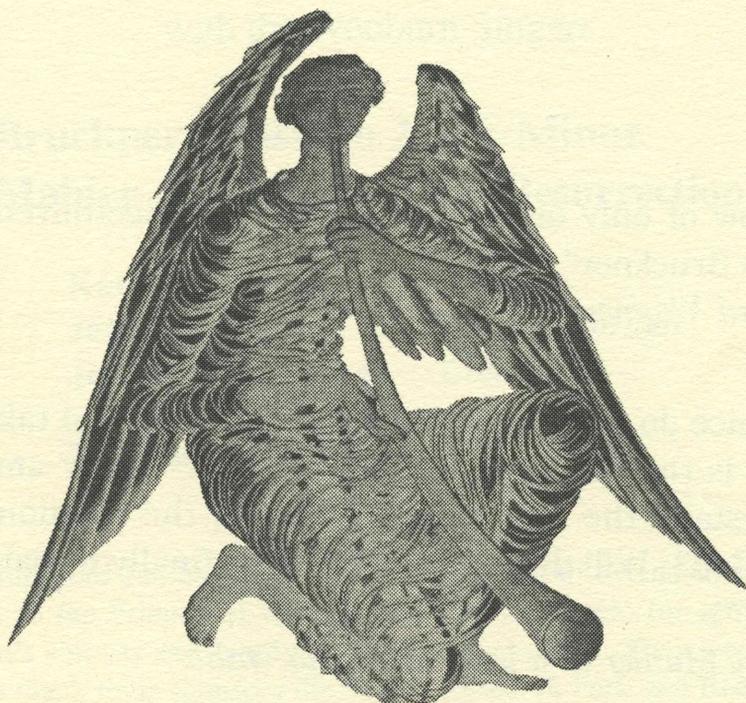


Guildford Philharmonic Choir



Bruckner Mass No 2 in E minor
Mahler Symphony No 2 (Resurrection)

Saturday 13th March 1999
Guildford Cathedral

£1.50

“I know of only one who reaches up to Beethoven and that is Bruckner”

Richard Wagner

“Whence do we come? Whither does our road take us? What is the object of toil and sorrow? How am I to understand the cruelty and malice in the creation of a kind God? Will the meaning of life be finally revealed by death?”

Gustav Mahler in a letter to Bruno Walter

Guildford Philharmonic Choir

President: Sir David Willcocks CBE, MC.

with the Wooburn Singers

Bruckner Mass No 2 in E Minor **Mahler Symphony No 2 (Resurrection)**

Katy Tansey	<i>Soprano</i>
Jeanette Ager	<i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>
Jeremy Backhouse	<i>Conductor</i>

The Forest Philharmonic

The Guildford Philharmonic Choir would like to extend their warm thanks to the Friends of the Guildford Philharmonic for sponsoring tonight's soloists and supplying programme sellers. They would also like to thank their sponsors the Surrey Research Park and Beachcroft Stanleys Solicitors for their generous support of this evening's concert.

The Guildford Philharmonic Choir's next concert will be a summer's evening of French choral and organ music to be held on Saturday 29 May in Guildford Cathedral. Tickets are already on sale and are available from the Guildford Civic box office (01483 444555) and the Guildford Tourist Office.

There will be a short interval between the two pieces of 10 minutes.

Anton Bruckner (1824-1896)

Bruckner was a native of rural Upper Austria who was educated at the great monastery of St Florian near Linz, where he maintained close links throughout his life, even after he moved to Vienna. An organist of prodigious ability, he performed throughout Europe, but as an improviser rather than a composer. He can now be recognised as one of the greatest of symphonic composers, whose strongly personal musical style resulted from his artistic integrity, his deep sensibilities and devout religious convictions.

During his lifetime, and for decades after his death, Bruckner's music was largely misunderstood, and nowhere more than in Vienna. In 1903, just seven years after he died, there existed no fewer than twenty-five different versions of his nine numbered symphonies, of which ten were published. It was not until the 1930s and the work of Robert Haas and, later, Leopold Nowak, that efforts were made to return to the composer's original conceptions instead of accepting the revisions that had often been imposed on the music by well meaning conductors and friends.

These problems derived from Bruckner's unique style, the result of his devout Catholicism and his Austrian rural background; the act of composing was part of his indestructible religious life. Although his musical principles were essentially classical, his use of the orchestra was wholly original, preferring separate instrumental groupings and sonorities to complex textures, and building emphatic statements in blocks of sound. Bruckner was a brilliant organist, and the sound-world of the organ in the resonant acoustic of a great cathedral is relevant in his symphonies, as of course it is in his religious works. From Wagner he derived his long time-spans, his weighty brass writing and expressive string textures, while another recurring influence was Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and especially its opening, in which the music makes us profoundly aware of its creative growth.

