

**HEATHFIELD CHORAL SOCIETY
WITH THE SOUTH EAST SINFONIA
PRESENT**

**JOSEPH HAYDN'S
THE
SEASONS**

SOLOISTS:

JENNIFER WITTON ~ SOPRANO

EDMUND HASTINGS ~ TENOR

ANDREW RUPP ~ BASS

CONDUCTED BY SEBASTIAN CHARLESWORTH

SAT 13TH MAY

7.30PM

PROGRAMME

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Programme

Some movements have been deliberately omitted. Words can be found on p12.

Spring

1. Introduction and Recitative: Behold, the surly winter flies (Bass, Tenor & Soprano)
2. Chorus: Come, gentle Spring
3. Recitative: From Aries now the sun (Bass)
4. Aria: At dawn the eager plowman goes (Bass)
5. Recitative: With joy th'impatient husbandman (Tenor)
6. Trio and Chorus: Be thou gracious
7. Recitative: Our fervent prayers are heard (Soprano)
8. Trio and Chorus: O, how lovely is the landscape
- 8a. Chorus: Wonderful, powerful God!

Summer

9. Introduction and Recitative: In misty mantle now draws near (Tenor, Bass)
10. Aria: So now the cheerful shepherd goes (Bass)
11. Trio and Chorus: And now ascends the sun
15. Aria: What refreshment to the senses (Soprano)
16. Recitative: Now see! There arises in the sultry air (Bass, Tenor, Soprano)
17. Chorus: Ah! the thunderstorm draws near
18. Trio and Chorus: And now the storm has passed away

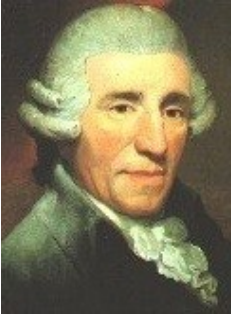
Interval

Autumn

19. Introduction and Recitative: What with all its blossoms (Soprano, Tenor, Bass)
20. Trio and Chorus: So nature thus rewards his toil
23. Recitative: Now on the bare denuded fields (Bass)
24. Aria: Look there upon the open field (Bass)
25. Recitative: The hares from out their beds (Tenor)
26. Chorus: Hark! A sonorous sound
27. Recitative: The shining grapes are full ripe (Soprano, Bass, Tenor)
28. Chorus: Yo-ho, Yo-ho, the wine is here

Winter

29. Introduction and Recitative: Now pale, the year begins to fade (Bass, Soprano)
31. Recitative: The lake lies in a grip of frost (Tenor)
32. Aria: The trav'ler stands perplexed (Tenor)
33. Recitative: As he draws near (Tenor, Soprano, Bass)
35. Recitative: Now the flax has all been spun (Tenor)
36. Song with Chorus: There was a squire as I've heard say
37. Recitative: From out the east there comes an icy blast (Bass)
38. Aria and Recitative: So understand, misguided man (Bass)
39. Trio and Chorus: Then comes the great and glorious morn



Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) was born in Austria, and became one of the most prolific and prominent composers of the Classical period. Haydn wrote 107 symphonies in total, as well as 83 string quartets, 45 piano trios, 62 piano sonatas, 14 masses and 26 operas, amongst countless other scores.

The son of a wheelwright and a local landowner's cook, Haydn had such a fine voice that at the age of five he entered the Choir School of St Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. His ethereal treble tones lasted until he was 16, a fact noticed by the Habsburg Empress, Maria Theresa, who uttered her

famous criticism: "That boy doesn't sing, he crows!". Haydn left the choir in memorable fashion - snipping off the pigtail of one his fellow choirboys - and was publicly caned.

By the 1770s, Haydn's music had become distinctive and boldly individual. His reputation spread rapidly throughout Austria, and commissions began arriving from abroad. 1790 saw the death of Prince Nicholas Esterházy, Haydn's employer since 1762. Haydn moved to Vienna and accepted an invitation from the great German-born violinist and impresario, Johann Peter Salomon, to visit England (1791-1792), where he found himself adored.

Prince Anton Esterházy, the next prince, died in 1795, and his successor, Nicholas II, requested Haydn's return to Esterháza. A lover of church music, Nicholas set Haydn the task of composing a new setting of the mass every year. In 1804, Haydn retired from Esterháza, and illness prevented him from any further composition. In 1808, he was invited to a tribute performance of *The Creation*, where he was carried into the hall to great applause and tears of devotion from the audience. Salieri conducted the performance, and Beethoven was in attendance. Sadly, Haydn was forced to leave halfway through the piece and this was his last public appearance.

