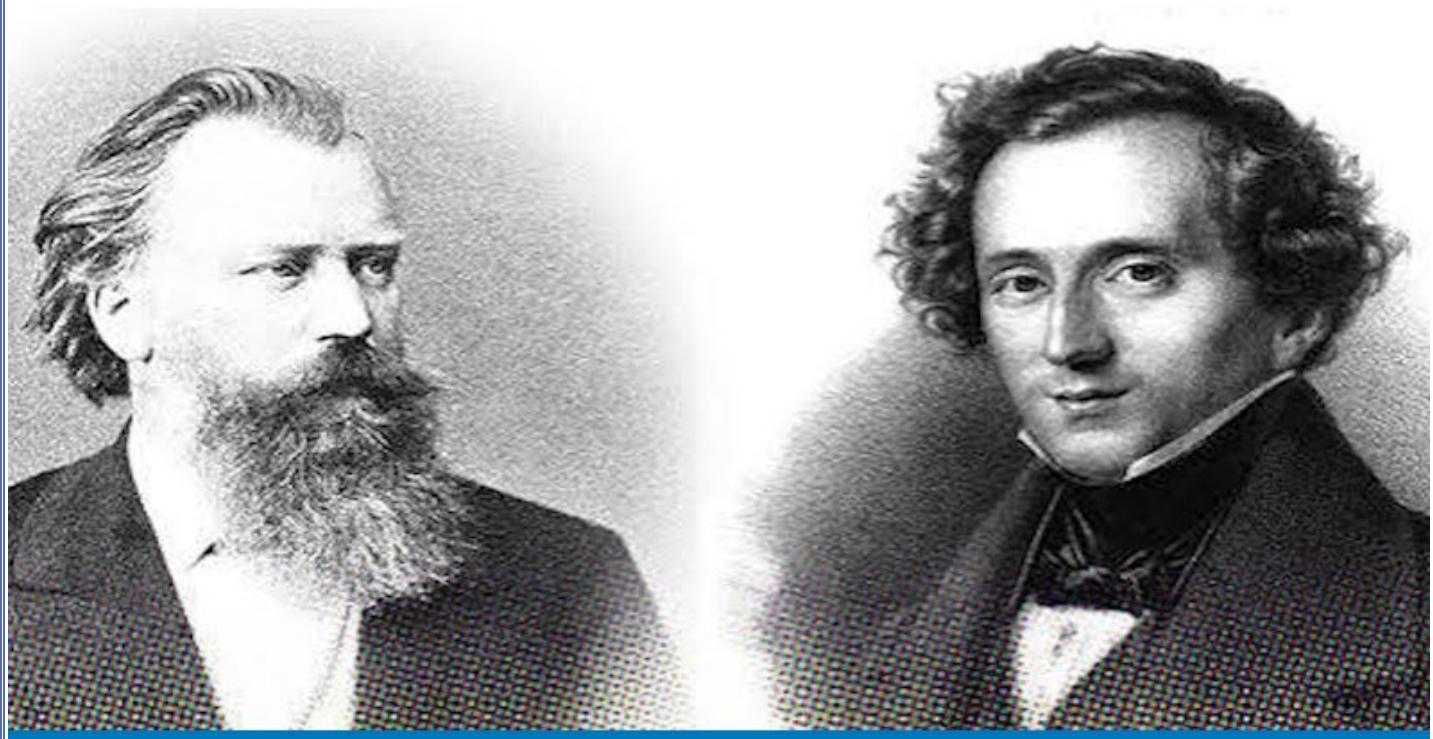
Thomas Tallis Society Choir
Directed by Eamonn Dougan

St Alfege Greenwich

BRAHMS & MENDELSSOHN

SACRED CHORAL WORKS



BACH Chorales
BEETHOVEN Piano Sonata in Ab

PIANO - Sherri Lin

Saturday 24th October, 7.30pm
St Alfege Church, Greenwich

Tonight's Programme

Chorale from Cantata BWV 93 – JS Bach

Three Psalms Op. 78 – Mendelssohn

Sonata No. 31 in Ab major, Op. 110 - Beethoven

Chorale from Motet BWV 227 – JS Bach

Two motets Op. 74 – Brahms

Chorale from Cantata BWV 180 – JS Bach

Geistliches Lied Op. 30 - Brahms

This concert has no interval. Drinks will be available in the hall after the concert. Please join us there.

