



WEALDEN

Bach's St. John Passion

28 March 2026

Holy Cross Church, Uckfield



WEALDEN

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Classical music on your doorstep

Musical settings of the Passion narratives for use in Holy Week have evolved over 1500 years, beginning with unaccompanied plainsong chants in the early medieval period. Renaissance composers such as Orlando di Lasso, Victoria in Spain and William Byrd in England all wrote passion settings, which alternate between chant and choral treatments of the *turba* – the crowd.

Baroque composers like Schütz continued to develop the form. Bach's setting of St. John's text dates from his first year as director of church music in Leipzig and was first performed in 1724. He revised it several times, and the version most performed today comes from the 1740s. Though Bach wished to retain a spirit of congregational worship, the music is intensely dramatic, and fully orchestrated. Recitatives and choruses narrate the story, with the chorus often taking the role of the crowd. Arias reflect on the text and chorales set hymns that would have been familiar to the congregation with the wonderful harmonisations that have made them a staple of study for budding composers for three centuries.

The work falls into two parts, which would originally have framed a sermon. Today's performance omits all the arias except one but preserves the structure of the Passion story.

St. John Passion

J.S. Bach

Part I:

Begins in the Garden of Gethsemane with Jesus's arrest, followed by Peter's denial and Jesus's examination before the High Priest.

J. S. Bach *Chorale Prelude - Christus der uns selig macht*
arranged for piano and cello.

Part II:

Covers the trial before Pilate, the sentencing, the crucifixion at Golgotha, and the final burial.

Ben Hancox-Lachman *tenor*
EVANGELIST

Sarah Butcher *cello continuo*
William Hancox *piano*

Rosie Page *mezzo*

Linda Glenn *conductor*

Jozik Kotz *bass*
JESUS

Laughton Village Choir
and **The Clockhouse Singers**

Peter Grevatt *baritone*
PILATE

Judy Mackerras *Maid*
Julian Morgan-Jones *Peter*

Ben Hancox-Lachman, tenor

Ben is establishing himself as a tenor in London and the Southeast, alongside studying for his PhD at Imperial College London working with photosynthetic proteins. This year on stage, Ben has played Don Basilio in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, and Marco in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers*. Recent oratorio engagements include Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, Haydn's *Nelson Mass* and the title role in Handel's *Samson*.

Additionally, Ben has performed an extensive repertoire in recital, with song ranging from Britten to Wolf, and Brahms

to Messiaen. Longer works include Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte*, and Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, *Liederkreis* op.24 and *Liederkreis* op.39, as well as a recent premiere of John Hawkins' song cycle *Both Beauties*.

In August, Ben recorded *Love, Friendship and Longing*, a setting of Tang Dynasty poems by composer Nicholas Smith, and recently performed Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* with Imperial Sinfonietta in London. Ben is proud to be a Music Box performer, having now sung many concerts across Wealden.

Rosie Page, mezzo

Rosie is a local singer at the start of her classical career and makes her debut as an oratorio soloist in today's performance.

She graduated in 2021 from The Institute of Contemporary Theatre and since then has performed at hundreds of events across the area, including the Mayor's Concert in Hailsham. She has also appeared at London's Natural History Museum at a concert for BBC *Children In Need*.

Rosie is currently developing her classical technique, training with William Hancox.

Jozik Kotz, bass

Jozik Kotz was born in Oxford, one of ten children of Polish-Australian parents. He read Music at York University, was a choral scholar at York Minster, and gained a scholarship to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

He was a finalist in the Kathleen Ferrier, Royal Overseas League, and Richard Tauber competitions, won the 1993 South East Arts competition, made his Wigmore Hall debut and gave many recitals across the UK with pianist Rebecca Holt. Early in his career, he sang with the choirs of St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, and

the BBC Singers, working with conductors including Sir Roger Norrington and Sir John Eliot Gardiner.

Operatic roles include performances with ENO, the Royal Opera, Glyndebourne, and houses in Paris, Vienna, Zurich, and Lisbon. As a concert soloist, he has appeared at the Proms and major London halls with leading orchestras. His recordings include works for Hyperion and Deutsche Grammophon. Alongside performing, he is active as a conductor, directing community and youth choirs throughout East Sussex and beyond.

