

THE CRUCIFIXION

by **J. Stainer**

presented by
**Cantores
Oecumenica**

Palm Sunday

13th April 2014

Holy Angels, Halebarns

Tenor : **Richard Pollock**
Baritone : **Oliver Dunn**
Guest Organist : **Derrick Cantrell**
Conductor : **Neil Provost**

Choir

Sopranos

Jean Brookes

Sue Brown

Marie Dixon

Sheila Duckham

Margaret Dyson

Madeleine Hamilton-Wryne

Rhiannon Healey-Provost

Caroline McEwan

Suzanne McEwan

Carole McNab

Lorna Marsland

Frances Provost

Chay Rowe

Kath Whyte

Clare Wilkinson

Altos

Adrienne Davis

Sally Peterken

Hazel Pryor

Adrienne Thompson

Tenors

Tony Campion

Steve Crowther

Alan Johnson

David Swindlehurst

Ted Thompson

Bass

Michael Brown

Roy Jervis

Keith Lewis

Ian Provost

Michael Cummins

The Work

Born in London in 1840, John Stainer lost an eye in a childhood accident. This did not deter him from becoming a leading organist of his age and a musical educator at the University of Oxford. For years he served at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, first as a chorister and then as organist. Contemporaries said he raised the Cathedral's standard of music to new heights of excellence, not least by enlarging the choir staff. In addition to his famous oratorio, he wrote over 230 services for St. Paul's Cathedral as well as other oratorios, anthems, hymns and cantatas. According to musicologist Sir George Grove, "amongst his most successful and artistic pieces of church music must be named the well-known 'Sevenfold Amen'."

When Stainer conceived the novel idea of writing a work for 'Passion Week' that was well within the amateur capabilities of a typical small town or village choir he could never have dreamt that *The Crucifixion* would become one of the most popular devotional choral works in the history of Anglican choral music. Although conceived on a different level, *The Crucifixion* became as admired as Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *St. Paul and Elijah*. Stainer, who was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1888, is remembered as a very great Victorian.

The Crucifixion is in fact a 'Meditation' on the Sacred Passion of the Holy Redeemer. It is scored for tenor and bass solo, SATB choir and organ. The work is interspersed with hymns for the congregation to sing. *The Crucifixion* was composed in 1887 for the use of Stainer's friend and pupil William Hodge, who was assistant sub-organist at St. Paul's Cathedral and organist at the St Marylebone Parish Church, in London. There a performance of the work has been given every Good Friday since its first hearing in 1887. The text to *The Crucifixion* was selected and written by Reverend J. Sparrow-Simpson, whose father was a colleague of Stainer as Succentor and Librarian at St. Paul's. The text has often been criticised as being rather awkward and amateurish containing a surfeit of Victorian piety. However, the librettist expressed himself in the liturgical language of the day. It may have been better if the libretto had been fashioned from the words of scripture, as for example, Elgar did in *Apostles and Kingdom*. Perhaps it is not without significance that perhaps the most enduring part of the work, 'God so loved the world' sets words directly taken from St. John's Gospel.

Even with all its faults and the considerable criticism over the years this has not prevented *The Crucifixion* securing a permanent position in the English sacred choral repertoire with its own unique following.

Richard Pollock was awarded a distinction in Vocal Performance and Opera from the Royal Northern College of Music, as a pupil of Mr Patrick McGuigan and Sir Peter Moores Foundation scholar. By that time he had also graduated in law and begun his teaching career.

Richard started singing as a church chorister in Sutton Coldfield, and went on to develop a successful sacred concert solo repertoire, performing in cathedrals and concert halls across the country. Such works include Bach *St John* and *St Matthew Passions* and *Christmas Oratorio* as the Evangelist, Beethoven 'Choral' Symphony, Britten *Saint Nicolas*, Elgar *The Kingdom*, Handel *Messiah* and the title roles *Judas Maccabeus*, *Samson*, and *Acis and Galatea*, Puccini *Messa di Gloria*, Dvorak *Stabat Mater*, Mozart *Requiem*, *Solemn Vespers* and *Coronation Mass*, Haydn *Creation*, Mendelssohn *Elijah* and *Symphony No 2*, Orff *Carmina Burana*, Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle*, and Bizet *Te Deum*. He was a guest artist for the Prom Praise celebrations at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester and also performed the world premiere of Rawsthorne's *Kubla Kahn* there.

In recital, Richard was the winner of the RNCM Cronshaw/Frost Song Cycle competition with Britten's *Winter Words*. Despite no longer singing opera, he still enjoys the occasional gala, both home and abroad.

