

7.00pm Thursday 3 April Royal Festival Hall

ST MATTHEW PASSION

They say that timing is everything, and while it can't explain the almost miraculous beauty of JS Bach's Passions, it did at least help them into existence.

Passion stories follow the Gospel accounts of Christ's arrest and execution. Musical Passion plays evolved in the 15th and 16th centuries; in the Lutheran tradition, Martin Luther's friend Johannes Walter helped develop the evangelical Passion style, of which Heinrich Schütz wrote three fine examples. The 'oratorio Passion' emerged in 17th-century north Germany, the Passion narrative decorated with arias, chorales and instrumental accompaniment. And, just

in time, this practice was accepted in conservative Leipzig by around 1721. Bach reported for duty in Leipzig in 1723, by which time the practice of musical Good Friday services was just established enough to be accepted, and just new enough to be malleable.

Bach modelled his Passions on earlier precedents, but created in the process something new and extraordinary – even paradoxical, fearlessly plunging us into the darkness of human suffering, yet in so doing lighting the way towards the divine.

BY JOANNA WYLD

SOUTHBANK CENTRE RESIDENT

WELCOME

to our 2024/25 season here at the Southbank Centre

The music that we love to play at the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment is a tangle of riddles and puzzles. Why did Bach choose the six concertos he did to become the Brandenburg Concertos? What is the secret theme hidden within the *Enigma Variations*? Why do certain works and composers achieve 'Greatness'? Why are others overlooked? Why did Beethoven scratch out the dedication to Napoleon of the 'Eroica' Symphony? Why did Bruckner never hear his Fifth Symphony? How does music decode human sentiment? Or express the ultimate enigma, humanity's relationship with the divine?

"I have come to believe that the whole world is an enigma, a harmless enigma that is made terrible by our own mad attempt to interpret it as though it had an underlying truth"

UMBERTO ECO

These enigmas have always nourished the human imagination. The secret themes, lost manuscripts and broken celebrity crushes that tease us are all part of the thrill. The idea that we might solve the mystery drives us on. If we're honest, though, we can't promise to uncover all the answers for you. So that leaves us with a simple choice: go mad... or just decide to enjoy the music!

If there is an underlying truth to be found it is in the act of coming together to share this wonderful, messy cosmos of music – the gathering of the musicians of the OAE with our inspiring artistic partners and you, our audience. Together we might find the secret key: one that unlocks the door to joy, generosity and, of course, Enlightenment.

Thank you for being part of our enigmatic adventure.

The Passion in Bach's time

Sundays and holy days in Bach's Leipzig would have meant, for many of the town's workers, a welcome day off. And attending a service at one of the main churches there, the Thomaskirche or the Nikolaikirche, would have brought the diversion of music – especially with Bach in charge.

When Bach's *St Matthew Passion* was first performed in the Thomaskirche in 1727, some of the congregation may have had an idea of what to expect; his *St John Passion* had been given in the Nikolaikirche in 1724. Perhaps they were excited at the prospect of this familiar story being brought to life with drama and, well, passion – although this was a church service, not a piece of theatre. The organ would have played them in; a prayer would have been said. And then: one of the monuments of Western music, heard for the first time.

Surely they were awed, electrified? Perhaps... But this was daring music; 'contemporary music'. Some audiences today struggle with new music, and it is possible that Bach's peers were similarly bewildered. They were familiar with grief, though, and must have related to its outpourings in this work. Bach's inclusion of familiar chorales would have taken many of the congregation back to a time before the bloody 30 Years War, rather as hearing an old English folk tune learned before the First World War might have moved a soldier emerging from that conflict. The humanity of Bach's music spoke to the humanity of his listeners, and while they may not instantly have recognised the significance of the St Matthew Passion, here was a reminder that music, and God, may both engage with human pain, and transcend it.

Read Joanna Wyld's in depth article on Bach's *St Matthew Passion* on page 6.

Performers

Anna Dennis soprano lestyn Davies alto Hugo Hymas tenor Nick Pritchard Evangelist (tenor)

Thomas Bauer bass **Florian Störtz** Christus (bass)

Malachy Frame Judas
Philip Tebb Peter
Lara Rebekah Harvey witness
Jeremy Budd witness
Jack Comerford high priest
Ben McKee high priest
Emilia Bertolini servant
Amy Wood servant
Robert Davies Pilate
Samantha Cobb Pilate's Wife

Choir of the Age of Enlightenment

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment Huw Daniel leader Kati Debretzeni leader

Jonathan Cohen conductor

Surtitles by Damien Kennedy Language coaching by Nobert Meyn Keyboards and tuning services provided by Robin Jennings

This concert is supported by Ian S Ferguson CBE and Dr Susan Tranter

There will be a pre-concert talk at 6.00pm in the Soutbank Centre's Level 5 Function Room, Green Side, Royal Festival Hall with members of the orchestra.