24 October 2026

PROGRAMME NOTES BY DANIEL JAFFÉ

Introduction

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-47) and Johannes Brahms (1833-97) appear at first flush utterly different as composers, only partly explained by their respective temperament and initial social standing: Mendelssohn, born into a well-to-do family, was gregarious, optimistic and fundamentally positive; Brahms, brought up in a slum by a poor family, who in his youth had to earn his living by playing piano in what were in effect brothels, was rough-mannered, misanthropic and essentially pessimistic. Yet they shared a great deal of musical heritage in their allegiance both to the Classical works of Haydn and Mozart, and – most pertinently to tonight's programme – the techniques of that much revered Baroque composer JS Bach.

That said, Mendelssohn and Brahms had a quite different relationship to that great 18th-century master's work. While Mendelssohn was learning Bach's techniques at the age of ten, under the guidance of his teacher Carl Friedrich Zelter (1758–1832), writing fugues in two and three parts within his first year, Brahms – notwithstanding the once widely propagated and accepted claim that he likewise learned Bach's techniques under his composition teacher Eduard Marxsen (1806-87) – appears to have only made a serious study of Bach at the age of 21. For Brahms, unlike Mendelssohn, Bach's style was not a manifestation of a compositional technique he had naturally digested as part of his early training, but an artefact in itself. Hence his tributes to Bach's style tended to be overt and self-conscious, while in Mendelssohn's music the Thomaskantor's method was so fully absorbed into his own harmonic style that often one has to pay close attention before one might consciously notice it.

To help cast into relief the Bach-style elements of their respective works, in this concert we preface first the Mendelssohn and then each of the Brahms works with a Bach chorale: typically appearing as the final part of his choral cantatas, Bach's harmonisation of these Lutheran hymns often present their own surprises.

Chorale from Cantata BWV 93 (1724) — Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)

Composed for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity in 1724, Bach's Cantata BWV 93 – of which this chorale is the final movement – was written in his first year as Kantor of the Thomasschule in Leipzig, when he produced a phenomenal number of works including two cycles of cantatas (each comprising about 60 cantatas). Though the chorale appears relatively straightforward compared to the rest of the cantata it is taken from, in which the chorale melody is inventively woven throughout the entire work, there are several subtle harmonic twists which give expressive point to its text.

Sing, bet und geh auf Gottes Wegen,
verricht das Deine nur getreu,
und trau des Himmels reichem Segen,
so wird er bei dir werden neu;
denn welcher seine Zuversicht
auf Gott setzt, den verläßt er nicht.

Sing, pray and walk in God's own pathway,
and do your part with purpose true,
by confidence in His rich blessing,
will you, through him, be born anew;
whoso on God his faith has set
him never will his God forget.

Three Psalms Op. 78 (1844-45) — Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847)

In November 1843, Mendelssohn and his family left Leipzig – where he had had such a profound impact on the city's music, including founding the Leipzig Conservatory – for Berlin. Mendelssohn had been enticed by an invitation from King Frederick William IV of Prussia to become the capital's director of sacred music, in which position he would take a leading role in overseeing and implementing music for worship in the newly formed protestant church, created by the unification of Prussia's various Lutheran and Calvanist churches at the behest of the king's late father, Frederick William III. Mendelssohn's brief was to revive music from the past with any necessary

revision to make it suitable for use, while also writing new music as needed. The Berlin Cathedral officials, in advance, presented Mendelssohn with a list of psalms for the principal liturgical days between Advent and the first Sunday of Lent.

Three of the very best of Mendelssohn's psalm settings from that time were eventually published posthumously as *Drei Psalmen,* Op. 78 (in 1845, he also composed one of his most beloved Psalms settings, that of Psalm 55, culminating in the famous solo "O for the wings of a Dove"). Mendelssohn was then at the very height of his compositional powers – just prior to his move to Berlin, he had written his enchanting incidental music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. However, he very soon had his wings clipped by the church authorities, who disapproved of his very first offering: a magnificent setting of Psalm 2 for double choir, composed for Christmas Day 1843. Objecting to its involved and dramatic character, the clergy insisted that Mendelssohn should henceforth simplify his musical style and ensure that the texts he set sounded more clearly and intelligibly to ordinary listeners.

Mendelssohn bore those criticisms in mind when he wrote the following two settings: Psalm 43 for Passion Sunday, and particularly Psalm 22 for Good Friday. In 1845, he subsequently revised his setting of Psalm 2, toning down some of its audacious harmonies and making the text clearer with a more homophonic setting: it is this relatively tamer version which was published with the other two settings as his Op. 78.

I. Psalm 2 Warum toben die Heiden

Even in its revised and finally published version, Mendelssohn's Psalm 2 demonstrates the expressive range of an eight-part double choir. The text is familiar to English listeners from the sequence set by Handel in *Messiah* (starting from "Why do the Nations so furiously rage together?").