Bruckner dedicated his final symphony, the unfinished Ninth, to the "Glory of God"; but in each of his major works such a dedication would be entirely appropriate. Throughout his life he remained entirely loyal to the Upper Austrian Catholic tradition into which he had been born. In truth, his spiritual outlook never left the imagery and influence of his beloved St Florian, one of Austria's most wonderful examples of high baroque architecture. Whenever his life brought him into contact with disappointment or crisis, he would always return there for consolation; and in accordance with his wishes, after his death in Vienna he was taken to St Florian, where he was buried beneath the organ.

Mass No. 2 in E minor

Bruckner composed the Mass in E minor during the autumn of 1866, shortly after completing his Symphony No. 1. The motivation to write the Mass was linked to the building of the new Linz Cathedral, delays to which meant that the work was not performed until 1869. Even then the conditions were not ideal, and the premiere had to take place in the open air, although this was not the cause of Bruckner's decision to score the work for wind instruments instead of the full orchestral body which he used in his two other Mass settings. Rather his intention was to generate a special and austere spirituality, captured to the full in the revised version of 1882, which he insisted was the authentic edition.

Bruckner's interest in the Renaissance polyphony of Palestrina finds rich reward in the Mass. This can be felt immediately in the *Kyrie*, in which the orchestra is used only

sparingly, to support the chorus in generating an outlook of the utmost devotional sincerity. The *Gloria* is more mobile; this movement and the succeeding *Credo* adopt the style of the Viennese classical masses, with fast tempi and lively rhythms, although there are abundant contrasts as dictated by the text. For example, the central section of the *Gloria* is the restrained “*Qui tollis peccata mundi*”, while within the *Credo* movement the *Et incarnatus* and *Crucifixus* sections are dignified and beautiful.

In the *Sanctus* the spirit of Palestrina is present once more, including a quotation from his *Missa Brevis*. At the climax, however, the orchestra adds a powerful reinforcement to the vocal texture. In the *Benedictus* and *Agnus Dei*, the orchestral role is more independent and complex, forming a link between the vocal passages, until the concluding “*Dona nobis pacem*” searches for eternity, in some of the most beautiful music Bruckner ever created.

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Gustav Mahler was born at Kalicht in Bohemia on 7 July 1860, the second of fourteen children. The first child, Isidor, had died in infancy, and of the subsequent twelve, six died during childhood of diphtheria or similar scourges. Therefore the imagery of death was with Mahler from the beginning: no wonder that his first composition, written at the age of six, was entitled *Polka, with introductory Funeral March*.

Mahler was immensely gifted, studying in Vienna before developing a dual career as conductor and composer. His career in the opera house brought him major appointments: Prague, Hamburg and, at the age of just thirty-seven, the Directorship of the Vienna Court Opera. This, together with guest conducting, left him with only the summer months that he could dedicate to his first love, composition.

There can be little doubt that it was this enormous pressure on his time that made Mahler concentrate on just two musical genres, the symphony and the song, and sometimes even to combine them. Moreover, it probably encouraged his sense of quest, his search for meaning, a search best explained through his own words: “I am thrice homeless: as a Bohemian in Austria, as an Austrian in Germany, and as a Jew throughout the whole world.”

Each of Mahler’s symphonies is concerned with the same issues, with what can essentially be called the struggle between Life-force and Death-force, an extension of Beethoven’s idea of triumph over Fate. To encompass so powerfully expressive an end, he opted for an approach that made the symphony into a world, in which all kinds of images could exist in order to fully develop the argument. This is why his symphonies vary so much in style, length and layout, and why the performing resources required are so large.

From 1907, when a heart condition was diagnosed, Mahler lived under sentence of death; thus his final works - *Das Lied von der Erde*, the ninth and tenth symphonies - possess a valedictory quality. He died in Vienna on 18 May 1911, aged fifty.

Symphony No. 2 in C minor, ‘Resurrection’

“We stand by the coffin of a person well loved. His whole life, his struggles, his passions, his sufferings and his accomplishments on earth once more for the last time pass before us. And now, in this solemn and deeply stirring moment, when the confusions and distractions of everyday life are lifted like a hood from our eyes, a voice of awe-inspiring

solemnity chills our heart - a voice that, blinded by the mirage of everyday life, we usually ignore: 'What next? What is life and what is death? Why did you live? Why did you suffer?'

So began Mahler's own programme for his 'Resurrection' Symphony. Its creation took a very long time, for he began the process in 1888, soon after the completion of his Symphony No. 1, with a symphonic poem entitled *Totenfeier* ('Funeral Rites'), in which the hero of the existing Symphony is laid to rest. Only at a later stage did this become the first movement of the new work, and during the summer of 1893 he composed movements two to four, the *Andante*, the *scherzo* and the song *Urlicht*.

By now Mahler was Principal Conductor of the Hamburg Opera, and when he returned there for the 1893-94 season these four movements were complete. However, a major problem remained; namely, how to bring a work of such profound implications to its conclusion? Understandably he found this task daunting; and when it came, the solution to his dilemma arrived in remarkable circumstances. When Mahler attended the funeral of the famous conductor-pianist Hans von Bülow, the impressive ceremony reached its climax as the choir intoned Klopstock's *Resurrection Ode*. The composer recalled: "It was as if I had been struck by lightning; everything suddenly rose clearly before me". Thus it was that Klopstock's *Ode* became the basis of the long finale.