A text sheet is available to download at oae.co.uk/text

CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA OF THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Orchestra 1

Violins I

Huw Daniel* Dominika Fehér Deborah Diamond

Violins II

Daniel Edgar Andrew Roberts

Violas

John Crockatt* Annette Isserlis

Cellos

Jonathan Manson* Catherine Rimer

Double bass

Christine Sticher*

Viola da gamba

Jonathan Manson

Flutes

Lisa Beznosiuk* Neil McLaren

Oboes

Daniel Lanthier Alexandra Bellamy

Bassoon

Györgyi Farkas*

Organ

Robert Howarth*

Orchestra 2

Violins I

Kati Debretzeni* Alice Evans Henry Tong

Violins II

Rodolfo Richter Claire Holden

Violas

Martin Kelly Kate Heller

Cellos

Andrew Skidmore Ruth Alford

Double bass

Cecelia Bruggemeyer

Flutes / Recorders

Rachel Beckett* Elizabeth Walker

Oboes

Sarah Humphrys Geoffrey Coates

Bassoon

Sally Jackson

Harpsichord

Jonathan Cohen

Choir 1

Sopranos

Emilia Bertolini Samantha Cobb Helena Moore Claire Ward

Altos

Tristram Cooke Lara Rebekah Harvey Sophie Timms

Tenors

William Anderson Jeremy Budd Sebastian Maclaine

Basses

Jonathan Arnold Jack Comerford Malachy Frame

Choir 2

Sopranos

Hannah Ely Angharad Gruffydd Jones Joanna Songi Amy Wood

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David Clegg Eleanor Minney Rebekah Nießer-Jones

Tenors

John Bowen Richard Dowling Nicholas Todd

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Robert Davies Philip Tebb Ben McKee



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St Matthew Passion

Thursday 3 April 2025 7.00pm at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685 – 1750) St Matthew Passion

(Passio Domini Nostri J.C. secundum Evangelistam Matthaeum)

Text by Christian Friedrich Henrici (Picander) There will be surtitles in English

Part 1

- 1. Chorus 'Kommt, ihr Töchter, helft mir klagen'
- 2. Recitative (Evangelist and Christus)
- 3. Chorale 'Herzliebster Jesu, was hast du verbrochen'
- 4a. Recitative (Evangelist) 4b. Chorus -

The visit to Bethany

- 4c. Recitative (Evangelist) 4d. Chorus 4e. Recitative (Evangelist and Christus)
- 5. Recitative (Alto)
- 6. Aria 'Buß und Reu' (Alto)
- 7. Recitative (Evangelist and Judas (bass))
- 8. Aria 'Blute nur, du liebes Herz!' (Soprano)

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

- 9a. Recitative (Evangelist) 9b. Chorus 9c. Recitative (Evangelist and Christus) 9d. Recitative (Evangelist) 9e. Chorus
- 10. Chorale 'Ich bin's, ich sollte büßen'
- 11. Recitative (Evangelist, Christus and Judas)
- 12. Recitative (Soprano)
- 13. Aria 'Ich will dir mein Herze schenken' (Soprano)

The Mount of Olives

- 14. Recitative (Evangelist and Christus)
- 15. Chorale 'Erkenne mich, mein Hüter'
- 16. Recitative (Evangelist, Peter (bass) and Christus)
- 17. Chorale 'Ich will hier bei dir stehen'

The garden at Gethsemane

- 18. Recitative (Evangelist and Christus)
- Recitative (Tenor) with Chorale 'Was ist die Ursach aller solcher Plagen?'
- 20. Aria 'Ich will bei meinem Jesu wachen' (Tenor) and Chorus
- 21. Recitative (Evangelist and Christus)

- 22. Recitative (Bass)
- 23. Aria 'Gerne will ich mich bequemen' (Bass)
- 24. Recitative (Evangelist and Christus)
- 25. Chorale 'Was mein Gott will, das g'scheh allzeit'
- 26. Recitative (Evangelist, Christus and Judas)
- 27a. Aria 'So ist mein Jesus nun gefangen' (Soprano and Alto) 27b. Chorus 'Sind Blitze, sind Donner in Wolken verschwunden?'
- 28. Recitative (Evangelist and Christus)
- 29. Chorale 'O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde groß'
- Interval -

Part 2

30. Aria 'Ach! nun ist mein Jesus hin!' (Alto and Chorus)

The palace of the High Priest

- 31. Recitative (Evangelist)
- 32. Chorale 'Mir hat die Welt trüglich gericht'
- 33. Recitative (Evangelist, Witnesses (alto, tenor) and High Priest (bass))
- 34. Recitative (Tenor)
- 35. Aria 'Geduld! Wenn mich falsche Zungen stechen' (Tenor)

36a. Recitative (Evangelist and High Priest (bass) and Christus) – 36b. Chorus – 36c. Recitative (Evangelist) – 36d. Chorus

- 37. Chorale 'Wer hat dich so geschlagen'
- 38a. Recitative (Evangelist, Servants (sopranos), Peter (bass) -
- 38b. Chorus 38c. Recitative (Evangelist and Peter (bass))
- 39. Aria 'Erbarme dich' (Alto)
- 40. Chorale 'Bin ich gleich von dir gewichen'
- 41a. Recitative (Evangelist and Judas (bass)) 41b. Chorus -
- 41c. Recitative (High Priests (basses))
- 42. Aria 'Gebt mir meinen Jesum wieder!' (Bass)

The residence of Governor Pilate

- 43. Recitative (Evangelist, Pilate (bass), Christus)
- 44. Chorale 'Befiehl du deine Wege'
- 45a. Recitative (Evangelist, Pilate (bass), Pilate's Wife (soprano) and Chorus) 45b. Chorus
- 46. Chorale 'Wie wunderbarlich ist doch diese Strafe!'

