



# Via Crucis

## A Passiontide Oratorio

Music by Robert Steadman

Words by Neil Provost

A World Premiere performed by

## Cantores Oecumenica

29<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Holy Angels, Halebarns



**Mezzo-Soprano** : **Joyce Tindsley**  
**Tenor** : **Richard Pollock**  
**Baritone** : **Oliver Dunn**  
**Guest Organist** : **Jonathan Scott**  
**Conductor** : **Neil Provost**

**Sopranos**

Katy Allan  
Kirsty Allan  
Jean Brookes  
Patricia Brown  
Sue Brown  
Rev. Valerie Davies  
Marie Dixon  
Margaret Dyson  
Rhiannon Healey Provost  
Caroline McEwan  
Sue McEwan  
Carole McNab  
Patsy Newhouse  
Frances Provost  
Jean Tragen  
Clare Wilkinson-Kirsop

**Tenors**

Tony Champion  
Steve Crowther  
John Fallon  
Alan Johnston  
Melanie-Anne Jose  
Kevin McAloon  
Tony Nash  
Ted Thompson

**Altos**

Gill Bate  
Adrienne Davies  
Ann Heap  
Jennifer Nugent  
Sally Peterken  
Hazel Pryor  
Kate Sibthorp  
Elspeth Stein  
Adrienne Thompson  
Christine Underwood

**Bass**

Michael Cummings  
Gus Hopper  
Roy Jervis  
Keith Lewis  
John Mulholland  
Ian Provost

**Joyce Tindsley** was born in Lancashire and, after graduating from UCNW, Bangor, where she studied with William Mathias, went on to study at the RNCM with Barbara Robotham and Christopher Underwood, continuing her studies with Opera North's Wyn Davies and Sally Burgess.

Joyce works regularly for the BBC on Daily Service, Radio 4 LW, both as a choral singer and a soloist. In 2010 she was the soloist for the BBC Radio Easter meditation at Salisbury Cathedral performing live with the BBC Concert Orchestra conducted by Howard Moody.

In 2011 she was the classical soloist in Karl Jenkins' Stabat Mater performing with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra at various venues in the south, and in 2012 performed Jenkins' The Armed Man at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall.

Recent highlights were Elgar's The Apostles at King's College, Cambridge for Stephen Cleobury, Elgar's Sea Pictures with the Blackburn Symphony Orchestra, Janacek's "Glagolitic Mass" at Guildford Cathedral for Christopher Herrick, Bach's B minor Mass at Beverley Minster and Lancaster Cathedral and Mozart's Requiem with Sir David Willcocks at Coventry Cathedral. Highlights this year include Bach's St John Passion and Magnificat , and Dvorak's Stabat Mater for the Mary Wakefield Festival.

**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. 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. He has received particular praise for his interpretation of the Evangelist in Bach's Passions and Christmas Oratorio, as Britten's Saint Nicolas and as a variety of Handel's heroes. He takes the title role in Elgar's Dream of Gerontius next year.

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.

Richard is the Junior Headmaster of Cransley School in Cheshire, husband, father of three, sailor, cook, charity-cyclist, rugby-watcher, F1 fan and dog-walker.

**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. 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.

**Jonathan Scott**, was born in Manchester, and studied piano and organ at Chetham's School of Music before gaining a scholarship on both instruments to attend the Royal Northern College of Music. With the aid of a Countess of Munster Scholarship he was able to continue his studies in USA and Holland. Jonathan has been a member of the keyboard staff at the RNCM since 2001.

A prize-winner at many International competitions including St Albans Organ Competition, Musica Britannica Early Music Competition and RCO Performer of the Year Competition. Jonathan also won the coveted Worshipful Company of Musicians WT Best Scholarship and gold medal, and is a Freeman of The City of London.