Opening in G minor, the two choirs, heard at first in alternation, sing a martial-style rhythm giving the music a march-like character. The male voices temporarily represent the rebellious kings who declare their intention of casting off their bonds with God, and the choirs joyously unite in expressing the Lord's derision at such presumption. The basses, themselves united, then express the wrath of the Lord with a baleful unison which menacingly hints at an augmented fourth with its insistence on the E flat against the dominant D.

Gentler music accompanies the words "Aber ich habe meinen König eingesetzt" (the whole phrase translating "Yet I have set my king upon the holy hill of Zion"). The whole choir enters in rich homophony as the Lord declares the Psalmist (and implicitly his people) to be his "son" and (here the two choirs sing antiphonally) that he will have charge of the heathen. The music becomes lively again, and harmonically more expressive, as the text describes how the heathen will be "dashed into pieces". By contrast, the choir then – in subdued unison – call upon the rebellious kings to be wise and serve the Lord with fear. The kings are invited to kiss the Son (the significance of which would not have escaped Mendelssohn as an integrated Jew) to avoid His wrath, and the music reaches a comforting cadence which strongly recalls the atmosphere of Mendelssohn's "Hear my Prayer", which he wrote not long afterwards. The final "Gloria patri" is simply yet effectively set as a four-part canon.

Warum toben die Heiden, und die Leute reden so vergeblich?
Die Könige im Lande lehnen sich auf, und die Herren ratschlagen sich mit einander wider den Herrn und seinen Gesalbten:

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying:

Laßt uns zerreißen ihre Bande, und von uns werfen ihre Seile!
Aber der im Himmel wohnet, lachet ihrer, und der Herr spottet ihrer.

Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us!
He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision.

Er wird einst mit ihnen reden in seinem Zorn, und mit seinem Grimm wird er sie schrecken. *Aber ich habe meinen König eingesetzt auf meinem heiligen Berge Zion.*	Then shall he speak to them in his wrath, and vex them sore in his displeasure. Yet I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.
Ich will von einer solchen Weise predigen, dass der Herr zu mir gesagt hat: *Du bist mein Sohn, heute hab' ich dich gezeuget; heische von mir, so will ich dir die Heiden zum Erbe geben, und der Welt Ende zum Eigenthum.*	I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me: Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee; ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
Du sollst sie mit eisernem Zepter zerschlagen, wie Töpfe sollst du sie zerbrechen. *So lasset euch nun weisen, ihr Könige, und lasset euch züchtigen, ihr Richter auf Erden.* *Dienet dem herrn mit Furcht und freuet euch mit Zittern!*	Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings, be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling!
Küsset den Sohn, dass er nicht zürne, und ihr umkommet auf dem Wege, denn sein Zorn wird bald aufbrennen. *Aber wohl allen, die auf ihn trauen.*	Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.
Ehre sei dem Vater und dem Sohne, und dem heiligen Geiste. *Wie es war von Anfang, jetzt und immerdar und von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. Amen.*	Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

II. Psalm 43 Richte mich, Gott

In the first two months of 1844, Mendelssohn composed the introits for the services of Passion Sunday and Good Friday – respectively Psalms 43 and 22. In both these works, Mendelssohn followed the monarch's stated preference for a cappella responsorial psalmody, in both cases having male voices singing followed by a choral response.

Psalm 43 opens with unison male voices singing a timeless-sounding modal theme (D aeolian), contrasted with sopranos and altos singing in anxious-sounding harmony. Then, at the words "Sende dein Licht", the ensemble blossoms into a warm F major that appears to look forward to the ecstatic climax of Bruckner's *Ave Maria* (in the same key) of 1861. With "Daß ich hineingehe zum Altar", the male voices are again contrasted with upper voices, though the former's tonality is now sweetened and made to sound more "expressive" by an implied modulation to F major. Again, Mendelssohn offers a delightful harmonic twist when the full choir is heard on the word "Harfe" ("harp").

Then immediately follows a self-quotation – rare in Mendelssohn's music – at the words "Was betrübst du dich, meine Seele": this is from Mendelssohn's earlier 1837 setting of Psalm 42 (for choir, soloists and orchestra), the text of which has been conjectured to be the first half of a single text – of which Psalm 43 is the continuation – hence, perhaps, the quotation within this Passion Sunday introit.