Mahler believed that the symphony was like the world, a composition in which a whole range of images and experiences could exist. Here the five movements span a period of more than eighty minutes, and there is a huge orchestra of well over a hundred, together with off-stage brass and percussion. In the last two movements, voices are added: soprano and mezzo soloists and large choral forces. As these statistics indicate, the music is wide-ranging emotionally; and in his customary fashion Mahler uses his large orchestra as a series of chamber ensembles also. The extremes of dynamics extend as far as *ppppp*, and the first choral entrance is perhaps the softest in the entire repertory. But on the other hand, Mahler feared that some sections might be overpowering in their loudness: "If anyone were told that the loudest parts in the first movement were only a weak child compared to those in the finale, he would fear for his eardrums. How huge the sound waves that are released here; they would kill one if the increase in sound intensity were not such a gradual one. What effect I could have achieved with chorus and organ if I had used them earlier; but I wanted to save that for the climax and I would rather relinquish its effect in other places."

The general plan of the work is not unlike that of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, though Mahler's recurring preoccupation with the issues of life-force and death-force (typical also of the time: Strauss's *Death and Transfiguration* and Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* are contemporary) led him to admit his special need. In 1897 he wrote: "When I draft a large-scale composition, I invariably reach the point where I have to use the word as a carrier of my musical ideas".

The famous conductor Bruno Walter was among the audience at the first performance, and from then onward "concluded with absolute finality that there lay my life's work: to pledge my future energies to Mahler's creations". Such enthusiasm, such belief and commitment, always surrounds performances of this music, and Mahler himself knew it: "The whole thing sounds as though it came to us from some other world. And I think there is no-one who can resist it. One is battered to the ground and then raised on angel's wings to the highest heights."

I. Allegro maestoso

The first movement is not a funeral march in the accepted sense, since tempi are wide-ranging and often quick. The mood does not represent a dignified expression of grief, but is full of anger, and from this standpoint searches for consolation. The massive structure is a sonata form comprising four main elements: funeral music by turns epic and fierce, a lighter nostalgic vein, gloomy and brooding music which pervades the development, and visionary moments which imply eventual triumph. The latter often take the form of a chorale (hymn-like) transformation of the *Dies Irae*, creating a mood that anticipates the finale, but this gleam of hope is ruthlessly swept away.

The closing stages of the movement are crucial to the Symphony's general scheme. Although a large structure full of contrasts, it could not end triumphantly lest the impact of the finale be compromised. Mahler's solution, a mixture of exhaustion and resignation, looks onward to the succeeding movements, while he also specified that the conductor should observe a five-minute pause.

We stand by the coffin of a person well loved. His whole life, his struggles, his passions, his sufferings and his accomplishments on earth once more for the last time pass before us. And now, in this solemn and deeply stirring moment, when the confusions and distractions of everyday life are lifted like a hood from our eyes, a voice of awe-inspiring solemnity chills our heart - a voice that, blinded by the mirage of everyday life, we usually ignore: "What next? What is life and what is death? Why did you live? Why did you suffer? Is it all nothing but a huge, frightful joke? Will we live on eternally? Do our life and death have a meaning?" We must answer these questions in some way if we are to go on living - indeed, if we are to go on dying! He into whose life this call has once sounded must give an answer. And this answer I give in the final movement.

II. Andante moderato

This epic drama is followed by two shorter movements. According to Mahler's original programme, the Andante is "a memory, a ray of sunlight ... some long-forgotten hour of shared happiness". To convey this mood there is a flowing Austrian Ländler, whose principal theme is a stream of melody featuring some wonderfully effective string writing. But darkness too makes its appearance; and this contrasted trio at one point turns to ferocity. Eventually calm is restored, and re-establishes itself as the prevailing mood.

A memory, a ray of sunlight, pure and cloudless, out of the departed's life. You must surely have had the experience of burying someone dear to you, and then, perhaps, on the way back, some long-forgotten hour of shared happiness suddenly rose before your inner eye, sending, as it were, a sunbeam into your soul - not overcast by any shadow - and you almost forgot what had just taken place.

III. In ruhig fliessender Bewegung (calmly flowing)

The scherzo is an orchestral version of Mahler's song, *St Anthony of Padua's Sermon to the Fishes*, of which he wrote: "Not one of the fish is the wiser for the sermon, even though the saint has performed for them! But only a few people will understand my satire on mankind." This is the first of the composer's dark scherzos, which form a significant aspect of his style. Despite the instruction "calmly flowing", the tempo is swift, and the scoring emphasises the negative philosophical stance. Percussion is to the fore, the strings frequently play *col legno* (with the wood of the bow) and *glissando*, and there are sudden crescendos and tempo changes. The principal theme is heard at the outset and binds the structure together, but the contrasting trio material is modified through several episodes, ranging from nostalgic melody to what Mahler called "a scream of anguish". In its later stages the music evaporates to allow the fourth movement to follow without pause.