- 47. Recitative (Evangelist and Pilate (bass))
- 48. Recitative (Soprano)
- 49. Aria 'Aus Liebe' (Soprano)

50a. Recitative (Evangelist) – 50b. Chorus – 50c. Recitative (Evangelist and Pilate (bass) – 50d. Chorus – 50e. Recitative (Evangelist)

- 51. Recitative (Alto)
- 52. Aria 'Können Tränen meiner Wangen Nichts erlangen' (Alto)
- 53a. Recitative (Evangelist) 53b. Chorus 53c. Recitative (Evangelist)
- 54. Chorale 'O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden'
- 55. Recitative (Evangelist)
- 56. Recitative (Bass)
- 57. Aria 'Komm, süßes Kreuz, so will ich sagen' (Bass)

Golgotha, the place of a skull

58a. Recitative (Evangelist) – 58b. Chorus – 58c. Recitative (Evangelist) – 58d. Chorus – 58e. Recitative (Evangelist)

- 59. Recitative (Alto)
- 60. Aria 'Sehet, Jesus hat die Hand' (Alto and Chorus)
- 61a. Recitative (Evangelist and Christus) 61b. Chorus 61c. Recitative (Evangelist) 61d. Chorus 61e. Recitative (Evangelist)
- 62. Chorale 'Wenn ich einmal soll scheiden'

63a. Recitative (Evangelist) – 63b. (Chorus) – 63c. Recitative (Evangelist)

- 64. Recitative (Bass)
- 65. Aria 'Mache dich, mein Herze, rein' (Bass)

The Burial

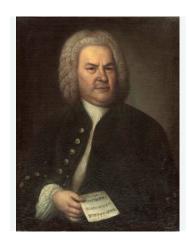
66a. Recitative (Evangelist) – 66b. Chorus – 66c. Recitative (Evangelist and Pilate (bass))

- 67. Recitative (Bass, Tenor, Alto, Soprano and Chorus)
- 68. Chorus



Bach's Great Passion

Joanna Wyld



Johann Sebastian Bach in 1746, with riddle canon by Elias Gottlob Haussmann, Public Domain via

hen Bach arrived in Leipzig in 1723 to take up his wide-ranging role as the city's Director of Music and cantor of the Thomasschule, he joined a community that could be hard-nosed and unsentimental. He regularly came into conflict with the city officials, and few seem to have appreciated just how exceptional a musician they had in their midst. Bach had limited resources with which to work, and was overstretched in his duties, which included teaching Latin (a task he delegated to a deputy); training four

choirs of school-boys; giving instrumental lessons to the most promising pupils; and producing music for four of the city's churches – as well as for its civic ceremonies.

Opera was frowned upon in Leipzig; the previous cantor of the Thomaskirche, Johann Kuhnau, had turned up his nose at fellow Leipzig composer Telemann, dismissing him as an 'opera musician', and Leipzig's opera house had been firmly shut up before Bach's arrival. Liturgical music was also subject to strict stipulations, and in the case of singing on Good Friday, it was forbidden to paraphrase the Gospel accounts, which had to be used in their original form.

Yet Bach, ever pragmatic, found ways round these obstacles. For his *St John Passion* of 1724, he supplanted the paraphrased sections of the libretto from the popular *Brockes Passion* (a 1712 work by Barthold Heinrich Brockes) with the Gospel texts on which they were based. For the *St Matthew Passion*, he persuaded his regular collaborator, the Leipzig poet Picander, to build on his recent publication of poetic *Erbauliche Gedanken auf den Grünen Donnerstag und Charfreytag* ('Edifying Thoughts on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday') by adding more free verse suitable for use alongside Gospel texts. Picander duly created a libretto using Chapters 26 and 27 of St Matthew's Gospel, as well as his own poetic meditations on the subject. Whereas the *St John Passion* uses texts from different sources, a single author overseeing the libretto for the *St Matthew Passion* lends it a particular coherence and flow.

As for the embargo on opera, Bach brought operatic elements into the *St Matthew Passion* by the back door, so that while the liturgical purpose of the work is ever-present in its pacing, rhetoric and tone, there are many innovative and daring stylistic elements that might have suggested associations with a world outside the walls of the church. Bach employed Italianate

operatic styles, wide-ranging harmonic and key sequences, varied scoring and timbre, and dynamic extremes. The unusual key sequences, which can seem surprising, even disjointed, were partly a product of the dramatic structure, and partly conceived to jolt listeners into an awareness of the extraordinary nature of the events unfolding.