Richte mich, Gott, und führe meine Sache wider das unheilige Volk, und errette mich von den falschen und bösen Leuten. *Denn du bist der Gott, du bist der Gott meiner Stärke; warum verstössest du mich?* *Warum lässest du mich so traurig geh'n, wenn mein Feind mich drängt?*	Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation, O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man. For thou art the God of my strength; why dost thou cast me off? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

Sende dein Licht und deine Wahrheit, dass sie mich leiten zu deinem heiligen Berge, und zu deiner Wohnung.
Dass ich hinein gehe zum Altar Gottes, zu dem Gott, der meine Freude und Wonne ist, und dir, Gott, auf der Harfe danke, mein Gott.
Was betrübst du dich, meine Seele, und bist so unruhig in mir?
Harre auf Gott! denn ich werde ihm noch danken, dass er meines Angesichts Hülfe, und mein Gott ist.

O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.
Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God.
Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope in God! for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

III. Psalm 22 Mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen

Psalm 22 opens with the words allegedly spoken by Christ on the cross, and so has been closely associated by the Christian church with Good Friday. Here Mendelssohn initially contrasts a solo tenor (sung tonight by all the tenors) with full choir, initially in four-part chorale-style harmony but later expanding to seven parts while the tenor 'solo' meanwhile is joined by a second tenor then by two bass voices. All this makes the return to a single tenor voice all the more striking, suggesting the loneliness of the psalmist (or of Our Lord, as Christians would perceive it). The response from the choir, this time representing the mocking masses, is more vigorous.

Then, after an anguished description of physical pain matched with chromatic lines, harmonic relief arrives with the words "Aber du, Herr, sei nicht ferne", sung above a warm E major chord. In a livelier tempo, the chorus joyfully urge that the seed of Jacob and of Israel should praise the Lord as He has not forsaken his people. In the final exchanges between 'solo' voices and choir, it is affirmed that the meek shall eat and be satisfied, and that the Lord rules over all nations.

Mein Gott, mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen? Ich heule, aber meine Hülfe ist fern.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

Mein Gott, des Tages rufe ich, so antwortest du nicht; und des Nachts schweige ich auch nicht.
Aber du bist heilig, der du wohnest unter dem Lobe Israels.
Unsre Väter hofften auf dich, und da sie hofften, halfest du ihnen aus.
Zu dir schrieen sie, und wurden errettet, sie hofften auf dich, und wurden nicht zu Schanden.
Ich aber bin ein Wurm, und kein Mensch, ein Spott der Leute, und Verachtung des Volks.
Alle, die mich sehen, spotten meiner, sperren das Maul auf, und schütteln den Kopf:
Er klage es dem Herrn, der helfe ihm aus, und errette ihn, hat er Lust zu ihm.
Ich bin augeschüttet wie Wasser, alle meine Gebeine haben sich getrennt.
Mein Herz ist in meinem Leibe wie zerschmolzenes Wachs.
Meine Kräfte sind vertrocknet wie eine Scherbe, und meine Zunge klebt am Gaumen, und du legst mich in des Todes Staub.

O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.
But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.
Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.
They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.
But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.
All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying:
He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.
I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.
My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.
My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

Denn Hunde haben mich umgeben, und der Bösen Rotte hat sich um mich gemacht; Sie haben meine Hände und Füsse durchgraben.
Sie teilen meine Kleider unter sich, und werfen das Loos um meine Gewand.
Aber du, Herr, sei nicht ferne.
Meine Stärke, eile mir zu helfen.
Errette meine Seele vom Schwert, meine Einsame von den Hunden.

For dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet.
They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.
But be not thou far from me, O Lord.
O my strength, haste thee to help me.
Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling from the power of the dog.

Hilf mir aus dem Rachen der Löwen, und errette mich von den Einhörnern.
Ich will deinen Namen predigen meinen Brüdern, ich will dich in der Gemeinde rühmen.
Rühmet den Herrn, die ihr ihn fürchtet!
Es ehre ihn in aller Same Jacobs, und vor him scheue sich aller Same Israels,
denn er hat nicht verachtet noch verschmäht das Elend des Armen, und sein Antlitz nicht vor ihm verborgen, und da er zu ihm schrie, hörte er es.
Dich will ich preisen in der grossen Gemeinde; ich will meine Gelübde bezahlen vor denen, die ihn furchten.
Die Elenden sollen essen, dass sie satt werden;
und die nach dem Herrn fragen, werden ihn preisen;
Euer herz soll ewiglich leben.
Es werde gedacht aller Welt Ende, dass sie sich zum Herrn bekehren, und vor ihm anbeten alle Geschlechter der Heiden.
Denn der Herr hat ein Reich, und er herrscht unter den Heiden.