Jonathan has performed at all the major concert halls in the UK, as well as venues throughout Europe, South America and the Far East with orchestras including BBC Philharmonic, RPO, RLPO, CBSO, The Hallé, and on a national tour as piano soloist with English National Ballet. Highlights in 2014 include performances of Gershwin Piano Concerto with RPO, as well as appearances as piano and organ soloist at London's Royal Albert Hall in Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and Saint-Saëns' *Organ Symphony*.

In addition to radio and TV broadcasts, Jonathan recorded the piano music soundtrack for the MIRAMAX film *Brideshead Revisited*, Melvyn Bragg's 'A Reel History of Britain' and has a solo recording catalogue of over 20 CDs.

**Neil Provost** was born in Altrincham and was involved in music through the amateur theatre at an early age. Starting piano lessons by age nine he progressed to the organ by age fourteen receiving lessons from Derrick Cantrell of Manchester Cathedral.

He took his first parish post at St Mark's, Dunham just before his sixteenth birthday. At St Ambrose College, Halebarns he took a strong interest in choral conducting under the tutelage of John Chadwick and Michael English, who later became his organ tutor. Neil has gone on to develop his own unique style and methods in choral training and conducting.

He moved to St John the Divine, Brooklands in 1990 as Director of Music, training and directing a mixed choir. Whilst there, through Neil's training, a number of choristers gained places in cathedral choirs and he brought the choir up to sufficient standard to be invited to sing in Manchester Cathedral for Choral Evensong.

In 2000 Neil moved to Christchurch, Timperley where he has forged a musical link between Holy Angels Choir and Christchurch Choir. He is Musical Director and Principal Conductor for Cantores Oecumenica.

Via Crucis is Neil's first work as a librettist.

**Robert Steadman** was born in Chiswick, London on April 1st 1965. He was brought up in Basingstoke, attending the Richard Aldworth School, before studying on the Pre-Professional Music Course at Cricklade College, Andover. In 1984, he gained an Associate of the Royal College of Music (A.R.C.M.) in tuba performance. He read music at Keble College, Oxford, graduating in 1986. During his time at Oxford, Robert was the musical director of many shows and, notably, became President of the Oxford Revue Company working with Armando Iannucci and John Sparkes.

Robert Steadman is a prolific composer of music including three symphonies and two operas, musicals and pieces for brass band. He has written a great deal for amateurs and children and is well known for his choral works. Robert has been commissioned to compose works for the percussionist Evelyn Glennie, saxophonist Sarah Field, London Brass Virtuosi and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. His opera Sredni Vashtar was written to a libretto by Richard Adams.

As well as composing, Robert has written many articles on music education and a number of books alongside teaching and leading creative music workshops for schools, museums and charities.

## Via Crucis - The Work

Via Crucis has been written following the success of Robert Steadman's 'Requiem', the premiere of which Neil Provost directed and conducted. Robert wished to write another choral work for Passiontide and Neil had already begun writing a libretto which covered the telling of the fourteen stations of the cross. This provided an opportunity for both Robert and Neil and the notion of 'Via Crucis' was born.

The work is in fifteen movements; the fourteen traditional Stations of the Cross and a concluding chorale. The Stations of the Cross are a religious devotion (most commonly used in the Catholic Church) commemorating the final hours and ultimately the death of Jesus Christ. There are many artistic representations and statues which depict tableaux of this story. Devotions will frequently use short biblical passages with contemplations, meditations and prayer to enable participants to experience the Passiontide story.

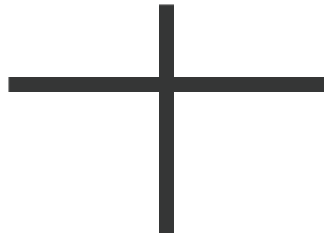
The libretto for Via Crucis, loosely translated as Way of the Cross, builds on this concept to include thoughts and feelings of characters from the Passiontide story.

The music is set for three soloists, choir and organ. The soloists (mezzo-soprano, tenor and baritone) each sing key characters, however the tenor soloist only sings the part of Christ. The choir sing the part of the crowd as well as the general contemplations.