He and his wife live in Cheshire, where both sons use their father's musical scores to build dens. Richard currently teaches at St Mary's CE School in Davyhulme, and somehow still finds time to go sailing, cook, watch rugby and walk his two dogs.

Oliver Dunn, baritone, is a Kentish man and in 2010 graduated with distinction and a Dip RAM from the Opera Course at the Royal Academy of Music, where he studied with Mark Wildman and Iain Ledingham. On entry to the Academy Oliver was awarded the Norman McCann Scholarship, for which he is extremely grateful. Previously to this he completed a degree and two Post Graduate years of study at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester under the tutelage of Robert Alderson.

In 2011 he was one of twelve trainees studying at the National Opera Studio in London. Oliver's NOS studies were supported by a Lionel Anthony Scholarship, the Robert Vivian Memorial Scholarship and the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys for which he is very grateful.

Awards include the 2011 Glyndebourne Donald A Anderson Prize, an Independent Opera Scholarship, and numerous awards at the RAM and the RNCM. On the concert platform he has appeared extensively across Britain with a variety of orchestras and ensembles. Oratorio performances include Mozart's *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore*, Bach *St Matthew Passion* (Christus) and *St John Passion* (Christus and Pilate), and Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man*, conducted by the composer. Oliver also performed concert excerpts of Disney's *The Jungle Book* and *The Lion King* at the Bridgewater Hall playing the roles of Baloo and Scar.

Derrick Cantrell received his first music lessons from his father, a professional musician in Sheffield. He passed ARCO with the Sawyer Prize whilst still at school and won a Holroyd Music Scholarship to Keble College, Oxford. During his years at Oxford he was organ scholar at New College and passed FRCO with the Limpus Prize.

His first organ appointment was at the Church of the Holy Rude, Stirling which he combined with a lectureship at Glasgow University and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music. His first cathedral appointment was at Chelmsford with teaching at the Royal College of Music. He followed Allan Wicks at Manchester Cathedral with teaching at Chetham's School of Music and the Royal Manchester College of Music. He left the cathedral to take on a Senior Lectureship at the then newly formed Royal Northern College of Music.

Neil Provost was involved in music through the amateur theatre at an early age, first performing on stage at the age of seven in a world premier called The Royal Rose. Starting piano lessons by age nine he progressed to the organ by age fourteen receiving lessons from Derrick Cantrell. He took his first parish post at St Mark's, Dunham just before his sixteenth birthday. Singing in the school choir at St Ambrose College, Halebarns he took a strong interest in choral conducting and under the informal tutelage of John Chadwick and Michael English, who was also later on his organ tutor, he has developed his own unique style and methods in choral training and conducting.

He moved to the parish of St John the Divine, Brooklands in 1990 as Director of Music, training and directing a mixed choir ranging in age from seven to seventy years old. Whilst there he helped two choristers gain places in Manchester Cathedral choir and brought the choir up to sufficient standard to be invited to sing in Manchester Cathedral for Choral Evensong.

Ten years later he moved to Christchurch, Timperley where he has forged a musical link between Holy Angels Choir and Christchurch Choir. Seven years ago the first of many successful Palm Sunday presentations began with Stainer's Crucifixion, followed by Olivet to Calvary and Faure's Requiem. In 2011, although he was unable to attend due to ill health, the combined choirs now supplemented further by guest singers performed a presentation of music for Lent and Easter followed by Charles Wood's St Matthew Passion in 2012. Last year brought the world premier performance of Robert Steadman's 'Requiem' which received much acclaim. The combined choirs have also sung together for many years at Christchurch for the Christmas Nine Lessons and Carols service.

Cantores Oecumenica is a cementing of this musical collaboration.

Movements

And They Came to a Place Named Gethsemane (tenor recitative)

The Agony (tenor and bass with chorus)

Processional to Calvary (organ solo, tenor and chorus)

And When They Were Come (bass recitative)

The Mystery of the Divine Humiliation (hymn)

He Made Himself of No Reputation (bass recitative)

The Majesty of the Divine Humiliation (tenor aria)

And As Moses Lifted Up the Serpent (bass recitative)

God So Loved the World (chorus)

Litany of the Passion (hymn)

Jesus Said, 'Father, Forgive Them' (tenor and chorus)

So Thou Lifest Thy Divine Petition (tenor and bass duet)

The Mystery of the Intercession (hymn)

And One of the Malefactors (bass recitative and chorus)

The Adoration of the Crucified (hymn)

When Jesus Therefore Saw His Mother (tenor recitative and chorus)

Is It Nothing to You? (bass recitative)

The Appeal of the Crucified (chorus)

After This, Jesus Knowing That All Things Were Now Accomplished
(tenor recitative. and chorus)

For the Love of Jesus (hymn)

The hymns were written for congregation and chorus. The words of these are printed on the following pages should you wish to sing.