When you awaken from that blissful dream and are forced to return to this tangled life of ours, it may easily happen that this surge of life ceaselessly in motion, never resting, never comprehensible, suddenly seems eerie, like the billowing of dancing figures in a brightly lit ballroom that you gaze into from outside in the dark - and from a distance so great that you can no longer hear the music. Then the turning and twisting movement of the couples seems senseless. You must imagine that, to one who has lost his identity and his happiness, the world looks like this - distorted and crazy, as if reflected in a concave mirror. Life then becomes meaningless. Utter disgust for every form of existence and evolution seizes him in an iron grip, and he cries out in a scream of anguish.

IV. Urlicht. Sehr feierlich (very solemn) - Alto solo

The mezzo-soprano's song, *Urlicht*, also comes from the folk source *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. Both the poem and the hymn-like setting are concerned with the expression of faith. The chorale for brass and woodwind brings a suitably solemn mood, and now the heavenly voice leads

the troubled soul to God. The words anticipate the issue to be developed and resolved in the finale.

The moving voice of naive faith sounds in our ears: "I am from God and will return to God. The dear God will give me a light, Will light me to eternal, blessed life!"

Urlicht

O Röschen rot!
Der Mensch liegt in größter Not!
Der Mensch liegt in größter Pein!
Je lieber möcht' ich im Himmel sein!

Da kam ich auf einen breiten Weg:
Da kam ein Engelein und wollt' mich abweisen.
Ach nein! Ich ließ mich nicht abweisen!
Ich bin von Gott und will wieder zu Gott!
Der liebe Gott wird mir ein Lichtchen geben,
Wird leuchten mir in das ewig selig Leben!

Primeval Light

O red rose!
Man lies in deepest need,
Man lies in deepest pain.
Yes, rather would I be in Heaven!

I came upon a broad pathway:
An angel came and wanted to send me away.
Ah no! I would not be sent away!
I am from God and will return to God.
The dear God will give me a light,
Will light me to eternal, blessed life!

V. Im Tempo des Scherzo; Langsam; Maestoso; Allegro energico; Langsam; “Der große Appell”

Langsam misterioso; mit Aufschwung, aber nicht eilen; Langsam

The finale links both emotionally and thematically with the opening movement. It immediately bursts forth with the “scream of anguish” from the scherzo, which is followed by a “vision of peace” and then the broad horn theme which Mahler identified with faith. Already the movement’s vastness is established, for it is an epic evocation of Judgement Day. From the structural point of view, the music clearly falls into seven sections. The introduction, having reached the stillness of silence, concludes with an off-stage horn, whose “call to Resurrection” is answered by woodwinds, trumpets and quiet strings.

Next the *Dies Irae* chorale theme from the first movement returns over pizzicato strings. It adopts a new transformation which results in symbolic aspiring phrases in horns and woodwinds, before these in turn die away. A doleful cor anglais is heard against an agitated accompaniment, and after reaching a climax this too subsides to silence. The *Dies Irae* chorale returns in full solemnity, its portent invoking fortissimo presentations of the aspiring figure. The Resurrection chorale is developed by the brass.

Once more we must confront terrifying questions. The movement starts with the same dreadful scream of anguish that ended the Scherzo. The voice of the Caller is heard. The end of every living thing has come, the Last Judgement is at hand, and the horror of the day of days has come upon us. The earth trembles; the last trump sounds; the graves burst open; all the creatures struggle out of the ground, moaning and trembling.

Out of this arises the fiercest of contrasts: a huge crescendo into an Allegro march, which acts a development section by subjecting the established material to ironic, even demoniacal, transformations. “The dead arrive and stream on in endless procession.” When this section is brought to its full and shattering climax, the effect is one of sheer terror: “The cry for mercy and forgiveness strikes fearfully in our ears”.

Now they march in a mighty procession: rich and poor, peasants and kings, the whole church with bishops and popes. The dead arrive and stream on in endless procession. All have the same fear, all cry and tremble alike because, in the eyes of God, there are no just men. The cry for mercy and forgiveness strikes fearfully in our ears. The wailing becomes gradually more terrible. Our senses desert us; all consciousness dies as the Eternal Judge approaches.

Peace is restored, and the imagery is laden with symbolism. Off-stage brass, sounding “as if in the far distance”, repeat the Resurrection call, and it is answered by other fanfare figures and by bird calls in flute and piccolo.

The trumpets of the Apocalypse ring out. Finally, after all have left their empty graves and the earth lies silent and deserted, there comes only the long-drawn note of the bird of death. Even it finally dies.

Out of the stillness thus created the chorus enters, *ppp*, with Klopstock's *Resurrection Ode*. As the chorale proceeds, the soprano rises above the ensemble in an expression of pure ecstasy. There is an orchestral interlude, quietly restating the main themes, including the Resurrection chorale, until the chorus resumes.

What happens now is far from expected: Everything has ceased to exist. The gentle sound of a chorus of saints and heavenly hosts is then heard. Soft and simple, the words gently swell up: "Rise again, yea, thou shalt rise again!" Then the glory of God comes into sight. A wondrous light strikes us to the heart. All is quiet and blissful. Lo and behold: There is no judgement, no sinners, no just men, no great and no small; there is no punishment and no reward. A feeling of overwhelming love fills us with blissful knowledge and illuminates our existence.