Mezzo-Soprano	Narrator, Mary, Veronica
Tenor	Christ
Baritone	Narrator, Pilate, John, Soldier(s),

The work is written in a free flowing pattern with interactions between characters, the narrator, the crowd and interspersed with contemplations and meditations sung by the choir and soloists. There are two haunting arias, one sung by the mezzo-soprano as the character of Veronica, the other sung by Christ ('The Women Lament'). A trio between all three soloists brings together the characters of Christ, Mary (his mother) and the disciple John.

Where a traditional Passiontide oratorio would end with Christ dying on the cross, Via Crucis continues the story to the tomb with a final duet between the mezzo-soprano and baritone. The work concludes with a chorale which summarises the story of Christ in a few short lines.



Via

Crucis





## The Movements

1st Station	Condemned to Death <i>(Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Baritone, Choir &amp; Organ)</i>
2nd Station	The Cross is Laid on Him <i>(Mezzo-Soprano, Baritone, Choir &amp; Organ)</i>
3rd Station	The First Fall <i>(Mezzo-Soprano, Choir &amp; Organ)</i>
4th Station	He Meets His Mother and John <i>(Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Baritone &amp; Organ)</i>
5th Station	Simon of Cyrene Takes the Cross <i>(Mezzo-Soprano, Choir &amp; Organ)</i>
6th Station	Veronica <i>(Mezzo-Soprano &amp; Organ)</i>
7th Station	The Second Fall (at the Gate of Judgement) <i>(Mezzo-Soprano, Choir &amp; Organ)</i>
8th Station	The Women Lament <i>(Tenor &amp; Organ)</i>
9th Station	The Final Fall (at Calvary) <i>(Mezzo-Soprano, Baritone, Choir &amp; Organ)</i>
10th Station	They Strip Him <i>(Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Baritone, Choir &amp; Organ)</i>
11th Station	They Crucify Him <i>(Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Baritone, Choir &amp; Organ)</i>
12th Station	He Dies on the Cross <i>(Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Baritone, Choir &amp; Organ)</i>
13th Station	Taken Down ... <i>(Choir &amp; Organ)</i>
14th Station	... and Buried <i>(Mezzo-Soprano, Baritone, Choir &amp; Organ)</i>
Chorale	<i>(Choir &amp; Organ)</i>

## **1st Station**

Mezzo (as Narrator)	And in the morning they bound Jesus and delivered him to Pilate.....
Baritone (as Pilate)	Are you the King of the Jews?
Tenor (as Jesus)	Is that your own thought? Is that what they tell you?
Baritone	Am I a Jew?
Tenor	My kingdom is not of this world, my kingdom is from another place.
Baritone	Are you a King then?
Tenor	It is you who say it! I bring the truth, and the truth only, to all who would listen to my word.
Baritone	But what is truth?
Mezzo	Pilate then went before the people, with Jesus on one side and Barabbas on the other. He asked them ...
Baritone	Here is your King, your King of the Jew's, the man you welcomed into your city, with pomp and joyfulness. What shall I do with him? Shall I release him?
Chorus	Give us Barabbas!
Baritone	Then what of your King? I find no wrong in him.
Chorus	Crucify Him! Give us Barabbas! Crucify Him!
Baritone	You want me to crucify Him? I shall have no part in this, I find no wrong in him! He is yours!
Chorus	Crucify Him! Crucify Him! We have no King but Cesar! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!
Mezzo	And so Pilate handed him over, to be flogged, and to be crucified...

## **2nd Station**

### **The cross is laid on Him**

Chorus	Hail the King! Hail the King! Glory and Hosanna! Hail the King!
Baritone (as a soldier)	Hail, 'King of the Jews!' Wear your cloak, your robe of scarlet. Wear your crown, your kingly crown of thorns. Your sceptre of reeds, my 'King'. I kneel and hail thee ... 'King of the Jews!' Where are your friends now? They've run away. You're on your own now, mighty 'King', no one will rescue you, not even your 'God'. You're going to die alone. Hail, 'King of the Jews!'