Peter Grevatt, baritone

Peter was born in Hastings and studied comparative religions at King's College, London. He went on to train vocally with Michael Maurel and was drawn to Italy in his early twenties, somehow finding himself on stage with Pavarotti at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino!

His professional debut in a major role was as Mozart's Figaro for London Opera Players, to which he quickly added Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*) at Holland Park, Dandini (*La Cenerentola*), Onegin and a number of other, largely lyric, baritone roles. Over the following decades he has

steadily added to his list of around ninety rôles, singing for companies such as The Opera Project, Nationale Reisopera, Festival dei Due Mondi, Opéra Nationale de Bordeaux, Kentish Opera, Opera à la Carte, the D'Oyly Carte and many others.

He regularly performs the popular oratorio canon and other sacred works and has an extraordinarily wide and eclectic concert repertoire, including much corporate a cappella work and Barbershop.

Sarah Butcher, cello continuo

Sarah studied cello at the Guildhall with Stefan Popov and played in masterclasses with William Pleeth at the Aldeburgh Summer School. In an eclectic career she has played in the BBCSO, The Guildhall String Ensemble, The OAE, Peter Gabriel's New Blood Orchestra, Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company, SLiDE, The Hanover Band, ETO, Garsington Opera and Glyndebourne Touring Opera Orchestra.

She is a member of the London Mozart Players. She formed period group The Bach Camerata which performed in the Barbican and also recorded St John Passion for

Chandos with Crouch End Festival Chorus.

She has made recordings for Cello Classics; *Music for Two Cellos*, *Julius Klengel: A Celebration* and *Petits Fours* with the LMP cello section. She has played with the Mistry String Quartet, Mainardi Trio and period group The Revolutionary Drawing Room. She founded The Chamber Players in 2006 which performed in festivals and music clubs all over the UK.

Sarah also edits audiobooks for Naxos AudioBooks, including projects in collaboration with Classic FM.

William Hancox, piano

After a degree at Cambridge, William studied with the Hungarian pianist Joseph Weingarten, himself a student of Dohnanyi, Bartok and Kodaly. He has performed in major venues as a soloist, chamber musician and accompanist throughout the UK and internationally, broadcast for Classic FM and the BBC and made a number of CD recordings. He has held staff pianist positions at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Trinity College of Music and the Britten-Pears School in Aldeburgh.

William has performed throughout Europe and made several trips to China, giving masterclasses, song recitals, solo recitals and

concerts in the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing. He has also worked extensively as a vocal coach with many students now pursuing successful singing careers.

William lives in East Sussex and is deeply involved in live music making in his own community. For many years he was pianist and artistic director of Music at Lime, a chamber music series in Herstmonceux, and he is the accompanist for Hailsham Choral Society and Laughton Village Choir. His most recent project is Music Box Wealden, with ambitious plans to bring more quality classical music into the heart of this largely rural community.

Linda Glenn, conductor

Linda Glenn is a mezzo soprano, founder and MD of Laughton Village Choir and The Clockhouse Singers.

Based in Sussex, Linda teaches adults to sing, runs choral workshops, and as choral MD gets to choose all her favourite repertoire!

She specialises in helping adult choral singers achieve a level of musicianship beyond their wildest dreams.

Laughton Village Choir

The LVC is an all-comers, unauditioned choir drawn from Laughton and the surrounding villages. A few members of the choir are experienced amateur musicians, but many had never held a musical score before they joined. The ability to sing in tune is more important than being able to read music, a skill everyone soon acquires! We provide learning support via on-line tutorials and informal sectional rehearsals (with cake) which enable the less confident to master their parts. We rehearse at 8.00-9.30pm on Mondays at the Laughton Village Hall, hugely assisted by Will Hancox, our accompanist.

The Clockhouse Singers

A friendly chamber choir that sings mostly a cappella, we always have a short slot in the Laughton Village Choir concerts. Rehearsals are on Thursday mornings 10.00- 12.00 in Wick Street, near Arlington.



FUTURE CONCERTS

Reawakening with The Symphonova

25 April 2026, 7pm

Church of St Mary the Virgin, Church St,
Eastbourne BN21 1HS

Scenes from the Savoy

17 May 2026, 3pm

The Ballroom, Herstmonceux Castle
BN27 1RN

Tango at The Secret Vineyard

6 June 2026, 6pm

The Secret Vineyard, Lime Cross Nursery,
Herstmonceux, BN27 4RS

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