Aufersteh'n, ja aufersteh'n wirst du,
Mein Staub, nach kurzer Ruh!
Unsterblich Leben! Unsterblich Leben!
Wird der dich rief dir geben.

Rise again, yea, thou shalt rise again,
My dust, after short rest!
Immortal life! Immortal life!
He who called thee will grant thee.

Wieder aufzublüh'n wirst du gesät!
Der Herr der Ernte geht
Und sammelt Garben
Uns ein, die starben!

To bloom again art thou sown!
The Lord of the harvest goes
And gathers in, like sheaves,
Us who died!

Once more the orchestra takes over, and against *tremolando* violas the mezzo-soprano sings the words Mahler himself added, treating of "defiant faith", as if to answer the issues he had raised in the first movement. When this faith is established, the soprano joins in.

O glaube, mein Herz, O glaube:
Es geht dir nichts verloren!
Dein ist, was du gesehnt!
Dein, was du geliebt,
Was du gestritten!

O believe, my heart, O believe
Nothing is lost with thee!
Thine is what thou hast desired,
What thou hast lived for,
What thou hast fought for!

O glaube,
Du wardst nicht umsonst geboren!
Hast nicht umsonst gelebt,
Gelitten!

O believe,
Thou wert not born in vain!
Hast not lived in vain,
Suffered in vain!

For contrast, the male voices take up the Resurrection chorale, moving powerfully from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo* in a symbolic cry of hope. This brings a soaring response from the two soloists, whose close imitations give the music both a greater intensity and a more urgent pulse.

Was entstanden ist
Das muß vergehen!
Was vergangen, auferstehen!
Hör' auf zu beben!
Bereite dich zu leben!

What has come into being
Must perish,
What perished must rise again!
Cease from trembling!
Prepare thyself to live!

O Schmerz! Du Alldurchdringer!
Dir bin ich entrungen!
O Tod! Du Allbezwinger!
Nun bist Du bezwungen!

O pain, thou piercer of all things,
From thee have I been wrested!
O Death, thou masterer of all things,
Now art thou mastered!

The basses lead the entire chorus towards the final climax, the statement of faith, "I shall die, to live", sounded in glorious unison. Naturally this leads on to the return of the Resurrection chorale, first in the trumpets and then presented by chorus and soloists. This powerful, indeed awe-inspiring, climax releases a broad orchestral peroration complete with bells and organ, to set the seal on the whole conception and its affirmation of faith.

Mit Flügeln, die ich mir errungen,
In heißem Liebestreben,
Werd' ich entschweben
Zum Licht, zu dem kein Aug' gedrunge!

With wings which I have won me,
In love's fierce striving,
I shall soar upwards
To the light to which no eye has soared!

Sterben werd' ich, um zu leben!
Aufersteh'n, ja aufersteh'n
Wirst du, mein Herz, in einem Nu!
Was du geschlagen
Zu Gott wird es dich tragen!

I shall die, to live!
Rise again, yea, thou shalt rise again,
My heart, in the twinkling of an eye!
What thou hast fought for
Shall lead thee to God!

*Translation by Deryk Cooke
(Courtesy of Cambridge University Press)*

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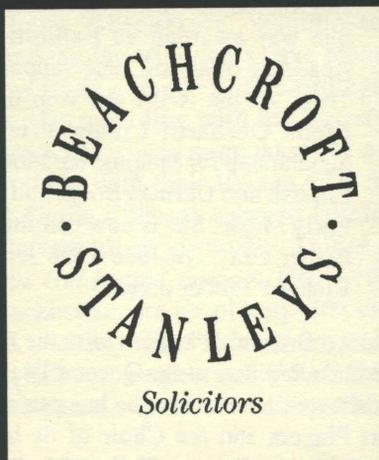
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Timeline

- 1824 Anton Bruckner born in Austria
- 1837 Accession of Queen Victoria to the throne
- 1842 Verdi has his first great success with his opera *Nabucco* in Milan
- 1846 Ether first used as an anaesthetic
- 1848 The great potato famine in Ireland
- 1856 Bruckner moves to Linz as church organist
- 1857 Elgar is born at Broadheath, near Worcester
- 1858 The Ringstrasse begins to be built in Vienna
- 1860 Gustav Mahler born in Bohemia
- 1865 Bruckner attends the premier of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* in Munich and is so overcome that he becomes one of the most enthusiastic Wagnerians in Europe
- 1866 Bruckner composes the *Mass in E Minor*
- 1868 Bruckner appointed teacher of organ and theory at the Vienna Conservatory
- 1869 The *Mass in E Minor* receives its first public performance
- 1876 Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone
- 1882 Bruckner fully revises the *Mass in E Minor*
- 1892 Wagner visits London for the only time to conduct performances of his operas at the Theatre Royal
- 1896 Bruckner dies
- 1901 Queen Victoria dies
- Mahler meets Alma Schindler at a Viennese dinner party on 7 November and proposes to her on 27 November. They are married on 9 March 1902
- 1903 Wright Brothers' first successful aeroplane flight
- 1907 Mahler's terminal heart condition is diagnosed. His eldest daughter dies from diphtheria at the age of five
- 1908 First model "T" Ford produced
- 1911 Mahler dies and is buried in Grinzing next to the body of his daughter Putzi with orders that only his name should appear on the headstone. "Anyone who comes to look for me will know who I was, and the rest do not need to know".