Despite the Leipzig establishment's fastidious, rather ungenerous nature, it would be wrong to assume that the Lutheran tradition that meant so much to Bach was innately puritanical. The appreciative, earthy phrase, 'wine, women and song' is attributed to Luther himself, and his insistence on using forms that ordinary people understood would have encouraged Bach to include the familiar chorale tunes that pervade the St Matthew Passion, both in the stand-alone chorales and woven into the fabric of more intricate movements. What's more, there had been enough room for manoeuvre within the establishment to allow for Passions to be sung in Leipzig in the first place. Following the Neue Kirche's lead, the Thomaskirche had introduced the custom in 1721, the sexton Johann Christoph Rost noting that 'on Good Friday of the year 1721, in the vesper service, the Passion was performed for the first time in concerted style.' Kuhnau's St Mark Passion, performed there, became an important model for Bach's Passions - although he had also made a transcript of Reinhard Keiser's St Mark Passion back in Weimar, some time before 1714, and an earlier Passion written by Bach, dating from 1717, is now lost.

CPE Bach claimed that his father wrote five Passions in all; the St Matthew Passion was referred to by the Bach family as 'the great Passion'. And so it is: Bach used a greater range of forms in the St Matthew Passion than in any comparable work. In the St John Passion, he eschewed certain forms of accompanied recitative and large-scale chorale settings; the later Mass in B minor (1749) does not include recitatives, certain types of aria, or ariosi (in which the style of singing falls between recitative and aria). But in the St Matthew Passion, Bach used the whole gamut of these forms, not to mention the polyphonic motet style, and numbers founded on that ancient musical anchor point, the 'cantus firmus' - a line of plainchant or chorale tune threading its way through a more complex texture. Bach also drew on the full depth of his experience of writing cantatas when composing the St Matthew Passion – and, tellingly, once this work was complete, the rate at which he produced cantatas dropped considerably.

One of the most striking and ambitious features of the *St Matthew Passion* is Bach's use of the double chorus. For the original 1727 version, he was writing for the two organ lofts of the Thomaskirche (similar in principle, if less grand, to the antiphonal effect created by two choirs in different balconies in St Mark's Basilica in Venice, an influential feature of the Italian early Baroque). The first chorus and orchestra performed from the larger organ loft, with the second chorus and orchestra situated in the smaller organ loft, limiting the number of performers that could be involved. In the revised version of



 $St\ Thomas\ School,\ Leipzig,\ where\ Johann\ Sebastian\ Bach\ taught\ from\ 1723-50\ sketched\ by\ Felix\ Mendelssohn.\ Lebrecht\ Music\ Arts\ /\ Bridgeman\ Images$

1736, Bach augmented his forces, accentuating the contrasts between these two groups: both have soloists and chorus, strings and continuo including organ, and woodwinds including transverse flutes – prominent in the first alto solo – oboes and oboes d'amore, plus two oboes da caccia joining the first group.

The Thomaskirche's 'swallow's nest' organ (a decaying instrument that had to be demolished in 1740) was used to emphasise the 'cantus firmus' of the opening and closing choruses of Part I. There are two main parts to the *St Matthew Passion*, following the crucial moments of the Gospel narrative: preparation, Gethsemane and the arrest, Caiaphas, Pilate, Christ's Crucifixion; and, finally, burial and farewell. At the end of each scene there is a commentary on, or response to, the action from either chorus or protagonist, set to Picander's poetic meditations. These vivid pieces form the core of the work, providing moments of contemplation or interpretation in a manner that would have made sense to a congregation used to similar structures in Lutheran services.

In fact, these responses to the action of the Passion story are at the heart of what's so remarkable about the work. It is not so much the story itself, but the human reactions to these events, that make the *St Matthew Passion* so immediate and relatable to this day, expressing feelings of grief, regret, hope, the need for solace – feelings that, regardless of one's beliefs, are universal.

In the opening number, there would have been an additional layer of meaning for the Leipzig congregation: the boys' choir of the Thomaskirche regularly sang for funerals and executions. The significance of this – and its gripping dramatic implications – would not have been lost on those first listeners. And even without that context, is there another opening in Western music more compelling than this? We're immediately arrested by the elegiac pull of Bach's lilting rhythms, the pulsing bass, the hymn tune wending its way through surging textures – the chorale melody's major-key inflections piercing the minor-key solemnity, letting in pinpricks of light.

Both Parts I and II begin and end in this vein: emphatic, emotive pieces that frame the action, which moves forwards through the alternation of the tenor Evangelist's narration with arias from the protagonists – Jesus, Judas, Peter, Pilate, Pilate's Wife, two Handmaidens, two Priests. The chorales sung by the choruses shift almost giddyingly between a wide-ranging cast of characters: the crowd, the high priests, the disciples and the Jews. For Jesus himself, Bach created a special effect: a halo of string sound. This theatrical device has the impact of a spotlight in the gloom, drawing our attention to the figure at the centre of it all every time he sings. When Christ later asks why God has forsaken him, the loss of the accompanying string halo makes the sense of abandonment all the more palpable.

There is powerful rhetoric, too, in the soprano aria 'Blute nur', which comes just after Judas's betrayal of Christ. The opening phrase is repeated at a higher pitch to indicate an intensification of feeling – a device the Leipzig congregation would have recognised and understood. And there is vivid writing for the choirs throughout, which take on distinct characters at different moments, singing



Handwritten score for the *St Matthew Passion*. Lebrecht Music & Arts Alamy Stock Photo

a chorale tune alongside the tenor recitative and aria that begins with 'O Schmerz!' ('O pain!'); adding punchy interjections in the duet for soprano and alto, 'So ist mein Jesus nun gefangen', before unleashing a tumult of thunder and lightning; and later showing anger during the soldiers' teasing and tormenting of Christ. Rhetorical devices abound in the instrumental parts as well, such as the vividly illustrative continuo writing when the curtain of the temple is torn asunder.

