

## A MOUNTAIN-TOP EXPERIENCE of MUSIC

For people of faith – Christian faith – this is an extraordinary and wonderful, if challenging time of year. As we approach the season of Lent our thoughts and our hearts focus on the Last Supper, the betrayal, arrest, scourging, and crucifixion of Jesus, trying to some extent, to put aside, until it is upon us, the glory of Easter.

Christians are fortunate in that almost every milestone in the life of Jesus has been celebrated by the creation and enjoyment of wonderful music, some of it recognised as the crowning glory of the art of Christian civilisation, and living, as you do, in the hinterland of your glorious cathedral in Chichester, you will know that some of the finest music inspired by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is sung there by the Cathedral's choirs and by the fabulous big choirs who present the Christian story as put to music by the great composers, Handel, Bach, Elgar, and many more.

I am a member of a choir bringing one such event to your Cathedral on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March at 7.15pm. The English Arts Chorale is a choir of 50 singers founded in St Mary's Church Reigate in 1980. Since that time we have sung Handel's Messiah, Bach's "Passions", Elgar's great sacred works for choir and orchestra, Rutter's Christmas music and much more in cathedrals around England.

On Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March at 7.15, we are to sing – for you, we hope – a piece which Elgar himself described as "the noblest sacred work in existence." This is Bach's St Matthew Passion. We invite you to join in with us in two or three of the well-known hymns – the "chorales" – which are central to this unforgettable and profoundly felt masterpiece written by a man who was himself without doubt a man of faith.

As a singer in the English Arts Chorale, I am expecting it to be a mountaintop experience. Do join me. Tickets at £35, £25 and £15 (full-time students £6) are available from [www.thenovium.org/boxoffice](http://www.thenovium.org/boxoffice) (01243 816525) or [www.englisharts.org](http://www.englisharts.org) (07901 604905).