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Katy Tansley read music at Selwyn College, Cambridge and is currently studying with David Pollard at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

As a soloist she has performed in Britten's *War Requiem* at St Alban's Abbey, Howells' *Hymnus Paradisi* and Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* with the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir, as well as more traditional repertoire such as Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, Haydn's *Creation*, Handel's *Solomon* with York University and Mozart's *C Minor Mass* at St John's Smith Square.

Future engagements include Messiaen's *Chants de Terre et de Ciel* at the Barbican Centre and taking part in masterclasses and a concert of Britten song cycles with Roger Vignoles at the Britten Pears School.



Jeanette Ager, who was born in Dorset, began her singing studies at the age of twelve with Mary Denniss. She was awarded an Exhibition to study at the Royal Academy of Music, also supported by the Michael James Trust. At the RAM she won many prizes, including the Elena Gerhardt Lieder Prize, the Jennifer Vyvyan Scholarship for Singing, the Flora Nielson Prize for French, English and German Song, and the Helen Eames Prize for Early Music. She is now continuing her studies with Linda Esther Gray. In June 1998 Jeanette won the prestigious Richard Tauber prize.

Her recent work has included Britten's *Phaedra* with the Brunel Ensemble, Tippett's *A Child of our Time*, Duruflé's *Requiem* at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, and Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* at York Minster. In oratorio she has performed Haydn's *St Nicholas* with the London Mozart Players and the Choir of St John's College Cambridge, Handel's *Messiah* in the Barbican Concert Hall and in Bermuda with the Bermuda Philharmonic Society, and Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus* at Winchester Cathedral. She was also the contralto soloist in Anthony Milner's *Salutatio Angelico* in Truro Cathedral. Her operatic work has ranged from Glyndebourne Festival Opera Chorus (1997 season) to Kent Opera (as a soloist).

For Hyperion, Jeanette Ager has recorded five pieces by Lili Boulanger as mezzo soloist with the New London Chamber Choir conducted by James Wood. She was a soloist in a Deutsche Grammophon recording of three songs for women's choir by Ruth Crawford called *To An Unkind God*.

Recent engagements include singing with the Glyndebourne Festival Opera Chorus for their 1998 season. This summer, Jeanette is touring France singing the part of Cherubino in *Figaro's Wedding* with Diva Opera.

JEREMY BACKHOUSE began his musical career in Canterbury Cathedral where he was Head Chorister, and later studied music at Liverpool University. He spent five years as Music Editor at the Royal National Institute for the Blind, where he was responsible for the transcription of print music into Braille. In 1986 he joined EMI Records as a Literary Editor and since April 1990 he has combined his work as a Consultant Editor for EMI Classics with his career as a freelance conductor and record producer.

From 1991 to 1995 he was Music Director of both the Streatham Choral Society and the BBC Club Choir. With these choirs he conducted many of the major works of the choral society repertoire and in doing so built close relationships with the Kensington Symphony Orchestra and the Surrey Sinfonietta.

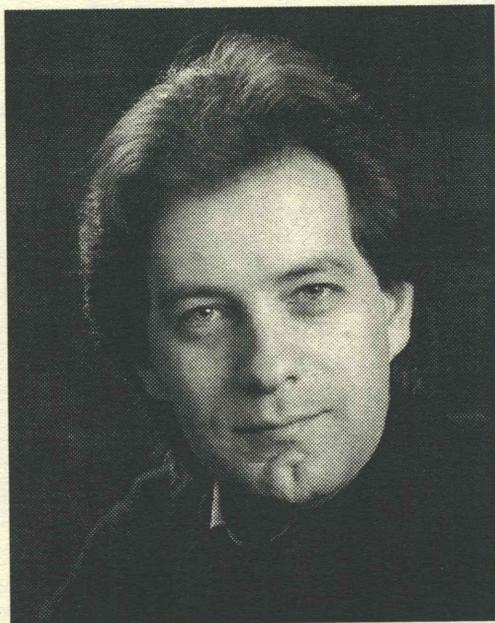
Jeremy Backhouse is the conductor of the Vasari Singers, widely acknowledged as one of the finest chamber choirs in the country. Since winning the prestigious Sainsbury's Choir of the Year competition in 1988, they have performed regularly on the South Bank and at St John's, Smith Square in London, as well as in the cathedrals of Canterbury, Chichester, Winchester, Hereford, Ely and Peterborough. Jeremy and the Vasari Singers have broadcast frequently on BBC Radios 3 and 4, and have made a number of recordings on the EMI Eminence, United and Guild labels. His recording with the Vasari Singers of the Howells' *Requiem* and Frank Martin *Mass* was nominated for a *Gramophone* Award in 1995 and was selected (along with their Britten CD) for inclusion in the 1996 *Gramophone Good CD Guide* ("Vasari succeed admirably ... it is beautifully done - the singers also have athletic virtuosity. This is choral singing of a high order") and the *Penguin Guide to Compact Discs 1995/96* ("Vasari, a choir conducted by Jeremy Backhouse, are absolutely first class and give a well-nigh exemplary performance, possibly finer than its immediate rivals. The present account is quite masterly in every respect and Vasari get remarkably fine results. A very convincing performance and an exemplary recording").

