



Sheffield Bach Choir

The Choir of Sheffield Bach Society [founded 1950] – www.sheffieldbachchoir.org.uk

Bach returns to Sheffield Cathedral!

St Matthew Passion

postponed from Saturday 3 March 2018

now takes place on **Saturday 14 April at 6.30 pm** [please note the starting time]

Sheffield Bach Choir

St Peter's Singers

Choristers of St John, Ranmoor

National Festival Orchestra

Sally Robinson *leader*

Alan Horsey *continuo*

Stephen Liley *tenor* – Evangelist

Thomas Hunt *bass* – Christ

Ella Taylor *soprano*

Anna Harvey *mezzo soprano*

Quentin Brown *bass*

Simon Lindley *conductor*

This performance is given in memory of John Dethick and Dr Geoffrey Walker – long standing friends of Sheffield Bach Society.

- Among the principals in the April performance are two exciting young Sheffield-born singers, rising stars Ella Taylor and Anna Harvey, each now based in London, returning to their home city to take leading solo roles. It is clearly a delight to the organisers, as well as something of a relief, that both artists – along with tenor Stephen Liley and bass Thomas Hunt in the roles of Evangelist and Christ – happen also to be free for the rearranged date.

For long, a prime aim of Sheffield Bach Society – an organisation founded in the year of the two hundredth anniversary of the death of J S Bach in Leipzig in 1750 – has been an annual presentation in early Spring of the Mass in B minor, the *St John Passion* and the *St Matthew Passion*. Very occasionally, the sequence has been slightly altered to accommodate a special commemoration [as in 2011, the centenary year of the edition in English of the *St Matthew Passion* by Sir Ivor Atkins and Sir Edward Elgar and again in Autumn 2016, the re-opening of Sheffield Cathedral after restoration was marked by a October performance of the Mass in B minor].

But this year, 2018, the intention to present the *St Matthew Passion* was thwarted by extreme weather conditions necessitating a postponement from the original plan for Saturday 3 March.

Sheffield Bach Choir is delighted to be able to announce the arrangements for the *St Matthew Passion* to be presented in English at Sheffield Cathedral, with all but one of the originally announced solo artists, on Saturday 14 April commencing at 6.30 pm. The work will be presented in full and the audience encouraged to join in the singing of the chorale hymns as would have been the case in Bach's own day.

The Bach Choir will be joined by members of St Peter's Singers from Leeds in the singing of the celebrated choruses for double choir and the acclaimed young Choristers of St John's Ranmoor will be providing the thrilling chorus of upper voices required by Bach in the first part of the work.

Second only to Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* is arguably the best-loved sacred work in the repertoire. The Bach Choir don't just sing Bach! – there's a similarly long-standing early December Sheffield tradition of *Messiah* normally on the first Monday evening of that month and also at Sheffield Cathedral.