During May 1809, Napoleon reached Vienna, but Haydn stayed in the city, guarded respectfully by two of the invader's sentries. On 31 May 1809 Haydn died peacefully in his sleep.

The Seasons

Haydn composed his two famous oratorios, *The Creation* and *The Seasons (Die Jahreszeiten)*, near the end of his career in Vienna. He had heard performances of Handel's *Messiah* in London and was so moved by the piece that he decided to write something similar. With support from his librettist and mentor Gottfried van Swieten, his first oratorio, *The Creation*, premiered in Vienna in 1799 to universal praise. van Swieten then urged Haydn to compose another oratorio, to be based on a poem by Scottish poet James Thomson. *The Seasons* was first performed on April 24, 1801, at the palace of Prince Schwarzenberg. On May 29, Haydn conducted the first public performance, and the oratorio was an immediate popular success.

Spring

Emphasizing the cyclical nature of the seasons, Haydn opens the oratorio with the transition from winter to spring. Hanne's gentle recitative introduces the chorus of country people's hymn-like prayer invoking spring. The orchestra alternates between gentle lyric passages and more triumphant, energetic ones; the hoped-for spring appears only gradually. But spring has truly arrived by the time Simon sings his dancelike song (No. 4) depicting a farmer cheerfully planting his fields. This entire section celebrates the promise of youth, with lilting passages that call attention to the beauty of newly budding flowers, the playful energy of frisking lambs, and the busy activities of the bees. It closes with a stirring hymn of praise to God, punctuated by the soloists' prayerful trio, concluding in a fugue of unmitigated joy.

Summer

This section begins with an adagio passage describing the first light of dawn gently dispelling the gloom of night. In No. 10, we hear the shepherd's horn as the sun rises and he sets out. No. 11 evokes the sunrise: The trio's harmonies ascend in brightness with the sun, culminating in the peasants' joyful, blazing chorus. Subsequent movements describe both the joyous energy of the sun and its enervating heat. The peace is disturbed by the approach of a summer storm. We can hear the faint rumbling of summer thunder in the timpani, followed by the plinks of the first raindrops at the close of No. 16. The storm grows to a fever pitch, the timpani's thunder punctuating the frantic semiquavers in the strings. As the clouds disperse and the sun shines over the fields once again, both people and animals emerge from their shelters. The chorus hails peaceful evening as the vocal lines descend into restful sleep.

Autumn

This section starts with the paeon to human industry that so annoyed Haydn — appropriately set to an energetic fugue. The depiction of hunting in Nos. 24 to 26 is perhaps the most evocative of the entire oratorio. Hunting horns sound as the huntsman's bird dog runs faster and faster. When the dog stops, so does the music, only to erupt again as the bird suddenly flushes and, with a loud report in the timpani, falls dead to the ground. In the following, galloping chorus, hunters and dogs pursue and kill a stag, with shouts of "Tally Ho!" accompanied by horns and the gleeful villagers. Finally, in a boisterous drinking song and dance, the country folk celebrate the best part of the harvest - the wine.

Winter

The final section begins slowly in a minor key, as winter imprisons all nature in its cold and gloom. The following movements describe a lost traveller,

blundering through the flurries of snow in confusion, who suddenly sees the light of a cottage before him and enters to find warmth and comfort. Inside, the country folk pursue their winter work and entertainments — spinning, gossiping, and storytelling.

Finally, the oratorio grows serious, as Simon warns that our own spring and summer will inevitably also pass into the autumn and winter of our lives. But the concluding message of the oratorio is that human beings, while a part of the natural world, can ultimately transcend its cycles of birth and death. The final chorus assures us that those who do the will of God will enter heaven and live eternally in the peace of the Lord.

by *Nina Ann Greeley*



Award Winning soprano, **Jennifer Witton** is a graduate of the Guildhall Opera School. Following various roles and covers for Glyndebourne, she performed the title role in Massenet's *Cendrillon* in performances for both the festival and the tour. She also works for the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Longborough Festival Opera, Opera North and Wexford Festival Opera. Equally at home on the concert platform, performance highlights

include concerts at the Barbican Hall, Cadogan Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Edinburgh Fringe Festival and the Oxford Lieder Festival. She is the recipient of the prestigious GSMD Gold Medal, won first prize at the inaugural 'Opera: By Voice Alone' competition and won the Royal Overseas League Roderick Lakin Award. Highlights this season include Strauss' *Four Last Songs* at St John's Smith Square in London, Mozart workshops with the Glyndebourne Tour, song recitals at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and singing the role of Adina in *L'elisir d'amore* for Longborough Festival Opera.