In January 1995, he was appointed Chorus Master of the Guildford Philharmonic Choir, working closely with conductors such as Jonathan Willcocks, En Shao and Vernon Handley, as well as regularly conducting concerts with the choir and orchestra alike. In November 1996 he conducted a performance of the Howells' *Hymnus Paradisi* and Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* as part of the Guildford Philharmonic's Subscription series, and in 1997 a performance of Britten's *St Nicolas*. 1995 and 1996 saw him conducting the Guildford Philharmonic in the highly popular outdoor Summer Festival concerts in Shalford Park, complete with firework display. In 1997 he helped establish a competition to find the Guildford Philharmonic Choir's Young Singer of the Year. More recently he conducted a memorable performance of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* in Guildford's Civic Hall, the first public performance to be promoted by the choir alone.

In 1996 he established a close rapport directing the Kent Youth Choir and Kent Youth Chamber Choir, with whom he toured Italy that summer, conducting the group in moving performances in the Duomo and Santa Croce in Florence and in St Mark's Venice.

Most recently he has been working with the Brighton Festival Chorus as an assistant conductor, and in September 1998, became the Music Director of the Wooburn Singers, only the third conductor in the distinguished 30-year history of the choir, following Richard Hickox and Stephen Jackson.

Gerald Place



The Forest Philharmonic was founded in the London Borough of Waltham Forest in 1962 and has since become this country's leading community orchestra. Rivalling the highest professional standards, it uniquely combines the talents of London's best amateur musicians with those of its up and coming music students. The orchestra has been joined by many international artists such as pianists John Lill and Ronan O'Hara, violinists Gyorgy Pauk and Tasmin Little, cellists Robert Cohen and Natalie Clein, and singers Lesley Garrett, Della Jones and Patricia MacMahon.

The Forest Philharmonic is also regularly invited to perform around the country, acting as an ambassador for the Borough of Waltham Forest and broadening the orchestra's repertoire of orchestral and choral works.

Tonight's concert staging has been purchased by the Association of Surrey choirs with the assistance of the Foundation for Sport and the Arts PO Box 20 Liverpool L13 1HB.

Guildford Philharmonic Choir

The Guildford Philharmonic Choir was founded in 1947 by the Borough of Guildford to perform major works from the choral repertoire with the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra. Since this time, the Choir has grown both in stature and reputation and can now rightly claim its place as one of the foremost Choruses in the country.

The Choir grew to prominence under the batons of such eminent British musicians as Sir Charles Groves, Vernon Handley and Sir David Willcocks. Sir David remains in close contact with the Choir as its current President.

As well as being well known in the South East for performing the set-pieces of the choral repertoire, the Choir has developed an interesting specialisation in 20th Century British music, and has recorded Gerald Finzi's "Intimations of Immortality" and Patrick Handley's "The Trees So High" under the direction of Vernon Handley. Notable achievements in last year's season include an acclaimed performance of Handel's *Israel in Egypt* with the Freiburger Bachchor in Freiburg in May 1998 and Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* at the Guildford Civic Hall in March 1998.

The Choir is currently enjoying rising to the challenge that a new Choral Director of Jeremy Backhouse's stature brings. Jeremy was appointed to the post in January 1995 and has continued the tradition of attracting an ever-wider audience to the joys of choral music with recent memorable performances of Howells *Hymnus Paradisi* and Britten's *St Nicholas*.

The Choir is nearing the end of a challenging and exciting concert programme for the 1998/1999 season. It will finish the season with an evening of French choral and organ music in aid of the Chase Children's Hospice, including Fauré's "Requiem", to be held at Guildford Cathedral on Saturday 29 May 1999.

The Choir is always searching for new members to maintain its high standard and auditions are held throughout the year. For further details about joining the Choir or for information about any of our future concerts, please contact Noreen Ayton Tel: (01932) 221918. Rehearsals are held on Monday evenings throughout term time in central Guildford, and prospective members are most welcome to attend rehearsals on an informal basis before committing to an audition.

If you would like to find out more about how you can support the choir by becoming a Benefactor, please contact Susan Ranft - Tel:(01306) 888870.

