

COMING NEXT

<i>29th / 30th May 1999</i>	<i>Weekend Services at Lincoln Cathedral</i>
<i>28th / 29th August 1999</i>	<i>Weekend Services at Durham Cathedral</i>
<i>Saturday 13th November 1999</i>	<i>Faure 'Requiem' and Durufle 'Requiem' at Congleton Town Hall</i>
<i>Sunday 28th November 1999</i>	<i>Advent Service - Swettenham Church</i>
<i>Saturday 18th December 1999</i>	<i>Traditional Christmas Carol Concert at Congleton Town Hall</i>

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Registered Charity No:- 51851

CONGLETON CHORAL SOCIETY

President: Sir Bernard Lovell FRS

Musical Director: David Johnson

Spring Concert



at

Congleton Town Hall

7.30 pm

Saturday 15th May 1999

Programme £1

Registered Charity No:- 51851

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of this
Programme by



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Congleton Choral Society would like to thank Congleton Borough Arts Council and National Federation of music societies for their support.

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DAVID JOHNSON (Musical Director)

Studied organ at Trinity College of Music in London and then with Roger Fisher at Chester Cathedral and 'cello with Margaret MacKenzie in London. He has been a member of the BBC Northern Singers, with whom he has appeared on radio and television many times.



WELCOME

We welcome you to this evening's concert in Congleton's magnificently restored Town Hall – well, the interior, anyway!!

Due to some masonry falling from the front of the Hall a month or so ago, it is now snugly clad in scaffolding. However, the inside is as wonderful as ever, and we are looking forward to performing Mendelssohn's 'Psalm 42' and Puccini's 'Messa di Gloria' here tonight.

The Psalm setting by Mendelssohn is his best-known and important psalm setting. He referred to this piece as 'My best sacred piece' and 'The best thing I have composed in this manner'. Those who know Mendelssohn's oratorio 'Elijah', will recognise many similarities to it in this Psalm, which was written some 8 years before its better-known major work.

Joining us for the performance is the Soprano soloist Victoria Joyce, who appears by kind permission of the Principal, the Royal Northern College of Music.

In the second half we perform 'Messa di Gloria' by Puccini. This is a majestic 'Tour de Force' with all the drama and operatic excitement that you would associate with Puccini. If you go away this evening without singing at least 'The Big Tune', then we shall have failed!!

Joining us this evening is the Tenor soloist Sean Ruane and the Bass soloist Craig Everingham, both of whom also appear by kind permission of the Principal, the Royal Northern College of Music. This College is a European 'Centre of Excellence', and has produced many world-class singers over the years, many of whom have performed with us in Congleton. We are very fortunate that the RNCM is literally on our doorstep, giving us the opportunity to hear the stars of tomorrow, whilst providing their students with the chance to join with local Choral Societies, which are the backbone of amateur music-making in England.

Talking about excellence, we are also very pleased to welcome once again the Cantilena Orchestra, led by Jane Nossek. They captivated us at Christmas, I know they will do so again this evening.

On a personal note, I should like to thank Mary Murphy for all the effort and commitment she has put in over the past months to make sure that, once again, that we have such talented soloists and orchestra with us this evening. At the moment I am working away a great deal, and it is such a comfort to know that all the critical and crucial musical detail are in such safe hands.

On the topic of thanks, it has indeed been a difficult year for the Society in one way and another, and the Committee of the Choral Society, and especially its Chairman – Geoff Gill – have my heartfelt thanks for guiding us through difficult waters. 'Thanks' Geoff.

Finally, to you, our audience 'Thank You' for coming. Without you, all this would not be possible. We value not only your support, but your presence here this evening, and also your commitment to music-making in this Town. I wonder if I could ask you one favour? In order to continue our music-making, we need more voices in the Choir. All voices are welcome, but particularly Altos and Tenors. If you yourself can sing, or you know of anyone who can, then please point them in the Choral Society's direction. Our Membership Secretary, Margaret McKeivitt (01260 271362), is waiting to hear from you. We meet on a Monday evening from 7.45 to 9.45, and sing a wide range of music.

So, once again, 'Welcome', sit back, and enjoy the music.

With Best Wishes,

David Johnson
Musical Director



Soloist's

Victoria Joyce / Soprano

Victoria Joyce was born in 1975 in Cheshire. Since graduating with B Mus(hons) from the Royal Northern College of Music she continues her studies there as a postgraduate with Caroline Crawshaw.

Whilst at the RNCM Victoria has taken part in several opera productions including the award-winning *Orlanskaya Dyeva*, and Roberto Devereux and Nicola LeFanu's modern opera *Dawnpath*. In 1997 she understudied and performed the role of Sophie in the RNCM opera season production of Massenet's *Werther*. Victoria's other roles at the RNCM include Adina *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Alcina, *Annchen Der Freischutz*, Helena *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Mary Warren *The Crucible*.