Mezzo (as Narrator) And Christ was stripped of the robe and led away .... To be crucified.  
They placed a cross on his bleeding shoulders.  
Chorus Take up your cross, O Christ.

### **3rd Station**

### **The first fall**

Mezzo (as Narrator) Christ falls for the first time  
Chorus By the weight of our sin you fall to the ground  
By the weight of our sin your head is bowed down  
Debased and defiled, abused by man's hand  
By the weight of our sin you fall to the ground  
What shall I, frail man, be pleading?  
Who for me be interceding,  
When the just are mercy needing?  
Spare, O God, Thy suppliant groaning!  
By the weight of our sin you fall to the ground  
By the weight of our sin your head is bowed down  
Debased and defiled, abused by man's hand  
By the weight of our sin you fall to the ground

### **4th Station**

### **He meets his Mother and John**

Mezzo (as Mary) My Son, what have they done to you?  
Baritone (as John) My Lord, my teacher...  
Mezzo As Simeon said they would, they have rejected you, my Son.  
Baritone My Lord, my teacher...  
Tenor (as Jesus) Woman, there is your son.....  
Baritone See this sorrow, weep not Raboni  
Tenor ....there is your Mother.  
Mezzo My heart is pierced by a sword of grief  
Tenor There is your son, there is your mother  
Baritone My Lord, my teacher, weep not Raboni  
Mezzo My Lord, what have they done to you?

### **5th Station**

### **Simon of Cyrene takes the cross**

Mezzo (as Narrator) On the way to Golgotha, they compelled a man from Cyrene, Simon was his name, to carry Jesus' cross, to spare him, so they could crucify him.

Chorus

God forbid that I should Glory  
Save in the cross of Jesus Christ  
Who, for the world, is crucified  
Who, by the world, is crucified  
O faithfull cross, thou peerless tree,  
No forest yields the like of thee.  
God forbid that I should Glory  
Save in the cross of Jesus Christ  
Who, for the world, is crucified  
Who, by the world, is crucified

## 6th Station

## Veronica

Mezzo (as Veronica)

Without beauty and majesty,  
A thing rejected and despised,  
A man of sorrows....suffering,  
I do not seek your face, hide not from me.  
I saw your face, the face of God  
In love and goodness  
Oh never leave me  
O Christ my Saviour  
Without beauty and majesty,  
A thing rejected and despised,  
A man of sorrows....suffering,  
I do not seek your face, hide not from me.  
The cruel thorns, the stripes of pain  
They took your dignity  
Oh never leave  
O Christ my Saviour

## 7th Station

## The second fall (at the Gate of Judgement)

Mezzo (as Narrator)

Christ falls for the second time

Chorus

By the weight of our sin you fall to the ground  
By the weight of our sin your head is bowed down  
Debased and defiled, abused by man's hand  
By the weight of our sin you fall to the ground  
Ah! that day of tears and mourning!  
From the dust of earth returning  
Man for judgement must prepare him;  
Spare, O God, in mercy spare him!  
By the weight of our sin you fall to the ground  
By the weight of our sin your head is bowed down  
Debased and defiled, abused by man's hand  
By the weight of our sin you fall to the ground

## 8th Station

## The women lament

Tenor (as Jesus)

Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for me,  
Weep for yourselves,  
Weep for your children.

Offer not your words of compassion,  
Not just walk alongside me,  
The green wood for the crucified,  
The green wood shaped for me

The days shall come in which they say "Blessed are the  
barren and the wombs that have not borne"...  
And to the mountains, they say "Fall on us!"  
And to the hills "Cover us!"

Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for me  
Not for me but for yourselves"

## 9th Station

## The third fall (at Calvary)

Mezzo (as Narrator)

Christ falls for the last time

Chorus

By the weight of our sin you fall to the ground  
By the weight of our sin your head is bowed down  
Debased and defiled, abused by man's hand  
By the weight of our sin you fall to the ground

Baritone (meditation)

He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,  
And a lamb before his shearers, he was dumb.  
He delivered his soul unto death,  
That he might give life to his people.  
What had he done to you, branded for your iniquities,  
Bruised for our sins and carried all our sorrows.

