



Tring Choral Society



Conductor: Colin Stevens



Handel *Messiah*

SOLOISTS

Ruth Provost (Soprano)
Eleanor Minney (Contralto)
Ruairi Bowen (Tenor)
Quentin Hayes (Bass)

Chiltern Orchestral Society
Leader: Janet Hicks

Saturday 19 December 2015 at 7.30pm

Registered Charity No. 276980



The Soloists



RUTH PROVOST (SOPRANO); Ruth read Music at Christ's College, Cambridge, and worked actively as both a cellist and



singer during this time. After graduating, she decided to embark upon a singing career, and began studying with Lynton Atkinson. Ruth has appeared as a

soloist in venues across the UK; engagements so far include J.S. Bach's Cantata Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen and St John Passion, Buxtehude's Membra Jesu Nostri, Mozart's Requiem and Mass in C minor, and Handel's Messiah, with such groups as the Cambridge University Baroque Ensemble, Manchester Baroque, the Thames Chamber Orchestra and Fretwork.

She also performs regularly as a recitalist, specialising in nineteenth and twentieth century song.

Ruth has recorded as a named soloist with Christ's College Chapel Choir, the Bede Singers and the Oxford Choir under directors such as David Hill and Christopher Robinson, and recently performed Haydn's Salve Regina with Manchester Cathedral Choir live on BBC Radio 3. She also sings on a regular basis at the London Oratory and St Pancras Church, London, and has toured in Europe with several groups including French baroque orchestra Le Concert d'Astre

ELEANOR MINNEY (ALTO); In 2010 Eleanor gained a First Class Honours degree in Vocal Studies from Trinity College of Music, London. She was also awarded the 2009 Wilfred Greenhouse Allt prize for Cantata and Oratorio for her performance in JS Bach's St. John Passion. Recent operatic roles include Ruggiero (Handel's *Alcina*) for Musica Poetica London, Cherubino (Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*) and Fanny Price (Dove's *Mansfield Park*) for Hampstead Garden Opera, Mercedes (Bizet's *Carmen*) for Riverside Opera, Maddalena (Verdi's *Rigoletto*) for Brent Opera, Lucretia (Britten's *The Rape of*

Lucretia), Florence Pike (Britten's *Albert Herring*) for Shadwell Opera, Amanzio (Handel's *Giustino*) and Second Witch (Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*).

Eleanor made her BBC television solo debut in 2013, performing Bach's *Erbarme Dich* (St. Matthew Passion) with the English Baroque Soloists, for Sir John Eliot Gardiner's documentary *Bach: A Passionate Life*. Other solo highlights include Bach's *B Minor Mass* with Sir John Eliot Gardiner in Tuscany, Mozart *Requiem* (St. Martin-in-the-Fields), Mozart Coronation Mass (St. John's Smith



The Soloists



Square), the world premiere of Tavener's *The Beautiful Names* (BBC Symphony Orchestra), Daniel-Lesur *Les Cantiques de Cantiques* at the BBC Proms, a series of recitals with baroque violinist Davina Clarke, and solo recitals at London's St. Martin-in-the-fields and Cadogan Hall. Future engagements include Joby Talbot's *Alice in Wonderland* with the Royal Ballet, and a new production of Gluck's *Orpheus ed Euridice*, both at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Eleanor is also a busy consort singer. She is a permanent member of the BBC Singers and the choir of St. Bartholomew the Great and performs regularly with The Monteverdi Choir, The Sixteen, the OAE, Collegium Vocale Gent, Tenebrae and The Eric Whittacre Singers.

Eleanor is currently based in London, where she studies with Alison Wells.