Save me from the lion's mouth, for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorn.
I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.
Ye that fear the Lord, praise him!
All ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him, and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.
For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.
My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation; I will pay my vows before them that fear him.
The meek shall eat and be satisfied;
they shall praise the Lord that seek him;
Your heart shall live for ever.
All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.
For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations.

Piano Sonata No. 31 in Ab major, Op. 110 (1821-22) — Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

Beethoven was in the middle of several large-scale projects, including the *Missa solemnis* and his Symphony No. 9, when in 1820 he embarked on a final trilogy of piano sonatas of contrasting character. His Piano Sonata in A flat major, Op. 110, was begun some time after he had completed the first of these – his Sonata in E major – being forced to take a break by various maladies including rheumatic attacks and a bout of jaundice. Although the complete autograph score is dated 25 December 1821, Beethoven continued to revise the final movement, not completing this until early 1822.

Like Op. 109, the A flat Sonata begins with a lyrical movement, followed by a brief scherzo in F minor, the latter rather more demanding than its predecessor's with its syncopations, leaping handwork and hand crossings. This leads straight into the finale, which opens with a mysterious and somewhat ominous arioso, followed by a serene, Bach-like fugue. The arioso returns, reintroducing a melancholy quality to the movement before chiming chords reintroduce the fugue, bringing the work to a triumphant and decisive end.

Chorale from Motet BWV 227 Jesu, meine Freude — Johann Sebastian Bach

This chorale setting is taken from the start of Bach's motet of the same name, thought to have been composed very soon after he had taken the post of Kantor of the Thomasschule in 1723.

Jesu, meine Freude, meines Herzens Weide,
Jesu, meine Zier!
Ach wie lang, ach lange ist dem Herzen bange
und verlangt nach dir!
Gottes Lamm, mein Bräutigam,
außer dir soll mir auf Erden nichts sonst Liebers werden.

Jesus, my joy, my heart's pasture,
Jesus, my treasure!
Ah how long, how long has this anxious heart suffered
and longed for you!
Lamb of God, my bridegroom,
besides you on earth nothing shall be dearer to me.

Two Motets Op. 74 (pub. 1878) — Johannes Brahms (1833 - 1897)

I. Warum ist das Licht gegeben dem Mühseligen? (1877)

Brahms composed this motet in the summer of 1877, while on holiday in the Austrian town of Pörtschach am Wörthersee. He was particularly proud of this work, both for its grave character and for the text he himself had compiled from biblical sources. He had, in fact, reworked a quantity of the music from an earlier work, his so-called *Missa Canonica*, which he had partly composed in 1856 (the Credo of which was subsequently lost; the work possibly never had a completed Kyrie and Gloria). Brahms had been unhappy with this mass, and no doubt was delighted to finally find a satisfactory context for some of its best music.

Remarkably, the motet was composed almost simultaneously with what is widely regarded as the sunniest of Brahms's symphonies, No. 2 in D major. Yet, to Brahms's delight, one of the symphony's earliest conductors, Vincenz Lachner, commented on the dark shadows cast by trombones and timpani in its first movement. Brahms explained: "I am…a severely melancholic person, that black wings are constantly flapping above us, and that in my output – perhaps not entirely by chance – that symphony is followed by a little essay about the great 'Why'. It casts the necessary shadow on the serene symphony and perhaps accounts for those timpani and trombones…"

The motet begins with a potently expressive pair of cadences, setting the question "Warum?" ("Why?"). A fugue immediately starts, setting words from the Book of Job, whose chromaticism eloquently expresses the dignified despair of that character and – by extension – Brahms himself. At the end of this opening sentence, and then the next (which starts on a new fugal subject), the existential question is repeated. Then follows a brighter-toned setting in F major of a verse from Lamentations of Jeremiah, calling us to raise our hands and hearts to God. The next section (starting "Siehe, wir preisen selig") has something of the same consoling quality of "Selig sind die Toten" in Brahms's German Requiem (completed some nine years earlier). Finally, Brahms closes with a Bach-style chorale setting of the Nunc dimittis, in Luther's metrical translation.

Warum ist das Licht gegeben dem Mühseligen,
und das Leben den betrübten Herzen? Warum?
Die des Todes warten und kommt nicht,
und grüben ihn wohl aus dem verborgenen;
Die sich fast freuen und sind fröhlich,
daß sie das Grab bekommen. Warum?
Und dem Manne des Weg verborgen ist,
und Gott vor ihm denselben bedecket?

Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery,
and life unto the bitter in soul? Why?
Which long for death, but it cometh not;
and dig for it more than for hid treasures;
which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad,
when they can find the grave. Why?
Why is light given to a man whose way is hid,
and whom God hath hedged in?

Lasset uns unser Herz samt den Händen aufheben zu Gott im Himmel.

Let us lift up our heart with our hands
unto God in the heavens.

Siehe, wir preisen selig, die erduldet haben.
Die Geduld Hiob habt ihr gehöret,
und das Ende des Herrn habt ihr gesehen;
denn der Herr ist barmherzig und ein Erbarmer.

Behold, we count them happy which endure.
Ye have heard of the patience of Job,
and have seen the end of the Lord;
that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin, in Gottes Willen,
getrost ist mir mein Herz und Sinn, sanft und stille.
Wie Gott mir verheißen hat, der Tod ist mir Schlaf worden.

In peace and joy I take my leave, for God's sake.
Faithful am I, in heart and mind; calm and at peace.
For God has promised me, that death will become sleep.

II. O Heiland, reiß die Himmel auf (c.1863)

Though published as the second of Brahms's Op. 74 motets, this was in fact composed some years earlier, possibly as early as 1863 and no later than 1870. Based on an Old German chorale tune, it demonstrates the contrapuntal techniques which Brahms had assiduously studied from late 1854. Of all the works in this evening's programme, this motet comes closest to Bach in its use of poignant and chromatic harmonies rather more stark than the more beguiling Romantic style typical of Brahms and his contemporaries.

The motet is divided into five verses, each effectively a variation on the chorale. In verses 1-4, Brahms uses the chorale melody as a cantus firmus – sung in its true form by one part – while other voice parts surround it with derived canons or freer imitation. Verse 4 is relatively slow, and gives the first real instance of poignant Bach-style chromaticism at the words "vor Augen steht der bittre Tod" ("A bitter death lies before us"). Verse 5 presents a mirror-canon between soprano and bass voices, while all the voices are presenting a variation on the original tune. This ends with a florid "Amen" where we hear sopranos followed by altos singing one theme, then tenors followed by basses singing that theme in inversion. In all, it is a consummate and impressive demonstration of Brahms's contrapuntal technique.

O Heiland, reiß die Himmel auf,
herab, herauf vom Himmel lauf,
reiß ab vom Himmel Tor und Tür,
Reiß ab, was Schloß und Riegel für.

O Redeemer, rend the Heavens,
come down from Heaven above,
tear down the gates and doors of Heaven,
Release all that is under lock and key.

O Gott, ein Tau vom Himmel gieß;
im Tau herab o Heiland, fließ,
ihr Wolken brecht und regnet aus
den König über Jakobs Haus.

O God, cast down a dew from Heaven;
flow down to us redeemer in the dew,
break your clouds and let it rain
over the king of Jacob's house.

O Erd schlag aus, schlag aus, o Erd,
Daß Berg und Tal grün alles werd,
O Erd herfür dies Blümlein bring,
O Heiland aus der Erden spring.

O flourish Earth, flourish O earth,
so that mountains and valleys will always be green,
O earth, bring forth the tiny flowers,
O Redeemer, from the earth.

Hie leiden wir die größte Not,
vor Augen steht der bittre Tod;
ach komm, führ uns mit starker Hand
von Elend zu dem Vaterland.

We now have our greatest need;
a bitter death lies before us;
Ah, come lead us with your powerful hand
from our misery unto our Father's land.

Da wollen wir all danken dir,
unserm Erlöser für und für,
da wollen wir all loben dich,
je allzeit immer und ewiglich. Amen.

So we all wish to thank you,
our Saviour, through and through;
we all wish to praise you
now and eternally. Amen.

Chorale from Cantata BWV 180 (1724) — Johann Sebastian Bach

"Jesu, wahres Brot des Lebens" is the closing chorale of Bach's Cantata *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele*, composed in 1724, based on a hymn with text by Johann Franck and melody by Johann Crüger.

Jesu, wahres Brot des Lebens,
hilf daß ich doch nicht vergebens
oder mir vielleicht zum Schaden
sei zu deinem Tisch geladen.
Laß mich durch dies Seelenessen
deine Liebe recht ermessen,
daß ich auch, wie jetzt auf Erden,
mög' dein Gast im Himmel werden!

Jesus, true bread of life,
help me so that not in vain
or perhaps to my loss
I may be invited to your table.
Grant that I may, through this food for my soul,
measure out rightly your love,
so that I also, as here on earth,
become a guest in heaven.