Victoria appears regularly on recital and oratorio platforms throughout the region.

Performances include Faure's *Requiem*, Brahms *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Vivaldi *Gloria*, Mozart *Mass in C minor*, Handel's *Messiah*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, Haydn's *Creation*, Bach's *Magnificat*, Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise*, Tippett's *A Child of our time* and Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Victoria recently appeared as a soloist at the Bridgewater Hall with the Halle Orchestra, conducted by Kent Ngano, in the world premiere performance of the original version of Mahler's *Das klagende Lied*, which was broadcast live on Radio 3 and recorded for CD.

Competition successes include being a finalist in the Alexander Young Award and the 1997 Webster Booth/Anne Ziegler Awards. More recently was the winner of the inaugural Sir Arthur Bliss Award for performance of his music. She is the recipient of the RNCM 1998/99 D'Oyly Carte Scholarship, which will fund her continuing studies at the RNCM. Masterclasses include Martin Issep and Joseph Ward OBE.

Victoria made her Gilbert & Sullivan debut as Phyllis in *Iolanthe* at Gawsorth Hall last summer. She is currently working alongside Valerie Masterson with the Carl Rosa Opera Company in new productions of *The Mikado* and *The Pirates of Penzance* which will subsequently be released on CD.

Victoria will perform the role of Karolka in the RNCM's 1999 Spring Opera Season production of *Jenufa* and Adele (*Die Fledermaus* for Carl Rosa's forthcoming UK tour).

Sean Ruane / tenor

Sean Ruane is a fourth year undergraduate student at the Royal Northern College of Music studying with Robert Alderson.

In the highly acclaimed 1997 RNCM production of *Albert Herring*, Sean understudied the role of the Mayor. In summer 1997 he sang the role of Conor in the Yorke Trust production of Purcell's *King Arthur* in Norfolk. This year Sean returned to play the role of Jupiter in Handel's *Semele*, repeating the performance in Manchester. He has performed in a number of operatic roles in opera excerpts including Ferrando/*Così fan tutte*, Paride/*Paride et Helena*, Lysander/*A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Sean's future engagements include covering the role of Laca in the RNCM Spring Opera production of *Jenufa*, Stainer's *Crucifixion* and Haydn's *Paukenmesse*. Sean will undertake the role of Il Tinca in Puccini's *Il Tabarro* for Clonter Opera.



Mendelssohn

Born Jakob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy on February 3, 1809, in Hamburg, he was the grandson of the noted Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. (The name Bartholdy was added to his surname when the family inherited property from a relative of that name, but he was always known by his original name.) As a child he converted with his family to Protestantism. Mendelssohn first appeared in public as a pianist at the age of 9 and performed his first original compositions when 11 years old. His masterly overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was composed at the age of 17; the famous "Wedding March" and the rest of his incidental music to the play were written 17 years later. His teachers included the Bohemian pianist-composer Ignaz Moscheles and the German composer Carl Zelter. A revival of public interest in the works of Johann Sebastian Bach was directly attributable to Mendelssohn, who in 1829 conducted the first performance since Bach's death of his *Passion of St. Matthew*.

Mendelssohn appeared as a pianist and conductor throughout Europe, making frequent trips to England. He was musical director for the city of Düsseldorf (1833-35), conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig (from 1835), and musical director to King Frederick William IV of Prussia (from 1841). In 1842 he helped organize the Leipzig Conservatory. He suffered a physical collapse at the death of his favorite sister, Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, and died a few months later in Leipzig on November 4, 1847.

In spite of an enormously strenuous schedule as pianist, conductor, and teacher, Mendelssohn was a prolific composer. Of his five symphonies, the best known are the *Italian Symphony* (1833) and the *Scottish Symphony* (1843). His organ and choral music is among the best of the 19th century and includes, for choir and orchestra, the oratorios *St. Paul* (1836) and *Elijah* (1846) and the cantata *Erste Walpurgisnacht* (*First Walpurgis-Night*, 1832; revised 1843); and his organ sonatas, preludes, and fugues. Also important are the *Variations sérieuses* (1841) for piano; his concert overtures, including *The Hebrides* (1832); his concertos for violin (1844) and for piano (1831, 1837); and the eight volumes of *Songs Without Words* for piano (1830-45; some of these are by his sister Fanny).

His romanticism shows most clearly in his use of orchestral colour and in his fondness for program music depicting places, events, or personalities.