RECITATIVE

(Tenor)
And they came to a place named Gethsemane:
and Jesus saith to His disciples,
Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

THE AGONY

(Bass)
Could ye not watch with me one brief hour?
Could ye not pity my sorest need?
Ah! if ye sleep while the tempests lower,
Surely, my friends, I am lone indeed!

(Chorus)
Jesu, Lord Jesu, bowed in bitter anguish,
And bearing all the evil we have done,
Oh, teach us, teach us how to love Thee for Thy
love; Help us to pray, and watch, and mourn
with Thee.

(Bass)
Could ye not watch with me one brief hour?
Did ye not say upon Kedron's slope,
Ye would not fall into the Tempter's power?
Did ye not murmur great worlds of hope?

(Chorus)
Jesu, Lord Jesu, bowed in bitter anguish,
And bearing all the evil we have done,
Oh, teach us, teach us how to love Thee for Thy
love; Help us to pray, and watch, and mourn
with Thee.

(Bass)
Could ye not watch with me? even so:
Willing in heart, but the flesh is vain.
Back to mine agony I must go,
Lonely to pray in bitterest pain.

(Recitative, Tenor and Bass)
And they laid their hands on Him, and took Him,
and led Him away to the high priest. And the
high priest asked Him, and said unto Him,
"Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"
Jesus said,
"I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on
the right hand of power, and coming in the
clouds of heaven."
Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith,
"What need we any further witnesses? Ye have
heard the blasphemy."
And they all condemned Him to be guilty of
death.
And they bound Jesus, and carried Him away,
and delivered Him to Pilate.
And Pilate, willing to content the people,
released Barabbas unto them, and delivered
Jesus, when he had scourged Him, to be
crucified.
And the soldiers led him away.

PROCESSIONAL TO CALVARY

(Chorus)
Fling wide the gates, for the Saviour waits
To tread in His royal way;
He has come from above, in His power and love,
To die on the Passion Day.

His Cross is the sign of a love divine,
His Crown is the thorn-wreath of woe,
He bears His load on the sorrowful road,
And bends 'neath the burden low.

(Tenor)
How sweet is the grace of His sacred face,
And lovely beyond compare,
Though weary and worn with the merciless scorn
Of a world He has come to spare.

The burden of wrong that earth bears along,
Past evil, and evil to be, -
All sins of man since the world began,
They are laid, dear Lord, on Thee.

(Chorus)
Then on to the end, my God and my Friend,
With Thy banner lifted high!
Thou art come from above in Thy power and
love,
To endure and suffer and die.

RECITATIVE

(Bass)
And when they were come to the place called
Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the
malefactors, one on the right, and the other on
the left.

HYMN - The Mystery of the Divine Humiliation

(Ladies)
Cross of Jesus, Cross of Sorrow,
Where the blood of Christ was shed,
Perfect man on thee was tortured,
Perfect God on thee has bled.

(All)
Here the King of all the ages,
Throned in light ere worlds could be,
Robed in mortal flesh is dying,
Crucified by sin for me.

(Ladies)
O mysterious condescending!
O abandonment sublime!
Very God Himself is bearing
All the sufferings of time!

(All)
Evermore for human failure
By His Passion we can plead;
God has borne all mortal anguish,
Surely He will know our need.

(All)
This – all human thought surpassing –
This is earth's most awful hour,
God has taken mortal weakness!
God has laid aside His Power!

(Men)
Once the Lord of brilliant seraphs,
Winged with Love to do His Will,
Now the scorn of all His creatures,
And the aim of every ill.

(Ladies)
Up in Heaven, sublimest glory
Circled round Him from the first;
But the earth finds none to serve Him,
None to quench His raging thirst.

(All)
Who shall fathom that descending?
From the rainbow-circled throne,
Down to earth's most base profaning,
Dying desolate alone.

(Men)
From the "Holy, Holy, Holy,
We adore Thee, O most High,"
Down to earth's blaspheming voices
And the shout of "Crucify!"

(All)
Cross of Jesus, Cross of Sorrow,
Where the blood of Christ was shed,
Perfect man on thee was tortured,
Perfect God on thee has bled!