The arias and chorales are more frequent and more expansive than in the earlier *St John Passion*, and in his 1736 revision of the work, Bach transplanted a large choral fantasia, 'O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde gross', from the second version of the St John into the *St Matthew Passion*, to end Part I (instead of the more modest chorale in the 1727 version). He also charted new harmonic territory with the arioso 'Ach Golgotha', preceding the aria 'Sehet, Jesu hat die Hand', reaching unprecedented extremes of harmony.

Yet this sense of scale and intensity in the *St Matthew Passion* is balanced by moments of understatement. Opening Part II is an alto aria, 'Ach! nun ist mein Jesu hin' – with a mini-chorus of four additional soloists – that ceases almost abruptly. And whereas in the *St John Passion*, the moment when Peter weeps bitterly after denying Christ is one of almost extravagant feeling, with long-breathed chromatic lines expressing extreme anguish, in the *St Matthew Passion*, the Evangelist traces an exquisite arc of delicately poignant sorrow. This subtlety makes what follows all the more effective, as though Bach was saving up the emotional release of the alto aria 'Erbarme dich'. Peter's very personal plea for forgiveness represents all humanity's desire for redemption, the melodic lines seemingly never ending, elongating just when you expect them to resolve, while the solo violin sings alongside the alto, accentuating the aria's harmonic twinges.

These contrasts between cathartic emotion and understatement are integral to the emotional impact of the *St Matthew Passion*, underlining the sincerity of the feelings expressed. Bach was a man of profound faith, careful to judge the precise nature of his portrayal of the Passion story and its significance for humanity. Towards the end of the *St Matthew Passion*, each soloist's brief farewell to Christ creates the impression that this is a temporary parting. A theological point was being made: the devastating scene of the crucifixion, marked by Good Friday, precedes the focal point of Easter: the Resurrection, when Christ rises from the dead. In this context, the almost perfunctory farewells make sense. Though the sombre mood remains, the Lutheran congregation would have been aware that these events anticipate a more hopeful conclusion: reunion with Christ.

Even in the anguished sweep of the final chorus, then, there are hints of hope; the animated bass-line, in contrast with its more static counterpart in the opening chorus of Part I, is liberated, imbued with a sense of forward motion. This is not the end. In the penultimate chord, Bach's scoring enhances the wincing pain of a dissonance typical of the French chaconne style – which then resolves. The tone remains sombre – we have not reached Easter yet – but points to something beyond our present grief. This final cadence might almost encapsulate the point of the Passion story in microcosm: the dissonance of the crucifixion, the resolution of the Resurrection.

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Biographies



THOMAS BAUER Baritone

Thomas E. Bauer is one of the most fascinating vocal artists of our time. He is enthusiastically celebrated for the "virile force", "baritonal beauty of sound" and "precise diction" (Opernglas) of his expressive voice.

As a concert singer, Mr. Bauer has recently made guest appearances with the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal with Schoenberg's Gurrelieder, with the Hong Kong Philharmonic, at the Vienna Musikverein, the Warsaw National Philharmonic with Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde, at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw with Bach's St Matthew Passion under the baton of Sigiswald Kuijken, at the Seoul International Music Festival, the Brühl Haydn Festival with Capella Cracoviensis, the Augsburg Mozart Festival and Rheingau Music Festival with Bach's Mass in B minor. He sang the world premiere of Jörg Widmann's oratorio ARCHE under the baton of Kent Nagano at the inauguration of the Hamburg Elbphilharmonie (as CD on ECM). Thomas E. Bauer sang Beethoven's Missa Solemnis under the baton of Philippe Herreweghe, Schubert's Winterreise at the Concertgebouw Brugge and the St Matthew Passion in concerts in Paris and Dijon, among others, with the Capella Mediterranea under the direction of Leonardo García Alarcón.

Most recently, he has also performed at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, at the Beethovenfest Bonn with Beethoven's song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*, with the MDR Symphony Orchestra under Simone Young and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra with Jörg Widmann's orchestral song cycle *Das heiße Herz*, with Beethoven's 9th Symphony with the Basel Chamber Orchestra under Giovanni Antonini (now on SONY Classical), with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra under Yu Long, Jukka-Pekka Saraste and Shao-Chia Lü with orchestral songs by Mahler and with Kent Nagano and the Hamburg Philharmonic State Orchestra with Bach cantatas. Recent highlights of the season include the world premiere of Peter Ruzicka's *Benjamin Symphony* with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra under the direction of the composer.

Thomas E. Bauer was Artist-in-Residence at BOZAR Brussels and has performed with the Boston Symphony Orchestra

under Bernard Haitink, Concentus Musicus under Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala under Zubin Mehta, the Gewandhaus Orchestra under Herbert Blomstedt and Riccardo Chailly and the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich. At the Salzburg Festival, he was most recently heard under Ingo Metzmacher in Schubert's *Lazarus* and in Schoenberg's *Jakobleiter* at the Berlin Philharmonie. On the opera stage, he celebrated great success in Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten* at the Teatro alla Scala. He has performed several opera premieres.