Our website address is <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/rodcuff/gpc.htm>

Sopranos

Jacqueline Alderton
Olivia Ames-Lewis
Joanna Andrews
Noreen Ayton
Penny Baxter
Elizabeth-Claire Bazin
Mary Broughton
Viv Chamberlin-Kidd
Elaine Chapman
Maura Dearden
Debbie Dring
Rachel Edmondson
Angela Hand
Melanie Hezzell
Nora Kennea
Jane Kenney
Mo Kfour
Friederike Kraus
Judith Lewy
Pat McCully
Jacqueline Norman
Susan Norton
Robin Onslow
Alison Palmer
Margaret Parry
Vivienne Parsons
Jessica Pires
Rosalind Plowright
Susan Ranft
Kate Rayner
Gillian Rix
Gill Scott
Maureen Shortland
Dawn Smith
Judy Smith
Vicki Steele
Kathy Stickland
Claire Strudley
Carol Terry
Enid Weston
Chirstine Wilks
Elisabeth Willis
Lucinda Wilson
Frances Worpe

Altos

Marion Arbuckle
Sally Bailey
Iris Ball
Mary Anne Barber
Andrea Bathory Nemeth
Iris Bennett
Tamsin Bland
Jane Brooks
Amanda Clayton
Mary Clayton
Margaret Dentskevich
Andrea Dombrowe
Valerie Edwards
Celia Embleton
Mandy Freeman
Karen Halahan
Ingrid Hardiman
Jo Harman
Susan Hinton
Sheila Hodson
Joy Hunter
Helen Lavin
Kay McManus
Christine Medlow
Mary Moon
Brenda Moore
Jean Munro
Sue O'Connell
Penny Overton
Anne Philps
Kate Plackett
Lesley Scordellis
Catherine Shacklady
Gillian Sharpe
Prue Smith
Hilary Steynor
Rosie Storey
Hilary Trigg
Janice Wicker
June Windle
Maralyn Wong
Beatrice Wood

Tenors

Bob Bromham
Douglas Cook
Bob Cowell
Leslie Harfield
Andrew Reid
Chris Robinson
John Trigg
Maggie van Koetsveld

Bass

Peter Allen
Peter Andrews
Richard Austen
Roger Barrett
John Paul Bland
John Britten
Neil Burton
Norman Carpenter
Neil Clayton
Rodney Cuff
Philip Davies
Michael Dawe
Simon Doran
Michael Dudley
Terence Ellis
Geoffrey Forster
Michael Golden
Nick Gough
Peter Herbert
Laurie James
Michael Jeffrey
Stephen Jepson
Tony Macklow-Smith
Neil Martin
Max New
Chris Newbury
Barry Norman
John Parry
Nigel Pollock
David Ross
Philip Stanford

THE WOOBURN SINGERS

The Wooburn Singers were founded in 1967 by Richard Hickox, who remains their President. In the three decades since, they have enjoyed an unusually varied existence, firmly rooted in South Buckinghamshire but near enough to London to have made regular appearances in most of the capital's concert venues. Their first Prom appearance was in 1984, joining the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony*. With Stephen Jackson's appointment as Director of the BBC Symphony Chorus in 1989 another fruitful link was established, and several BBC collaborations followed: the Berlioz *Te Deum* in the 1990 Proms, a double bill of Verdi's *Quattro Pezzi Sacri* and Brahms's *Schicksalslied* in 1992, and in 1994 a Royal Festival Hall performance of Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*.

The Wooburn Singers' recording credits include the Berlioz *Te Deum* under Abbado for DG, Langlais's *Salve Regina* and Burgon's *Requiem* for Argo, and a compilation of *Music for the Last Night of the Proms* with the RPO and Sir Charles Groves which was one of the ten best-selling classical releases of 1990.

With trips to Venice, Paris and Prague in the last few years, foreign tours are now a significant feature of the Wooburn Singers' calendar. From September 1998 their Musical Director has been Jeremy Backhouse.

1st sopranos

Maggie Burkinyoung
Judy Deats
Elizabeth Douglas
Pam Ehrlich
Emily Jacks
Robina Redgard-Siler
Jane Robinson
Geraldine Rowe
Katy Teare
Cheryl Teideman

2nd sopranos

Chris Barber
Carolyn Bourne
Katherine Bradnock
Tracy Elliott
Ann Floyd
Helen McArthur
Lorraine Moses
Katharine Murray
Jean Packer
Emma Payne

Ros Russell
Miriam Richardson
Joy Strzelecki
Ann Weaver

1st altos

Jacqui de Bohun
Helen Cooke
Sally Cox
Imogen Dolin
Kate Goodwin
Barbara Southwell
Alissa Stephenson

2nd altos

Judith Crofts
Pat Howell
Diane Isaacs
Sarah Johnson
Chris Locke

1st tenors

David Flinders
Ian Gordon
Bill Richards
Roger Webber

2nd tenors

Mark Johnstone
John Peasgood
Mark Sutton
Jeremy Wicks

1st basses

Martin Barber
David Bourne
Neil Cooper
Jeremy Rowe
Edwin Smith

2nd basses

Laurence Beard
Chris Glover
Neville Holmes

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The Choir would like to express its thanks to all its supporters, and in particular to its Patrons and Friends who are as follows:-

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