RECITATIVE

(Bass)
He made himself of no reputation, and
took upon Him the form of a servant, and
was made in the likeness of men:

And being found in fashion as a man,
He humbled Himself, and became obedient
unto death, even the death of the cross.

THE MAJESTY OF THE DIVINE HUMILIATION

(Tenor Solo)
King ever glorious!
The dews of death are gathering round Thee,
Upon the Cross Thy foes have bound Thee,
Thy strength is gone.

Not in Thy Majesty,
Robed in Heaven's supremest splendour,
But in weakness and surrender,
Thou hangest here.

Who can be like Thee?
Pilate high in Zion dwelling?
Rome with arms the world compelling?
Proud though they be!

Thou art sublime;
Far more awful in Thy weakness,
More than kingly in Thy meekness,
Thou Son of God.

Glory and honour:
Let the world divide and take them,
Crown its monarchs and unmake them;
But Thou wilt reign.

Here in abasement,
Crownless, poor, disrobed and bleeding;
There, in glory interceding,
Thou art the King!

RECITATIVE

(Bass)
And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the
wilderness, even so must the Son of man be
lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him
should not perish, but have everlasting life.

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

(Chorus)
 God so loved the world, that He gave
 His only-begotten Son, that whoso believeth
 in Him should not perish, but have everlasting
 life. For God sent not His Son into the world
 to condemn the world; but that the world
 through Him might be saved.

HYMN - Litany of the Passion

(All)
 Holy Jesu, by Thy Passion,
 By the woes which none can share,
 Borne in more than kingly fashion,
 By Thy love beyond compare:
 Crucified, I turn to Thee,
 Son of Mary, plead for me.

(All)
 2. By the treachery and trial,
 By the blows and sore distress,
 By desertion and denial,
 By Thine awful loneliness:
 Crucified, I turn to Thee,
 Son of Mary, plead for me.

(All)
 By Thy look so sweet and lowly,
 While they smote Thee on the Face,
 By Thy patience, calm and holy,
 In the midst of keen disgrace:
 Crucified, I turn to Thee,
 Son of Mary, plead for me.

(All)
 By the hour of condemnation,
 By the blood which trickled down,
 When, for us and our salvation,
 Thou didst wear the robe and crown:
 Crucified, I turn to Thee,
 Son of Mary, plead for me.

(All)
 By the path of sorrows dreary,
 By the Cross, Thy dreadful load,
 By the pain, when faint and weary,
 Thou didst sink upon the road:
 Crucified, I turn to Thee,
 Son of Mary, plead for me.

(All)
 By the Spirit which could render
 Love for hate and good for ill,
 By the mercy, sweet and tender,
 Poured upon Thy murderers still:
 Crucified, I turn to Thee,
 Son of Mary, plead for me.

RECITATIVE

(Tenor and Chorus)

Jesus said:
 "Father, forgive them, for they know not what
 they do."

DUET

(Tenor and Bass)
 So Thou liftest Thy divine petition,
 Pierced with cruel anguish through and through;
 So Thou grieve'st o'er our lost condition,
 Pleading, "Ah, they know not what they do."

Oh! 'twas love, in love's divinest feature,
 Passing o'er that dark and murderous blot;
 Finding, e'en for each low-fallen creature,
 Though they slay Thee, one redeeming spot.

Yes! and still Thy patient heart is yearning
 With a love that mortal scarce can bear;
 Thou in pity, deep, divine, and burning,
 Lifest e'en for me Thy mighty prayer.

So Thou pleadest, e'en for my transgression,
 Bidding me look up, and trust, and live;
 So Thou murmurest Thine intercession,
 Yea, he knew not; for my sake, forgive.

HYMN - The Mystery of Intercession

(All)
 Jesus, the Crucified, pleads for me,
 While He is nailed to the shameful tree,
 Scorned and forsaken, derided and curst,
 See how His enemies do their worst!
 Yet, in the midst of the torture and shame,
 Jesus, the Crucified, breathes my name!
 Wonder of wonders, oh! how can it be?
 Jesus, the Crucified, pleads for me!

(All)
 Lord, I have left Thee, I have denied,
 Followed the world in my selfish pride;
 Lord, I have joined in the hateful cry,
 Slay Him, away with Him, crucify!
 Lord, I have done it, oh! ask me not how,
 Woven the thorns for Thy tortured Brow;
 Yet in His pity so boundless and free,
 Jesus, the Crucified, pleads for me!