RUAIRI BOWEN (TENOR); Ruairi began his musical education as a chorister at St Davids and St Paul's Cathedrals. He spent a term singing with the choir of St Thomas Church 5th Avenue, New York before taking up a choral scholarship at King's College, Cambridge. While an undergraduate, he toured on three continents with the choir, was a soloist on national television, radio and two CDs and directed The King's Men, with whom he planned and managed a recording of close harmony for commercial release. He took part in numerous student productions and concerts, notably as Acis in Handel's *Acis and Galatea* and Britten's *Canticle II: Abraham and Isaac*, as well as masterclasses with Dame Ann Murray and Justin Lavender, and graduated with the Harmer Prize and Jasper Ridley Prize from King's College. Now living in London, he





The Soloists



is a member of the resident professional octet at the Priory Church of St Bartholomew the Great, deputises regularly at Westminster Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, while maintaining a busy concert and recording schedule with leading professional ensembles such as Polyphony, Tenebrae, Eric Whitacre Singers, Alamire and EXAUDI. Recent solo engagements include Chilcott's *Requiem*

at the Three Choirs Festival, Handel's *Judas Maccabeus* with Somerset Singers, Britten's *Cantata Academica* with the English Concert Chorus at St John's, Smith Square and the Evangelist quartet of Pärt's *Passio* with the Choir of King's College, Cambridge/Endymion.

He continues his vocal studies with Berty Rice.

QUENTIN HAYES (BASS); Quentin studied at Dartington College of Arts and the Guildhall School of Music. He launched his international career by winning the VARA Dutch Radio Prize at Belverdere Competition, Vienna.

Subsequent concerts at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw were Britten's *War Requiem* and *Elijah*, Messaien's *St Francois d'Assise*, Henze's *Bassarids* and Ades' *The Tempest*. His opera debut was as Figaro (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*) with Glyndebourne Touring Opera. He then went on to sing major roles with all the leading UK companies, including five years as Principal Baritone at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Recent engagements have been the Japanese premiere of Elgar's *Light of Life* (Tokyo Symphony Orchestra), *Elijah* (in Exeter Cathedral), *Dream of Gerontius* (in Winchester Cathedral), Verdi *Requiem* (Hull), *Die Meistersinger* (ENO) and Scarpia in *Tosca* (Wexford Festival, Ireland).

Future plans include Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* (in Gloucester Cathedral), Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* (Chester

Cathedral) and Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* (WNO).



Quentin is now a professor of singing at the Royal Northern College of Music.



Georg Friedrich Handel



Not only was Handel born in the same year as J S Bach (in 1685), but he was born in Halle, a mere fifty miles from the great Johann Sebastian's birthplace of Eisenach. At one time, these two giants lived just twenty miles apart, although they never met. Bach's admiration for Handel is evident from his having copied, with the help of his wife, a passion and other works by Handel. Knowing that Bach wanted to meet Handel, Prince Leopold lent Johann Sebastian a horse. For reasons that remain a mystery, the meeting never took place. Musical historians are of the opinion that Bach's admiration for Handel was not reciprocated. Incidentally, Domenico Scarlatti and Guisepe Alberti (he of the Alberti bass) were also born in the same year as Handel and Bach so, one way or another, it was a very good year for music!

The co-incidences don't stop there, however. In one of the curious ironies of music history, both Handel and Bach would be afflicted with cataracts in their old age and undergo surgery at the hand of the same surgeon, John Taylor.

By today's standards, this surgery was extremely crude, and any improvement to the visual impairment would have been minimal at best. It involved physically pushing the cataract-covered lens back into the eyeball in an attempt to allow a little more light to enter. (Bach would die from septicaemia induced as a consequence of contaminated instruments). As this surgery was done

without anaesthesia, the courage and physical constitution of both men must have been amazing!

In 1710 Handel became Kapellmeister to George, elector of Hanover, later George I of Great Britain. He visited London in 1710 and settled there permanently in 1712, receiving a yearly income of £200 from Queen Anne. In 1727 Handel's opera *Scipio (Scipione)* was performed for the first time, the march from which remains



the regimental slow march of the British Grenadier Guards.