Geistliches Lied Op. 30 (1856) — Johannes Brahms

This beautiful early choral work was composed in Hamburg in April 1856. It was probably no coincidence that this followed Brahms's period of intensive study of Bach-style technique, which had resulted in his composition of several Bach-inspired works including dance movements written over the previous two years. While the harmonies in Geistliches Lied are generally too Romantically beguiling to pass for Bach, it demonstrates Brahms's mastery of some of the Thomaskantor's contrapuntal techniques. Indeed, Brahms specifically and proudly indicated on his manuscript's subtitle that this is a "Double Canon at the Ninth": the tenors and basses imitate the sopranos (who first enter delectably on a suspended supertonic) and altos. The piano provides a tranquil introduction and interludes, and the choir ends with a glowing "Amen".

Laß dich nur nichts nicht dauren mit Trauren,
sei stille, wie Gott es fügt,
so sei vergnügt mein Wille!
Was willst du heute sorgen auf morgen?
Der Eine steht allem für,
der gibt auch dir das Deine.

Do not be sorrowful or regretful;
Be calm, as God has ordained,
and thus my will shall be content!
What do you want to worry about from day to day?
There is One who stands above all
who gives you, too, what is yours.

Sei nur in allem Handel ohn Wandel,
steh feste, was Gott beschleußt,
das ist und heißt das Beste.
Amen.

Only be steadfast in all you do,
stand firm; what God has decided,
that is and must be the best.
Amen.

EAMONN DOUGAN



Eamonn Dougan is an inspirational communicator with a wide-ranging repertoire and is a renowned vocal coach and baritone. Eamonn is Associate Conductor of The Sixteen, founding Director of Britten Sinfonia Voices, Musical Director of the Thomas Tallis Society, and Chief Conductor for Jersey Chamber Orchestra.

Alongside Eamonn's regular conducting, recent projects include conducting BBC Scottish Symphony for the Scottish Premiere of Taylor Scott Davis '*Magnificat* at the Cumnock Tryst Festival; directing Chamber Choir Ireland alongside leadership of its CCI Studio training programme; a return tour with Ars Nova Copenhagen; and a third recording in his Morales series with De Profundis on CORO. Eamonn programmed and directed The Song Company for its May/June '25 Australian tour, *'another very imaginative program… the brainchild of visiting Program Director Eamonn Dougan... performed to great emotional effect, and executed brilliantly*' and returned to the Royal Festival Hall in December to conduct the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Philharmonia Chorus in Handel *Messiah*.

Eamonn is consultant coach for the Royal Academy of Music and a Visiting Professor to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, where he teaches ensemble singing and directs the Guildhall Consort. As Associate Director of The Sixteen, Eamonn also leads the Genesis Sixteen courses as tutor and mentor. Eamonn Dougan is managed worldwide by Percius.

SHERRI LIN - PIANO



A Steinway Young Artist, Sherri Lun was named '2020 Performing Artist of the Year' by the South China Morning Post and has garnered acclaim for her "pinpoint clarity and convincing bravura" (Chicago Tribune). Born in Hong Kong and currently based in London, Sherri has swiftly established herself as a rising soloist on the international stage.

A 2025/26 Kirckman Artist, Sherri is also supported by the Keyboard Charitable Trust, Lang Lang International Music Foundation, and KNS Classical, with whom she released her debut CD in 2023. She made her concerto debut at the Ravinia Festival at the age of ten with the Midwest Young Artists and has since performed extensively across Europe, Asia, and the United States. Her engagements have included appearances at major venues such as Wigmore Hall in London, Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris, and Millennium Park in Chicago.

The 2026 season features solo debuts at Bridgewater Hall, Wigmore Hall, Kings Place, and the Brighton Festival, alongside concerto appearances in the UK and Italy. Recent engagements have included the Hammerklavier International Piano Series in Barcelona and Girona, Festival Musicale delle Nazioni in Rome, and appearances at Steinway Halls in London and Vienna, as well as recital tours across Italy and Malaysia. She has collaborated with ensembles including the Salzburg Chamber Soloists, Munich Chamber Orchestra, Cologne Chamber Orchestra, and Hong Kong Youth Orchestra. Her performances have also been broadcast by Radio Television Hong Kong and BBC Radio 3. In 2025, she was invited to join the Lieven Piano Foundation, and in 2026 was selected as a scholar of the Imogen Cooper Music Trust.