Thomas E. Bauer, initiator of the award-winning Blaibach Concert Hall, received his first musical education with the Regensburger Domspatzen and later studied singing at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Munich.



JONATHAN COHEN Conductor

Jonathan Cohen has forged a remarkable career as a conductor, cellist and keyboardist. Well known for his passion and commitment to chamber music, Jonathan is equally at home in such diverse activities as baroque opera and the classical symphonic repertoire. He is Artistic Director of Handel and Haydn Society, Artistic Director of Arcangelo, Music Director of Les Violons du Roy and Artistic Director of Tetbury Festival. From 2025 he becomes Artistic Advisor to London Handel Festival.

Throughout the 24 / 25 season, Jonathan continues to have a strong presence on both sides of the Atlantic. He returns to Kammerorchester Basel and directs performances of *St Matthew Passion* with both Rotterdam Philharmonic and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. He returns to Glyndebourne Festival for a revival of Barrie Kosky's production of Handel *Saul*. He leads both Handel and Haydn Society and Houston Symphony Orchestra in *Messiah*, and with Handel and Haydn he also conducts Haydn *The Seasons*, Mozart Requiem and Beethoven Mass in C.

Jonathan founded Arcangelo in 2010 to create high quality bespoke projects. The ensemble was the first named Baroque Ensemble in Residence at Wigmore Hall, where it enjoys a continuing close association, and has toured to exceptional halls and festivals including Philharmonie Berlin, Vienna

Konzerthaus, Barbican Centre, Kölner Philharmonie, Salzburg Festival, MA Festival Bruges, with three appearances at the BBC Proms including the premiere of Handel *Theodora* (2018) and a televised performance of Bach *St Matthew Passion* (2021). They are Principal Ensemble in Residence at the London Handel Festival from 2025.

Arcangelo's founding commitment to the recording studio has produced 30 critically lauded albums including 'Arias for Guadagni' and Bach Cantatas with lestyn Davies (Hyperion; Gramophone Award 2012 and 2017), Mozart Violin Concertos with Vilde Frang (Warner; ECHO Klassik Award 2015) CPE Bach Cello Concertos with Nicolas Altstaedt (Hyperion; BBC Music Magazine Award 2017), Buxtehude Trio Sonatas Op.1 (Alpha Classics; GRAMMY Nominee 2018), 'Tiranno' with Kate Lindsey (Alpha; Sunday Times Records of the Year 2021). Arcangelo's latest recordings include Handel *Theodora*, Sacroprofano with Tim Mead, Handel Chandos Anthems (Alpha; releasing 2025) and a landmark project with Nicolas Altstaedt to make the first survey on period instruments of Boccherini Cello Concertos (Alpha).



IESTYN DAVIES Countertenor

After reading Archaeology and Anthropology at St John's College, Cambridge, lestyn Davies studied at the Royal Academy of Music, London.

An esteemed Handelian, he has delighted audiences globally with his vocal agility and supreme musicianship in roles such as Orlando, Rinaldo, Ottone in *Agrippina* and David in *Saul*. Committed also to contemporary music, his intelligent and considered interpretations have led to fruitful collaborations with Thomas Adés, George Benjamin and Nico Muhly.

On the opera stage, he has appeared at the Metropolitan Opera, New York; the Lyric Opera of Chicago; Teatro alla Scala Milan; the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; English National Opera; Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Welsh National Opera; Teatro Real Madrid; Salzburg Festival and in Munich, Vienna, and Zurich. Recent appearances include *Partenope* in Madrid, *Agrippina* in Hamburg and Munich, *Rodelinda* for the Metropolitan Opera, and *L'incoronazione di Poppea* in Versailles.

Concert engagements have included performances at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan with Dudamel, the Concertgebouw and Tonhalle with Koopman and at the Barbican, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Lincoln Centre, Carnegie Hall and at the BBC Proms in the Royal Albert Hall with orchestras that include the New York Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, English Concert, Britten Sinfonia, Concerto Köln, Concerto Copenhagen,

Ensemble Matheus, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Academy of Ancient Music and Scottish Chamber Orchestra. In recent seasons, he sang Bertarido in *Rodelinda* on tour in the USA and Asia with Harry Bicket and The English Concert, made his role debut at the Paris Opera as Tolomeo in *Giulio Cesare*, sang Oberon in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Atlanta Opera and at Garsington Opera, and the Boy in George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra. In August, he made his Australian debut singing JS Bach and Arvo Pärt in an extensive solo tour with the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

lestyn begins the 24 / 25 season singing Didymus in *Theodora* at Teatro Real Madrid and with Music of the Baroque, Chicago; before delving into other works by Handel including David in *Saul* at the Glyndebourne Festival; Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno and Dixit Dominus with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Emmanuelle Haim, Messiah with Les Violons du Roy and Bernard Labadie, and arias on tour with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Robin Ticciati.