Puccini

Puccini, Giacomo

(1858-1924), Italian composer, whose operas blend intense emotion and theatricality with tender lyricism, colorful orchestration, and a rich vocal line. Puccini was born December 22, 1858, in Lucca, the descendant of a long line of local church musicians. In 1880 he wrote a mass, *Messa di Gloria*, that encouraged his great-uncle to help underwrite his musical education. After studying (1880-83) music at the Milan Conservatory, Puccini wrote his first opera, *Le Villi* (1884); this brought him a commission to write a second, *Edgar* (1889), and a lifelong connection with Ricordi, a major music publisher. His third opera, *Manon Lescaut* (1893), was hailed as the work of a genius. *La Bohème* (1896), although containing some of the most popular arias in the repertoire today, displeased the audience at its Turin premiere, even with Arturo Toscanini conducting. Subsequent productions, however, won the composer worldwide acclaim.

Puccini's other operas include *Tosca* (1900), a standard repertory piece; *Madama Butterfly* (1904), which drew hisses at La Scala in Milan on opening night but scored a success after Puccini revised it; *The Girl of the Golden West* (1910), an opera on an American theme; the high-spirited *La Rondine* (1917); and *Il Trittico*, a trilogy of one-act operas comprising *Il Tabarro*, *Suor Angelica*, and the comic *Gianni Schicchi* (1918). Puccini was working on *Turandot* when he died, November 29, 1924, in Brussels. The opera, his most exotic, was completed by Franco Alfano and had its premiere in 1926.

Although his work lacks the grandeur of Giuseppe Verdi's ("The only music I can compose is that of little things," Puccini once said), many consider him second only to Verdi among Italian composers who lived after Giacomo Rossini.



Soloist's

Craig Everingham / baritone

Australian born Craig Everingham completed a Diploma of Music, a Diploma of Operatic Art and a Post-graduate Diploma of Music (Opera) from two of Australia's most noted musical institutions - Newcastle University Conservatorium of Music and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. These studies were completed in 1994.

Whilst in Sydney, Craig was the recipient of many distinguished awards and scholarships. He was awarded the "Bud Brown Scholarship" and the "Savage Club Scholarship" (1992); the Lionel Edgerton Memorial Scholarship" (1993); and the "Marsh Prize for Opera" (1994). He was also a finalist in the illustrious McDonald's Aria Competition in 1994 held at the Sydney Opera House. During 1995 Craig won the aria sections of the Bathurst and Newcastle Eisteddfods.

Besides his many scholarship awards Craig had the opportunity to perform in the Sydney Conservatorium Opera School's productions performing the principal roles of Ottone (The Coronation of Poppea 1991); Pandolfe (Cendrillion 1992), Prince Gremin (Eugene Onegin 1993) and Rambaldo (La Rondine 1994).

Craig's professional engagements are numerous and include concerts on the Australian National Radio Company - the ABC and National television broadcasts of the Darling Harbour Christmas Concerts. His oratorio repertoire is extensive and Craig has also held a position with the Australian Opera Company and has performed the operas of Verdi's *Aida*, Beethoven's *Fidelio*, Puccini's *La Bohème* and Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*.

On acceptance to the Royal Northern College of Music, Craig was awarded two eminent vocal scholarships from Newcastle, Australia. Since beginning his course at the RNCM, Craig has had the opportunity to perform in several masterclasses as well as understudying the role of Joseph in Berlioz's *L'enfance du Christ* performed at the Bridgewater Hall. In the summer of 1997 Craig was invited to perform the role of the Father in Kurt Weill's *Die sieben Todsunden* performed in Batignano, Italy. Craig also understudied the role of Marcello in the RNCM's production of Puccini's *La Bohème*.

Craig continues to study at the RNCM, generously supported by the Peter Moores Foundation, of which he is a scholar.

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Programme Part 1.

Psalm 42 'As the Hart Pants'

by Felix Mendelssohn

1. As the Hart Pants
2. For My soul Thirsteth for God
3. My Tears Have been my meat
4. Why, My Soul, art Thou so Daxed ?
5. My God, within me is my soul cast down
6. The Lord hath commanded
7. Why, My Soul, art Thou so Daxed ?

Interval



Programme Part 2.

Messa di Gloria

by Giacomo Puccini

Messa di Gloria was written by Giacomo Puccini at the tender age of 18. The score was created to serve as Puccini's graduation thesis from the Institute Musicale of Lucca, Italy. Representing the fulfillment of his entire musical background, it was intended as a tribute to the four previous generations of his family who had specialised in sacred music. First performed in 1880, it remained forgotten until the 1950's when the manuscript was rediscovered by an American priest whilst researching his biography of Puccini 'Immortal Beloved'. The work was performed in Chicago and later in Naples to great critical acclaim. It is now written in musical history as a lasting monument to the glory of God.

1. Kyrie
2. Gloria
3. Credo
4. Sanctus
5. Agnus Dei