Originally a treble at Bath Abbey, tenor **Edmund Hastings** sang at King's College, Cambridge and New College, Oxford, going on to study at the Royal Academy of Music. His operatic experience ranges from the title role in *Orfeo* (Hampstead Garden Opera) to creating the role of Gabriel in *Hagar in the Wilderness* by Sally Beamish. Other opera includes Sailor in *Dido and Aeneas* (AAM), Offenbach's Vert-Vert in the opera of the same name for Garsington Opera, and Cinea Cajo Fabricio for the London Handel Festival. Concert

appearances include the first performance of Handel's *Messiah in Goa* with the Symphony Orchestra of India, a song recital at the Parisian British Ambassadorial Residence, Beethoven's Ninth with CUMS in the Pallazzo Vecchio, Florence, and a *St Matthew Passion* tour with the Israeli Camerata. Edmund is also the proud mastermind of a unique music and mountains holiday concept, set against the backdrop of the stunning Snowdonia hills. Google 'Mountain Lieder' for more details.



Bass **Andrew Rupp** was born in Canterbury and started singing there as a Cathedral Chorister. He made his operatic debut in 1996 as The Vicar in Britten's *Albert Herring* for British Youth Opera. Since then he has sung roles at Glyndebourne, Berlin Staatsoper, English National Opera, the Royal Opera House, Opera North, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Lausanne, Caen, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Paris, Vienna, Aldeburgh and Cardiff. He performed *The Sea*

Symphony at both the Royal Festival Hall with the RPO and the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing, its Chinese debut. He also sang with L'Ensemble Intercontemporain in Paris and Cologne under the direction of Pierre Boulez and was a soloist in the all night performances of John Tavener's *The Veil of the Temple* in London, Amsterdam and New York.

He was High Priest of Jupiter in ENO's *Castor and Pollux*, returning there to sing Bosun in a new production of Billy Budd. He sang the title role in Walton's *The Bear* for Northern Ireland Opera. As a member of the BBC Singers, Andrew performs frequently on Radio 3 and has been a soloist on many occasions, including Vaughan-Williams' *Five Mystical Songs*, Brahms' *Requiem*, and *Carmina Burana*. He was also a soloist at The Last Night of the Proms in 2017 and repeated the honour in 2022.

Andrew has also worked with some of the country's top choral ensembles, including The King's Consort, Tenebrae, English Concert and Polyphony.

The South East Sinfonia is made up of some of the finest freelance players in London. Among their number are players who are members of, or play regularly with, all the major UK orchestras including BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Academy of Ancient Music, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra to name but a few.



Sebastian Charlesworth was delighted to be appointed Musical Director of Heathfield Choral Society in May 2019. He is a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he initially trained as a bassoonist. On graduating, and deciding that the best thing to do with a degree in bassoon was to pursue a career in singing he has, for the last decade, been working as a professional chorister and soloist on both the concert and opera stages. As a session singer, he can be heard on many recent blockbusters including

multiple scores for composers including Danny Elfman and the late Scott Walker. In recent years, conducting/musical direction has become a mainstay of his work and, alongside HCS, he is MD for the chamber choir New Sussex Singers and has worked as guest conductor with Musicians of All Saints, Lewes. He is a teacher of both singing and bassoon across five different schools and travels the world with the company Moving Performance, facilitating transformational leadership programmes within businesses. In his 'spare' time, he enjoys fine dining, home improvement and spending as much time as possible with his wife Hannah, and young sons Hugh and Magnus.



Gavin Stevens has been accompanist for Heathfield Choral Society since 1999. He works as a teacher of piano and guitar. As a composer, Gavin has written a wide range of works for piano and a growing number of pieces for guitar, among works for other instruments and voices. Gavin gives frequent piano recitals and he likes to include works by 20th century British composers in these concerts alongside his own music and more standard repertoire.

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our next events:

Saturday June 17th 2023, St Richard's Church

Music for a Summer Evening

Saturday December 9th 2023, State Hall, Heathfield

Christmas Concert

Please reserve the dates!