In other repertoire, he will tour Monteverdi's *Poppea* with Cappella Mediterranea and Leonardo Garcia Alracon in Europe, and JC Bach, Scheidt, Schein, Buxtehude and more with Fretwork in the US and Canada.

An outstanding recitalist, he has performed in Vienna, Tokyo, Paris, and New York in repertoire ranging from Dowland to Clapton. He is a regular favourite at London's Wigmore Hall and Kings Place where he has curated residencies.

His recital discs have won three Gramophone Awards, and he performed on the Grammy-winning recording of Thomas Adès's *The Tempest.* He is the recipient of a Royal Philharmonic Society Award and was nominated for an Olivier Award for his singing role in *Farinelli and the King* opposite Mark Rylance (premiered at London's Shakespeare's Globe and transferring to the West End and Broadway). In 2017 he was awarded an MBE by the Queen for his services to music.



ANNA DENNIS Soprano

Anna studied at the Royal Academy of Music an was the recipient of the 2023 Royal Philharmic Society's Singer award.

Her opera performances include Katie Mitchell's *New Dark Age* at the Royal Opera House, Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* at Drottningholms Slottsteater in Stockholm, Handel's *Rodelinda* at the Göttingen Handel Festspiel, Mozart's *Idomeneo* directed by Graham Vick at Birmingham Opera Company, Damon Albarn's *Dr Dee* at English National Opera, and roles in all three Monteverdi

operas during John Eliot Gardiner's world tour of the trilogy. She recently created the title role of Violet in Tom Coult's debut opera, premiered at the Aldeburgh festival, and multiple roles in Sir David Pountney's Purcell pasticcio *Masque of Might* for Opera North.

In concert she has sung with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of St Luke's in New York, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Orquestra Gulbenkian, Les Violons du Roy, Britten Sinfonia, Akademie Alte Musik Berlin and Sinfonietta Riga. She has sung Britten's *War Requiem* at the Berlin Philharmonie and Thomas Ades' *Life Story*, accompanied by the composer, at New York's White Light Festival. Recent highlights have included performing Antony Burgess setting of TS Eliot's *The Wasteland* with Benedict Cumberbatch and Britten Sinfonia at the Charleston Festival, Bach's *Mein Herze Schwimmt im Blut* with Kristian Bezuidenhout in Riga, Haydn's *Jahreszeiten* with Düsseldorfer Sinfoniker under Adam Fischer, and Handel's *Orlando* with the Academy of Ancient Music under Laurence Cummings.

Her numerous recordings include Elena Langer's *Landscape* with Three People, the Grammy-nominated Kastalsky Requiem with the Orchestra of St Luke's under Leonard Slatkin, two orchestral song cycles on composer Tom Coult's debut disc "Pieces that Disappear" with the BBC Philharmonic, and Handel's *Amadigi di Gaula* with Early Opera Company under Christian Curnyn.

In the current season she sings Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* for Opera North, Boulez *Pli Selon Pli* with BBC Symphony Orchestra and Martyn Brabbins, Pergolesi *Stabat Mater* with Portland Baroque Orchestra, Mendelssohn *Lobgesang* with the Orquestra de la Comunidad de Madrid, and Poulenc Gloria with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.



HUGO HYMAS Tenor

British tenor Hugo Hymas is in much demand for his interpretations of the baroque and renaissance repertoire and enjoys collaborations with the foremost practitioners of the genre.

His 24 / 25 season reflects many established relationships: he sings Bach *St John Passion* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under Jonthan Cohen as well making his début with Les Violons du Roy with the same conductor. He joins John Butt for Handel *Esther* with The English Concert and for Bach with the Dunedin Consort and he sings *Messiah* with both the Sinfonieorchester Basel and the Tonkünstler-Orchester Niederösterreich under Ivor Bolton. Hymas will make his Bergen Philharmonic debut with Bach *Weihnachtsoratorium* under Dinis

Sousa. He returns to Potsdamer Winteroper to sing Clotarco (Haydn *Armida*), performs Alessandro (Handel *Poro*) in a semistaging with {oh!} Orkester under Martyna Pastuszka and reprises one of his signature roles, Acis (*Acis and Galatea*) with Vox Luminis under Lionel Meunier. Engaging with more recent repertoire Hymas will record Stravinsky Cantata with The Façade Ensemble under Benedict Collins Rice and collaborates with Leicester International Music Festival Artistic Director Nicholas Daniel performing Warlock, Vaughan Williams, Tippet and Elena Langer.

Amongst his significant previous engagements are Jove (Semele) for Glyndebourne Festival Opera (available on Glyndebourne Encore), Eurimaco (Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria) at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and Lucius in the premiere of Georgio Battistelli Julius Caesar at Teatro dell'Opera di Roma. He has performed and recorded Handel's sacred oratorio La Resurrezione with The English Concert and Harry Bicket and Purcell with Arcangelo under Cohen, sung Purcell and Handel with the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra directed by Kristian Bezuidenhout, Haydn Die Schöpfung with Les Arts Florissants under William Christie and the St Matthew Passion with Collegium Vocale Gent under Philippe Herreweghe. Hymas has undertaken major European tours of the Bach B Minor Mass with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under Vaclav Luks as well as Semele with Monteverdi Choir under Sir John Eliot Gardiner.