In 1727 Handel was commissioned to write four anthems for the coronation ceremony of King George II. One of these, *Zadok the*



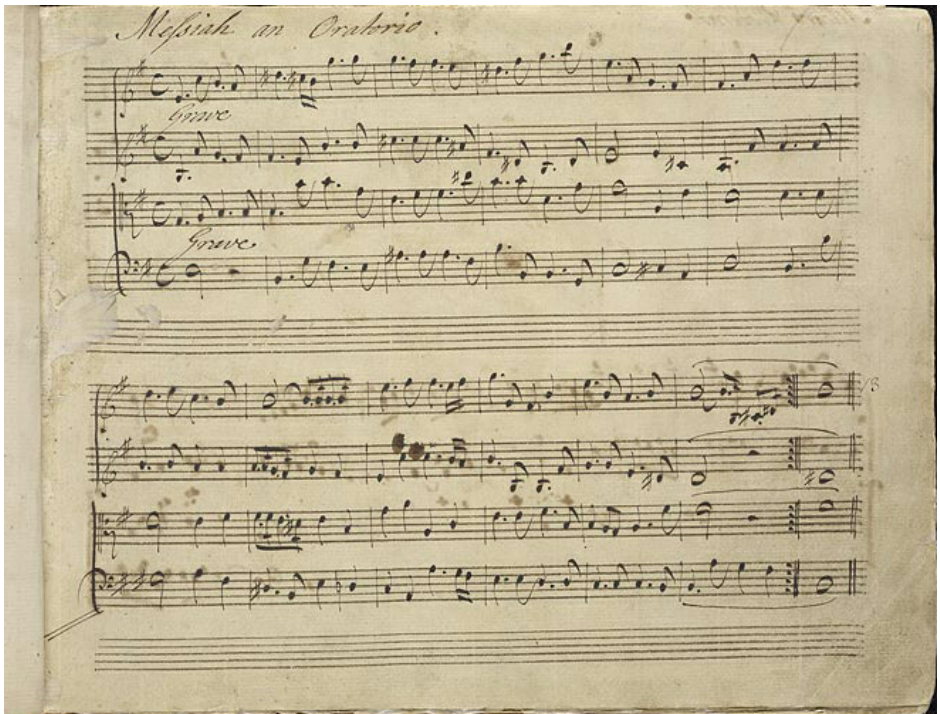
Georg Friedrich Handel



Priest, has been played at every coronation ceremony since. Handel was director of the Royal Academy of Music 1720-1728, and a partner in the management of the King's Theatre 1729-1734 with J J Heidegger. Handel also had a long association with the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, where many of his Italian operas were premiered. Handel gave up operatic management entirely in 1740, after he had lost a fortune in the business. In 1751 he became blind, and died in London. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Handel's compositions include some fifty operas, twenty-three oratorios, and a large amount of church music, not to speak of his superb instrumental pieces, such as the organ concerti, the *Opus 6 Concerti Grossi*, the *Water Music*, and the *Fireworks Music*.

Handel adopted the spelling 'George Frideric Handel' on his naturalisation as a British citizen. He lived at 25 Brook Street, London, from 1723 until his death in 1759 and it was here that he composed *Messiah*, *Zadok the Priest*, and *Fireworks Music*.



Page 1 of Handel's autograph manuscript of *Messiah*.



Handel; Messiah - the background



Handel's *Messiah* has been described by the early-music scholar Richard Lucket as "a commentary on Jesus Christ's Nativity, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension", beginning with God's promises as spoken by the prophets and ending with Christ's glorification in heaven.

In contrast with most of Handel's oratorios, the singers in *Messiah* do not assume dramatic roles, there is no single, dominant narrative voice, and very little use is made of quoted speech.

The libretto was composed by Charles Jennens (born c 1700) and his intention was not to dramatise the life and teachings of Jesus, but to acclaim the "Mystery of Godliness", using a compilation of extracts from the Authorised (King James) Version of the Bible, and from the Psalms included with the Book of Common Prayer (which are worded slightly differently from their King James counterparts).

The three-part structure of the work approximates to that of Handel's three-act operas, with the "parts" subdivided by Jennens into "scenes". Each scene is a collection of individual numbers which take the form of recitatives, arias and choruses.

In Part I, the Messiah's coming and the Virgin Birth are predicted by the Old Testament prophets. The annunciation to the shepherds of the birth of the Christ is represented in the words of St Luke's Gospel.

Part II covers Christ's Passion and his death, his Resurrection and Ascension, the first spreading of the Gospel through the world, and a definitive statement of

God's glory summarised in the "Hallelujah". Part III begins with the promise of Redemption, followed by a prediction of the Day of Judgment and the "general Resurrection", and ends with the final victory over sin and death and the acclamation of Christ.