(All)
 Though thou hast left me and wandered away,
 Chosen the darkness instead of the day,
 Though thou art covered with many a stain,
 Though thou hast wounded me oft and again,
 Though thou hast followed thy wayward will:
 Yet, in my pity, I love thee still.
 Wonder of wonders it ever must be!
 Jesus, the Crucified, pleads for me!

(Choir)
 Jesus is dying, in agony sore,
 Jesus is suffering more and more,
 Jesus is bowed with the weight of His woe,
 Jesus is faint with each bitter throe.
 Jesus is bearing it all in my stead,
 Pity Incarnate for me has bled;
 Wonder of wonders it ever must be!
 Jesus, the Crucified, pleads for me!

RECITATIVE

(Tenor, Bass, and Chorus)
 And one of the malefactors which were hanged,
 railed on Him, saying,
 "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us."
 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying,
 "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the
 same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for
 we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this
 man hath done nothing amiss."
 And he said unto Jesus,
 "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into
 Thy kingdom."
 And Jesus said unto him,
 "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou
 be with me in Paradise."

HYMN - The Adoration of the Crucified

(Choir)
 I adore Thee, I adore Thee!
 Glorious ere the world began;
 Yet more wonderful Thou shinest,
 Though divine, yet still divinest
 In Thy dying love for man.

(All)
 I adore Thee, I adore Thee!
 Thankful at Thy feet to be;
 I have heard Thy accent thrilling,
 Lo! I come, for Thou art willing
 Me to pardon, even me.

(All)
 I adore Thee, I adore Thee!
 Born of woman, yet divine;
 Stained with sins I kneel before Thee
 Sweetest Jesu, I implore Thee,
 Make me ever only Thine.

RECITATIVE

(Tenor, Bass, and Chorus)
 When Jesus therefore saw His mother,
 and the disciple standing by, whom He
 loved, He saith unto His mother,
 "Woman, behold thy son!"
 Then saith He to the disciple,
 "Behold thy mother!"
 There was darkness over all the land.
 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with
 a loud voice, saying,
 "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

RECITATIVE

(Bass)
 Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?
 Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like
 unto my sorrow which is done unto me,
 wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the
 day of His fierce anger.

The Appeal of the Crucified

(Chorus)
From the Throne of His Cross, the King of grief
Cries out to a world of unbelief:
Oh! men and women, afar and nigh,
Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?

I laid my eternal power aside,
I came from the home of the glorified,
A babe, in the lowly cave to lie;
Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?

I wept for the sorrows and pains of men,
I healed them, and helped them, and loved
them; but then, but then
They shouted against me, Crucify!
Is it nothing to you?

Behold me and see: pierced through and
through
With countless sorrows – and all is for you;
For you I suffer, for you I die;
Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?

Oh! men and women, your deeds of shame,
Your sins without reason and number and name,
I bear them all on this Cross on high;
Is it nothing to you?

Is it nothing to you that I bow my head?
And nothing to you that my blood is shed?
Oh, perishing souls, to you I cry;
Is it nothing to you?

Oh come unto me! by the woes I have borne,
By the dreadful scourge, and the crown of thorn,
By these I implore you to hear my cry;
Is it nothing to you?

Oh come unto me! this awful price,
Redemption's tremendous sacrifice,
Is paid for you. – Oh, why will ye die?

Oh come unto me! Why will ye die?

RECITATIVE

(Tenor and Chorus)
After this, Jesus knowing all things were now
accomplished, saith,
"I thirst."

When Jesus had received the vinegar, He saith,
"It is finished. Father, into Thy hands I
commend my Spirit."

And he bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.

SILENCE IS KEPT

HYMN - For the love of Jesus

(All)
All for Jesus – all for Jesus,
This our song shall ever be;
For we have no hope, nor Saviour,
If we have not hope in Thee.

(Men)

All for Jesus – Thou wilt give us
Strength to serve Thee, hour by hour,
None can move us from Thy presence,
While we trust Thy love and power.

(Ladies)
All for Jesus – at Thine altar
Thou wilt give us sweet content;
There, dear Lord, we shall receive Thee
In the solemn sacrament.

(All)
All for Jesus – Thou hast loved us;
All for Jesus – Thou hast died;
All for Jesus – Thou art with us;
All for Jesus Crucified.

(All)
All for Jesus – all for Jesus,
This the Church's song must be,
Till, at last, her sons are gathered
One in love, and one in Thee.

May peace be with you this Eastertide

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Thank you for any contribution you are able to make.