The Choir

Sopranos

Sue Carter
Sarah Christie
Kathryn Dewhurst
Sally DiFabio
Barbara Edwards
Frederica Everett
Francesca Hunt
Carol Kemp
Jacqui Locker
Ruth McDermott
Sarah Norris
Georgina Penticost
Colleen Robinson
Gillian Stevens
Caroline Thompson
Mary Wilce
Hillary Wilson
Jeni Woodhouse

Altos

Carolyn Burgess
Jenny Crisford
Linda Davis
Linda Dearsley
Liz Delves
Shineen Galloway
Danielle Gregory
Pat Harwood
Sue Hyden
Moira James
Ann Kenward
Jenny Mayhew
Kate Peckham
Susan Tranter
Cornelie Usborne

Tenors

Phillip Brooks
Nick Dibb
Nick Howard
Peter Lewis
Brian Newman
Nick Rees

Basses

Howard Burgess
Stephen Charlesworth *
Martin Clay
Ray James
Bernard Maishman
Richard Penticost
Chris Thompson
Steve Tolhurst

* *Guest*

The Orchestra

Violin 1:

Nick Ward (Leader)
Abigail Dance
Lauren Abbott

Violin 2:

Vieda Mercer
Eloise MacDonald
Mike Parkin

Viola:

Stephen Giles
Anna Cooper

Cello:

Joe Giddey
Christopher Hedges

D Bass:

Francesca Urquhart

Flute:

Chloe Vincent

Oboe:

Ben Marshall

Clarinet in Bb and A:

Boyan Ivanov

Bassoon:

Ben Excell

French Horn:

Duncan Fuller
Clare Lintott

Trumpet:

Jacob Rosenberg

Percussion/Timpani:

Fabian Edwards

Continuo Fortepiano:

Gavin Stevens



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Spring

1. Recitative. Behold how surly Winter flies; to polar regions now he goes. Now follows at his call the savage storm's tumultuous host with all its dreadful roar. And see, from craggy rocks the snow in muddy streams flows down the slopes! And see how from the south, by mild and gentle winds allur'd, the spring again appears.

2. Chorus. Come, gentle Spring! The gift of heaven, come! From deathly winter sleep bid Nature now awake! O come, return, delay no more! And now she nears, the gentle Spring, her soft and balmy breath we feel., and soon to all will life return. But yet do not too soon rejoice, for oft, enwrapp'd in mist and fog, the winter will return and spread o'er bud and flow'r his chilling frost.

3. Recitative. From Aries now the sun shines brightly down upon us here. Now frost and fog retire, and mild mists hover all about; our mother earth is now revived, enliven'd is the air.

4. Aria. With joy th'impatient husbandman sets forth to till the field, the furrow's length he strides along and whistles as he ploughs. And then with slow and measur'd step he casts the seed abroad, by faithful earth preserv'd it soon will grow to golden com.

5. Recitative. The farmer now his work hath done, avoiding neither care nor toil; the hand of nature will in time provide reward; for this he pleads to heaven above.

6. Trio and Chorus. Now be gracious, bounteous heaven, open wide, and pour thy blessings over all our lands below. Let earth receive the dew's refreshment. Let

rainfall now enrich the furrows. And let thy breezes gently blow, thy sun send forth his shining rays! To us abundant life will flow, and we will give thee thanks and praise.

7. Recitative. Our fervent prayers are heard; the warm west wind arises and fills the sky above with sailing clouds. The clouds increase; they now descend, and pour into the lap of earth the pride and wealth of Nature's store.

8. Trio and Chorus. O how lovely is the landscape spread before our eyes! Come, dear maidens, let us wander o'er the verdant fields! O how lovely is the landscape spread before our eyes! Come, young fellows, let us wander through the fresh green woods! See the lilies, see the roses, all the flow'rs in bloom! See the pastures, see the meadows, see the open fields. See the mountains, see the rivers, see the sparkling air! All is living, all is floating, ev'ry creature now astir. See the lambs, how they are leaping! See the shoals of fishes swimming! See how all the bees are swarming! See the birds now all aflutter! O what pleasure, what enjoyment swells within our hearts! Sweetest fancies, gentle charms bring gladness to our souls. That which touches and delights you is the presence of the breath of God. Let us honour, let us worship, let us give our praise to him! In resounding song to thank him raise your voices high.