Chorus

By the weight of our sin you fall to the ground  
By the weight of our sin your head is bowed down  
Debased and defiled, abused by man's hand  
By the weight of our sin you fall to the ground

Mezzo (meditation)

There remains nothing other than for us to ask Him,  
from the depths of our hearts, the cry:  
"Lord, save us!"

## 10th Station

## They strip Him

Mezzo (as Narrator)

And when they came to a place called Golgotha, they  
offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall, but when he  
tasted it, he would not drink it

Tenor (as Jesus)

They look on me and gloat over me.  
They divide my garments among them  
and for my vesture they cast lots.

Chorus	But you, O Lord, are not far from me.
Tenor	O my people, what have I done to you? How have I offended you? Answer thou me!
Chorus	But you, O Lord, are not far from me.
Mezzo	They took his garments and divided them four ways, one for each soldier. There was also his tunic, but this was woven in one piece from top to bottom; it had no seam. They said to each other,
Baritone (as a soldier)	"We should not tear this. Let us throw dice and see who gets it."
Tenor	O my people, what have I done to you? How have I offended you? Answer thou me!
Chorus	But you, O Lord, are not far from me.

## **11<sup>th</sup> Station**

### **They crucify Him**

Mezzo (as Narrator)	And they crucified Him .....
Tenor	O my people, what have I done to you? What are these wounds upon my hands? They pierced my hands, my feet, numbered all bones, And now I hang upon the cross.
Chorus	O blessed Jesus, what have we done to you? What are those wounds upon your hands? We pierced your hands and feet with cruel nails And now you hang upon the cross to die.
Chorus and Tenor	And now you (I) hang upon the cross to die
Baritone	Save yourself, 'King', come down from the cross You saved others, come down from the cross Rebuild the temple! You said you would Are you truly the King of Kings Hanging there, with common criminals, condemned to die. Save yourself, 'King', come down off that cross!!
Chorus	And still you hang upon the cross to die.

## **12th Station**

### **He dies on the cross**

Mezzo (as Narrator)	Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the Cross; it read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews".
Baritone	And from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice,

Tenor	"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"
Mezzo	That is,
Tenor	"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
Baritone	And some of the bystanders hearing it said,
Chorus	"He calls Elijah!"
Mezzo	And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink. And Jesus cried again with a loud voice ...
Tenor	"Father into your hands I commend my spirit! It is finished!!"
Mezzo	....and the earth shook and the veil of the temple was torn in two!
Baritone (as a soldier)	Truly this was the Son of God!

### **13th Station**

### **Taken down .....**

Chorus	They gave his body into her arms and laid him on her knees. For Christ is dead For my sins was slain For me in torments died. They gave his body into her arms and laid him on her knees. Once they followed him Once they worshipped him They crucified him They gave his body into her arms and laid him on her knees His body broken His body lifeless His death for all
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### **14th Station**

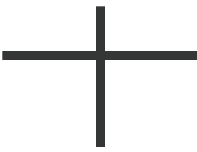
### **.....and buried**

Mezzo & Baritone	They took his body, his tortured body And laid him in the tomb, an unused tomb They wrapped his body, in whitest linen They laid him in the tomb, an unused tomb
Chorus	The stone was rolled across the tomb Darkness fell And they left.

## Chorale

Chorus

Christ came upon the earth  
To cleanse away our sin  
And took the mantel of a man  
The Christ light hid within  
He hung upon the cross  
In pain he suffered all  
And still he uttered not one word  
And died for us, for all  
In paradise, O Christ  
You sit upon your throne  
With kingly grace, in rightful state  
You are our Lord, our own.



Via  
Crucis



**This performance has been given free of charge.**

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