"I have heard great music--even sublime music. I've heard music fit for princes, for kings. I have heard music fit for any monarch. But that night, for the first time in my life, I heard music fit for God."

(J Scott Featherstone, Hallelujah - The Story of the Coming Forth of Handel's Messiah)

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Handel; *Messiah* - the text



PART ONE

SINFONY (Orchestra)

RECITATIVE (Tenor)

Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God.

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness; prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

(Isaiah 40:4)

SONG (Tenor)

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain and hill made low; the crooked straight and the rough places plain.

(Isaiah 40:4)

CHORUS

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

(Isaiah 40:5)

ACCOMPAGNATO (Bass)

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts: Yet once a little while and I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come.

(Haggai 2:6-7)

The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.

(Malachi 3:1)

RECITATIVE (Bass)

But who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire.

(Malachi 3:2)

CHORUS

And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

(Malachi 3:3)

RECITATIVE (Alto)

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Emmanuel, God with us.

(Isaiah 7:14; St Matthew 1:23)

SONG AND CHORUS (Alto)

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain.

O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God!

(Isaiah 40:9)

Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

(Isaiah 60:1)

ACCOMPAGNATO (Bass)

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee, and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

(Isaiah 60:2-3)

SONG (Bass)

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

(Isaiah 9:2)

CHORUS

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

(Isaiah 9:6)

PIFA (Orchestra)

RECITATIVE (Soprano)

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

(St Luke 2:8)

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.

(St Luke 2:9)

RECITATIVE (Soprano)

And the angel said unto them: Fear not, For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

(St Luke 2:10-11)

RECITATIVE (Soprano)

And suddenly there was with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying:

(St Luke 2:13)

CHORUS

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men.

(St Luke 2:14)

SONG (Soprano)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.

(Zechariah 9:9-10)

RECITATIVE (Alto)

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

(Isaiah 35:5-6)

SONG (Alto and Soprano)

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; and He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

(Isaiah 40:11)

Come unto Him, all ye that labour, come unto Him that are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

(St Matthew 11:28-29)

CHORUS

His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light.

(St Matthew 11:30)

CHORUS

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

(St John 1:29)

SONG (Alto)

He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

(Isaiah 53:3)

CHORUS

Surely He hath borne our griefs, and

carried our sorrows! He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.
(Isaiah 53:4-5)

CHORUS
And with His stripes we are healed.
(Isaiah 53:5)

CHORUS
All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.
And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.
(Isaiah 53:6)

Interval

RECITATIVE (Tenor)
All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying:
(Psalm 22:7)

CHORUS
He trusted in God that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him.
(Psalm 22:8)

RECITATIVE (Soprano)
Thy rebuke hath broken His heart:
He is full of heaviness. He looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him.
(Psalm 69:20)

SONG (Soprano)
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow.
(Lamentations 1:12)

RECITATIVE (Tenor)
He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgressions of Thy people was He stricken.
(Isaiah 53:8)

SONG (Tenor)
But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell; nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.
(Psalm 16:10)

CHORUS
Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle,
The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory.
(Psalm 24:7-10)

CHORUS
The Lord gave the word;
great was the company of the preachers.
(Psalm 68:18)

SONG (Soprano)
How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.
(Isaiah 52:7/Romans 10:15)

CHORUS
Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world.
(Romans 10:18/Psalm 19:4)

SONG (Bass)
Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed.
(Psalm 2:1-2)

CHORUS

Let us break their bonds asunder,
and cast away their yokes from us.
(Psalm 2:3)

RECITATIVE (Tenor)

He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh
them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in
derision.
(Psalm 2:4)

RECITATIVE (Tenor)

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a
potter's vessel.
(Psalm 2:9)

CHORUS

Hallelujah: for the Lord God Omnipotent
reigneth.
(Revelation 19:6)

The kingdom of this world is become the
kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ;
and He shall reign for ever and ever.
(Revelation 11:15)

King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.
(Revelation 19:16)

SONG (Soprano)

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that
he shall stand at the latter day upon the
earth. And though worms destroy this
body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.
(Job 19:25-26)