8a. Trio and Chorus. Wonderful, powerful, merciful God! From thy most blessed table dost thou provide our food, From streams of joy unending thou givest us to drink. Glory, laud and praise be thine, wonderful, merciful God.

Summer

9. Recitative. In misty mantle now draws near the gentle morning light; with limping step at her approach the weary night retires. To dark and gloomy caves the birds of doom now take their flight, and with their mournful cries appeal the timid heart no more. The herald of the new-born day, with sharp and penetrating voice, to new activity now calls the shepherd from his rest.

10. Aria and Recitative. So now the cheerful shepherd goes to gather all his bleating flock; to pastures rich he drives them out, slowly o'er the verdant hills. Towards the East he gazes then, while leaning on his shepherd's crook, and waits to see the rising sun shed abroad his glorious light.

The rosy dawn breaks forth in light; like wisps of smoke the clouds disappear; the heav'n is clothed resplendent in blue, the mountain peaks in fiery gold.

11. Trio and Chorus. And now ascends the sun, he climbs, he nears, he comes, he beams, he shines. Now shine with glorious pow'r the fires of his majesty. Hail, O sun, all hail! The source of light and life, all hail! Thou soul and eye of all the worlds, thou God-like shining star. We give thee grateful thanks, thou God-like shining star. For who can tell the jubilation thy gracious presence stirs in us? Who numbers

them, the many blessings that of thy kindness we receive? The jubilation, who can tell? Thy blessings, O who numbers them? Who? All thanks to thee for giving joy. All thanks to thee for giving life. All thanks to thee for giving health.

But more to God who gave to thee the pow'r thy beams display. Now praises come from all men, these praises nature joins.

15. Aria. What refreshment to the senses, what a comfort to the heart! Life through ev'ry vein is flowing, and in stirring ev'ry nerve invigorates the soul. The spirit now awakes to pleasure and to joy; with strength renew'd it lifts the heart to fresh delights.

16. Recitative. O see! There rises in the sultry air, close by the border of the hills, a pallid fog of mist and vapour form'd. 'Tis small at first, but now expands, and soon black darkness covers all beneath the gloomy sky. Hear, from the vale, how the dull roar announces storm to come! See how the baleful cloud with slow progression makes its way and threatens all the land below! In dread foreboding all living Nature waits. No beast, no leaf dares stir itself. A deathly hush is all around.

17. Chorus. Ah, the thunderstorm comes near! Help us,

heaven! O how the thunder rolls! Now rage the winds about us! Where shall we fly? Flashes of lightning now streak through the air, the bolts from the sky now burst the clouds open, to pour down torrents of rain. Where is safety? Dreadful roars the storm. The open sky is aflame. Save us wretches! Crashing, smashing, crack on crack the thunder rolls with awful noise. Save us! The whole world shakes and trembles e'en to the ocean floor.

18. Trio and Chorus. And now the storm has passed away; the clouds disperse, the wind dies down. Before the time

to set has come the sun looks out once more, and so his final sparkling rays with pearls adorn the fields. Now to its well-accustom'd home, enliven'd and refreshed, the well-fed herd returns. The quail already calls his mate. The cricket chirps from out the grass. The frog is croaking in the marsh; the distant curfew now has tolled. The evening star shines from above, inviting us to soft repose. Maidens, young men, women, come! Soothing sleep awaits us now, for this is granted honest hearts and healthy bodies after toil. We come. We follow you.

Autumn

19. Recitative. What with all its blossoms was promis'd by the spring, what the warmth of summer to welcome ripeness brought, autumn with its fullness shows to the farmer now. For there on heavy loaded carts th'abundant harvest home is borne. The plenty that the fields provide his massive barns can scarce contain. With cheerful eye he looks around, and measures all the bounteous produce there, and pleasure floods into his heart.

20. Trio and Chorus. So Nature thus rewards his toil; she calls, she smiles at him, encouraging his hopefulness, she willing gives her aid; she works for him with pow'r and strength. O toil, O noble toil, from thee comes ev'ry good. In thee all virtues grow, and manners rude are overcome. By thee the heart of man is cleans'd and purified. From thee all courage comes, that duty and good may fill our daily life.

23. Recitative. Now on the bare denuded field some uninvited guests appear, that on the stalks found nourishment, and wander seeking further food. These little thefts do nought to harm the farmer, he can leave them be, unless excessive losses come that he can ill afford. Then action that can this prevent he sees as benefit, and willing enters on the hunt that gives his master such delight.