Sherri's recent international distinctions include the Special Prize from the Mozart Society Munich at the 74th ARD International Music Competition and Second Prize together with two additional prizes at the 2026 Friuli Venezia Giulia International Piano Competition. She captured both First and Audience Prizes at the 2024 Birmingham International Piano Competition and was named a 2025 Royal Over-Seas League award winner, following top prizes at the Robert Schumann Competition (Düsseldorf), Zhuhai Mozart Competition, Hong Kong Generation Next Arts Competition, and Steinway & Sons Youth Piano Competition. At the Royal Academy, she won the Sterndale Bennett, Chung Nung Lee, and Harold Craxton Prizes in consecutive years.

Born in 2003, Sherri studied piano and viola as a junior student of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. She subsequently studied with Professor Christopher Elton at the Royal Academy of Music, graduating with first-class honours and supported by the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme. She is currently pursuing her Masters' as a Leverhulme Scholar, with additional scholarships from the Craxton Memorial Trust, Help Musicians UK Rupert Heggs Award, and the Countess of Munster Musical Trust.

THOMAS TALLIS SOCIETY CHOIR

With around 60 auditioned voices TTS presents four or five concerts a year in the beautiful setting of St Alfege Church. Although many of the choir members live locally in Greenwich, TTS attracts musicians from all over London owing to the high standards it maintains. All singers are required to have very good sight-reading abilities as the choir works on a few concentrated rehearsals before each concert.

We are always keen to recruit new voices. If you are interested, please contact our membership secretary Kathryn Strachan strac157@ntlworld.com.

Sopranos Phoebe Clapham, Alana Clark, Alice Giles, Jan Hart, Claire Jones, Chloe Lam, Caroline Molloy, Rosemary Naylor, Naomi Quant, Kathryn Strachan, Anne Whyte, **Emma Wilkins**

Altos Christine Balls, Tom Bridges, Joanna Clark, Sian Evans, Moira Fitzgerald, Sally Hughes, Emma Humphries, Emily John, Sonia Johnson, Sophy Miles, Caitriona Sheil, Alice Shelton

Tenors Antonio Antonucci, David Cresswell, Justin Eeles, Andrew Green, Larry Howes, Adam Oliver

Basses Dermot Agnew, Rob Barker, Richard Brooks, Cyril Cleary, Quentin Evans, David Houghton, Daniel Jaffé, Jonathan Louth, George Oakenfold, Tom Perry, Nigel Press, Marcus White, Mike Whittaker, Geoff Woodhouse

Bold denotes Choral Ambassadors.

You can follow us on:

@TTSoc ThomasTallisSociety thomastallissociety

And look out for updates on our website www.thomas-tallis-society.org.uk.

NEXT SEASON'S DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Saturday 5 December 2026 – Sing we with angels – Christmas music for harp and choir

Saturday 6 March 2027 – The Phoenix of France – Marc-Antoine Charpentier

Saturday 26 June 2027 – Great Mass in C minor - Mozart



FRIENDS AND PATRONS

We are very grateful to our faithful group of Patrons and Friends that have been loyally supporting us for a number of years. Their generosity and support have really helped the Society to keep going. A reliable yearly income is a huge benefit in planning programmes and means we can budget more accurately.

We are very keen to increase the number of Patrons and Friends to help us go forward in a sustainable manner and we would love your support as either a Patron or Friend.

A Friend contributes £30 per year and this special relationship with the choir is recognised by:

- A newsletter with early notification of concerts
- An invitation to the annual Friends and Patrons party
- Recognition of support in TTS programmes.

As a Patron of the Society you receive additional benefits in recognition of an annual donation of £180:

- A complimentary top price ticket to all concerts
- Free concert programmes
- Separate interval or pre-concert complimentary drinks table
- Acknowledgment of support of the Society in the programme
- An invitation to the annual Friends and Patrons party.

Please consider whether you could support TTS by becoming a Patron or a Friend of the Society. Speak to Carole tonight or contact her at carolelowe@rocketmail.com.

We would like to recognise the important contribution of the following TTS Patrons:

Mrs Daphne Barnett
Mrs Caroline Bent
Ms Jackie Breadmore
Ms Mary Bright
Ms Rosemary Burch
Ms Jill Champion
Mrs Jenny Clark
Mr John Clark
Mrs Caroline Cooper
Mr Philip Cooper
Mrs Ann Dannatt
Dr Susan Doering
Prof Nigel Duncan
Mrs Deirdre Ellis
Mr Michael Ellis
Ms Amanda Finlay
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Mr Richard Williams
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Mr Richard Haydon
Mrs Linda Haydon
Mr Robert James
Mrs Carol Price
Mr Roger Price
Mr Malcolm Reid
Mr Paul Renney
Mr and Mrs P Sankey-Barker
Mr and Mrs A Seymour

With thanks to the Churchwardens of St Alfege for their continued support.