For now is Christ risen from the dead, the
first fruits of them that sleep.
(1Corinthians 15:20)

CHORUS

Since by man came death, by man came
also the resurrection of the dead. For as
in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all
be made alive.
(1Corinthians 15:21-22)

ACCOMPAGNATO (Bass)

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all
sleep, but we shall all be changed in a
moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the
last trumpet.
(1Corinthians 15:51-52)

SONG (Bass)

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead
shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall
be changed.
(1Corinthians 15:52-53)

RECITATIVE (Alto)

Then shall be brought to pass the saying
that is written: Death is swallowed up in
victory.
(1Corinthians 15:54)

DUET (Alto and Tenor)

O death, where is thy sting? O grave,
where is thy victory? The sting of death is
sin, and the strength of sin is the law.
(1Corinthians 15:55-56)

CHORUS

But thanks be to God, who giveth us the
victory through our Lord Jesus Christ
(1Corinthians 15:57)

CHORUS

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and
hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to
receive power, and riches, and wisdom,
and strength, and honour, and glory, and
blessing. Blessing and honour, glory and
power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the
throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and
ever. Amen.
(Revelation 5:12-14)

CHORUS
Amen



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Jane Brown
Corinna Chute
Charlotte Clark*
Hilary Colbert
Margaret Collier
Sally Dussek
Elaine Florsheim
Mary Haywood
Zoe Hill
Katie Hughes
Sue Jones
Christine Keen
Harriet Mackinder
Brigid Mathers
Heather Nash
Fiona O'Neill
Eileen Patterson
Barbara Pearce
Pam Rush
Rosemary Southworth
Brenda Stapleton
Helen Stokes
Elizabeth Thompson
Jenny Watkins
Jennie Watt
Louise Westley

* *Choral Scholar*

ALTOS

Karen Baldwin
Rachel Baldwin
Christine Bass
Janet Briant
Nicky Bull
Jean Bygate
Kathy Chantler
Rachel Cobb
Sue Collins
Kate Davies
Ann Denwood
Dorothy Denwood
Margaret Flanigan
Natasha Gething
Jane Glover
Janet Graves
Maggie Halsey
Jenny Hoare
Lorna Lang
Jane Legg
Gill Lerigo
Elizabeth Moxley
Rhian Nicholls
Elizabeth Norris
Enid Powell
Marilyn Pryor
Harriette Purchas
Phyllis Reynolds
Chris Sivers
Anne Wales
Heather Wignall
Kate Winterbottom

TENORS

Jenny Brannock-Jones
Cliff Brown
Richard Brown
John Deane
Philip Hayes
Roger Judd
Andrew Robertson
Chris Smith
Russell Smith
David Wilde

BASSES

Robert Allnutt
Alan Archer
Michael Bernstein
David Chasey
Dave Clarke
Bob Davies
Paul Doughty
Peter Graves
Richard Grylls
Geoff Harrison
David Long
Tony Mackinder
David Morgan
Richard Onslow
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Guy Williams



Chiltern Orchestral Society



Leader; Janet Hicks

Violins; Frances Bigg,
Darrell Dunning, Marion
Garrett, David Glenister, Ed
Hewitt, David Moore, Roger
Neighbour, Leslie Pearce, Mark
Redman, Chris Shelley,
Frances Stanhope

Oboe; Victoria Parkins,
Frances Slack

Bassoon; Caroline
Cartwright, Thomas, Dryer-
Beers

Violas; Roger Evans, Ceri
Fagg, Katie Hayes, John
Saunders

Trumpets; Jeremy Loukes,
Allan Robinson

Cellos; Mary Harris, Herrick
Hayes

Tympani; Richard Baron-Tait

Organ; Adrian Johnson

Bass; Sudhir Singh



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Tring Choral Society thanks the Rennie Grove Hospice
Care Shop, Tring, for support as our ticket agents.

The piano accompanist for Tring Choral Society rehearsals is Adrian
Johnson.

Our thanks go to Roy Mathers for writing and compiling this
programme.

We are grateful for the presence of St John Ambulance
representatives at this concert.

Vesperae solennes de Confessore

KV 339

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Klavierauszug von / Vocal score by Martin Focke

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