24. Aria. Look there upon the open field! The hound is moving through the grass. He searches there to find the scent and then will tireless follow it. But over eager now he runs, he heeds his master's orders no more: he hastens on forward then sudden stops and stands unmoving as a stone. The start'd bird now takes to flight in hope the danger to avoid: but all his speed will not avail. The gun is fired, he is struck by the shot that drops him dead from the sky to earth.

25. Recitative. The hares from out their beds are driven by the closing ring. Now press'd about on ev'ry side they find there's no escape, and soon they fall, to be laid out as trophies of the hunter's sport.

26. Chorus. Hark, hark, a sonorous sound is through the forest ringing! What a clamorous din is heard throughout the wood! It is the horn with its thrilling call, the ravenous

hounds are now baying. The stag already is arous'd, pursuing are hunters and eager dogs. He flies, O see how he bounds! See how he leaps! Then from the coppice he breaks for the fields, and hastens across to the thickets beyond. He now has bewilder'd the hounds, at fault they range and go astray. The hounds are now at fault, they wander here and there. The huntsman calls, and blows his horn to gather them once again. Tallyho! With redoubled ardour now the pack recovers the scent of the fleeing prey. Thus overtaken by his foes, his courage and his vigour lost, exhausted now the deer will fall. Proclaiming that his end is come the jubilant song of sounding brass announces the hunters' victory. Tallyho! Proclaiming that the stag is dead the jubilant song of sounding brass announces the hunters' victory. Blow horn, blow!

27. Recitative. The shining grapes are fully ripe upon the branches of the vine, they call the happy vintner out to gather them without delay. Already tubs and vats below the hill are set, and from their houses villagers stream, and gather ready the welcome work to do. See how the mountainside with swarming folk is cover'd! And hear how joyful sounds from ev'ry quarter echo. The work is eased by humorous talk from morn until the evening comes, and then the sparkling juice of the grape will raise the mirth to shouts of joy.

28. Chorus. Yo-ho, yo-ho! The wine is here, the barrels now are fill'd; so let us merry be and yo-ho, yo! From open throats we shout! Let us drink then! Drink up, brothers, let us merry be! Let us sing then, all must sing now, let us merry be! Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo! All hail to the wine. All hail to the land that brings it forth! All hail to the vat that gives it strength! All hail to the bowl from whence it flows! Brothers come and fill the tankards, drain the mugs and let us merry be! All hail to the wine, the noble wine, that trouble and grief removes, his praises sing we loud and high, exalting him a thousandfold. Ho there, let us merry be, yo-ho, yo-ho from open throats we shout!

Winter

29. Recitative. Now pale, the year begins to fade, and cold the mists form round about. They wrap the mountains in their fogs, and lastly cover all the land, and e'en at noon the sun is hid in all-pervading gloom. The winter with his dismal storms now rushes forth from Lapland's caves, and his approach doth freeze all nature, fill'd with anxious care.

31. Recitative. The lake lies bound in grip of frost, the passage of the stream chok'd with ice. The waterfall plunging down from tow'ring cliff is silent now and flows no more. No sounds are heard within the woods: the fields lie white, the valleys fill'd with monstrous drifts of heavy snow. The face of earth is now a grave, where Nature's charms quite buried lie, a deathly colour sadly rules, and wheresoe'er the gaze may roam it finds no more than desert wastes.

32. Aria. The trav'ler stands perplex'd; uncertain and unsure which way his wand'ring steps to turn. In vain he strives to find the road, but neither track nor path appear. In vain he struggles on his way, and wading through the drifting snow he finds himself still more astray. Now all his courage fails, and fear o'ercomes his heart, he sees the day will soon be gone, and weariness and cold turn all his limbs to stone. Now all his courage fails, and fear o'ercomes his heart: but suddenly his searching eye discovers nearby shining lights at hand. With life restor'd to him, and joyful beating heart, he runs in haste to reach the house where, stiff and cold, he hopes relief.

33. Recitative. As he draws near, into his ears, till now by the howling winds oppress'd, comes the sound of voices clear. In the warm room he happy finds a gathering of friends from nearby dwelling-places, who with light work and chatter make short the drawn-out evening hours. Around the blazing stove the fathers talk of youthful days; their sons in cheerful groups are gather'd too, repairing traps and baskets with fresh willow wands. The mothers work at the distaff, their daughters at spinning wheels seated, and all their work is cheer'd by artless song and melody.

35. Recitative. Now the flax has all been spun, the wheels no longer turn. The circle closes in, surrounded by the men and boys, impatient all to hear the tale that Jane will soon recount to them.

36. Song with Chorus. There was a squire as I've heard say, once lov'd a pretty maid, and, meeting her alone one day, sprung off his horse and said: 'My pretty lass you've won my heart, indulge me with a kiss.' Her heart would fain have answer'd No, her lips responded Yes! Ha, ha, but why not answer No? 'Be not alarm'd, my pretty lass, but give thy love to me, and doubt not that I'll always prove a true love unto thee. Thou shalt be happy, see, this purse and

ring to thee I grant; I'll study ev'ry wish of thine, in nothing shalt thou want!' So so, indeed young squire, you promise fair! 'What if my brother were to know, or what my father, say, they're both in yonder field at plough, perchance they'll look this way. Were they not there why then indeed I can't say what I'd do, creep thro' the hedge and let me know if they can see us two.' Ha, ha! What next, I pray? The thorns and briars held him fast, as he were in a vice, Meanwhile the maid sprung on his horse and vanish'd in a trice. 'Farewell to thee, my gentle swain' she cried in bitter scorn, 'And when you next would pluck a rose you'll not forget the thorn.' Ha, ha, well done my girl, ha ha, poor squire, goodbye!

37. Recitative. From out the East there comes an icy blast with piercing cold. Harsh and cutting to the bone, it gathers up the fog, and steals the breath of man and beast. This tyrant, full of rage, this winter now has vict'ry won, and voiceless in her fear the whole of nature lies aghast.

38. Aria and recitative. So understand, misguided man, the picture of thy life is here. Thy spring was short and now is gone, exhausted is thy summer's strength. For now are come thine autumn years, while winter pale already nears, and shows to thee the open tomb. Where are those hopes of joy and gladness, those plans and lofty schemes? Misfortune's heavy burdens, the vain desire of fame? Where are they now, those times of plenty, once spent in luxury? And where those cheerful evenings and nights of revelry? Where are they now? Where? They all are vanish'd as a dream. Only virtue lasts. Alone she stays and leads us on, unchangeable, through passing days and years, through good or evil fortune, to reach the highest goal of life.

39. Trio with Double Chorus. Then comes the great and glorious morn; the word of the Almighty Lord calls us to second life, from pain and death for ever free. The gates of heaven are open'd wide, the holy hill appears. There stands the house of God where peace and freedom dwell. But who may pass between those gates? The man whose life was incorrupt. And who may climb the holy hill? The man whose lips spoke only truth. And who may make that house his dwelling? The man who help'd the poor and weak. And who shall joy and peace delight in? The man who saved the innocent. O see, the glorious morn is near. Behold, the splendid light! The gates of heaven are open'd wide, the holy hill appears. Now are they gone, for ever past, the days of woeful suff'ring, the winter storms of living, for Spring eternal reigns, and everlasting happiness is virtue's true reward. May we alike reward deserve! Let us labour, let us struggle. Let us struggle, and continue our attempt that prize to gain. Direct us in thy ways, O God, and make us strong and brave. Then shall we sing, we shall ascend into the glorious realm of heaven.

Amen.

Heathfield Choral Society was formed in 1945 and now has a membership of around 60 singers drawn from Heathfield and the surrounding towns and villages. It is recognized as one of the most enterprising choirs in the area, performing regularly with professional orchestras and soloists. Its concerts have included a wide variety of sacred and secular works and first performances in the area. In 2009 the choir gave the first performance in East Sussex of Howard Goodall's work, *Eternal Light*, and in November 2016 joined an international group to perform this work in New York's Carnegie Hall – a great honour for the choir, of whom around 25 were able to take part.

As a founder member of the Eastbourne and District Choirs' Association, the Society has played a pivotal role in extending the work of choirs in the area, by promoting open rehearsals, combined concerts and co-operation between member choirs. The choir supported South Downs Opera's productions of *Tosca* (2012) and *Aida* (2015).

The Society welcomes new singers, and is very happy for you to try a couple of rehearsals before joining. **There are no auditions!** Please contact Jenny at heathfieldchoral.membership@gmail.com for more information, or speak to a choir member.

If you would like to be included on our mailing list, please email heathfieldchoral.publicity@gmail.com or visit our website www.heathfieldchoral.org.uk

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