Hymas is a former Britten-Pears Young Artist and Rising Star of the Enlightenment. He grew up in Cambridge where he sang as a chorister in Great St Mary's Church Choir and studied the clarinet after which he joined the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge as a tenor. He holds an honours degree in Music from the University of Durham.



NICK PRITCHARD Evangelist (tenor)

Tenor Nick Pritchard is gaining fast recognition for his performances of the music of Bach and in particular his interpretation of the Evangelist in the Passions. Described as a 'Masterly Evangelist' in *The Guardian*, he has sung the role in Bach's St John and Matthew Passions around the world and his recording of the *St John Passion* (Evangelist) for Deutsche Grammophon with Sir John Elliot Gardiner was nominated for a Grammy Award for best Choral Performance (2023). Recent performances of the piece include those with the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra at the Concertgebouw under Jonathan Cohen, for the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, Irish Baroque under Peter Whelan, Residentie Orkest under Richard Egarr and Stavanger Symfoniorkester under Masato Suzuki.

On the concert platform he has performed with Ensemble Pygmalion, Concerto Köln, Les Talens Lyriques, Les Violons du Roy, L'Orchestre du Chambre de Paris, English Concert, Academy of Ancient Music, Early Opera Company, Philharmonia Orchestra, The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Early Opera Company and he made his BBC Proms debut with Britten Sinfonia under David Bates performing Mozart's Requiem.

He has performed under conductors including Harry Bicket, John Butt, Laurence Cummings, Christian Curnyn, Maxim Emelyanychev, Adam Fischer, Emmanuelle Haïm, Simon Halsey, George Petrou, Raphaël Pichon, Christophe Rousset and Ryan Wigglesworth.

A fine actor and equally at home on the operatic stage, roles have included Oronte, (Alcina) in a new Tim Albery production for Opera North, Lysander, A Midsummer Night's Dream as part of the Aldeburgh Festival's 70th anniversary, Tamino, (Die Zauberflöte) for Glyndebourne on Tour and for Irish National Opera, Ferrando, (Cosí fan tutte) for Opera Holland Park, Amphinomus, (The Return of Ulysses) for the Royal Opera House and Purcell's The Indian Queen for the Opéra de Lille, Théâtre de Caen, Opera Vlaandern and Grand Theatre Luxembourg. A regular performer of New Music he has also given several world premieres, including creating the role of Matthew in Mark Simpson's opera Pleasure (Opera North, Aldeburgh and The Royal Opera House).

In August 2023 Nick gave his Edinburgh International Festival recital debut with pianist Ian Tindale which was broadcast on BBC Radio 3. He has also given recitals with Gary Matthewman, James Bailieu, Simon Lepper, Sholto Kynoch, Christopher Glynn, Graham Johnson and Malcolm Martineau.

More recent highlights include Mendelssohn: 'Lobgesang' with the OAE conducted by Sir András Schiff, George Benjamin's Written on Skin (John / Angel 3) with the Finnish Radio Symphony conducted by the composer and Britten St Nicolas for the Aldeburgh Festival in a recreation of the first ever concert given at the festival in 1948. In North America he toured Handel's L'allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato and Bach's B Minor Mass with Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra with two performances at Carnegie Hall as well as making his debut at Park Armory in a world premiere performance of a new creation co-commissioned with the Asia Society where Nick performed a selection of Bach cantatas in a staging by the celebrated director Peter Sellars.

This season Nick performs the role of Funeral Director in a new production by Oliver Mears of Bernstein's *A Quiet Place* for the Linbury Theatre, Royal Opera House, makes his Japanese debut with the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra in Mozart's Requiem under Masato Suzuki as well as performances with La Nuova Musica, Academy of Ancient Music, OAE and Les Talens Lyriques at venues including l'Opera Royal de Versailles, Theater an der Wien, Het Concertgebouw, Wigmore Hall, Barbican Centre, and Philharmonie de Paris.



FLORIAN STÖRTZ Christus (bass-baritone)

German bass-baritone Florian Störtz announced his arrival on the European concert scene with victories at 2023 International Handel Singing Competition as well as the 2023 Helmut Deutsch Song Competition. Together with pianist Mark Rogers he also took the Prix de mélodie at the 2023 Lili et Nadia Boulanger competition in Paris and won the Young Artists Platform at the International Song Festival Zeist, Utrecht 2024.

Florian's 24 – 25 season sees important débuts singing Bach and Charpentier with the Monteverdi Choir under Christophe Rousset, Bach *Weihnachtsoratorium* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra under Václav Luks, Berlioz *L'Enfance du Christ* with the NFM Wrocław Philharmonic under Paul McCreesh and Bach B Minor Mass with The English Concert directed by Kristian Bezuidenhout. A current Rising Star of the Enlightenment his many forthcoming engagements with the ensemble include a European tour of the *St Matthew Passion* under Jonathan Cohen. He will record his début recital disc with pianist Aleksandra Myslek for Delphian.

Florian recently sang Bach's *Weihnachtsoratorium* with the OAE under Masaaki Suzuki and Handel *Esther* at London Handel Festival with Laurence Cummings. His recording of Duruflé's Requiem with the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge and Stephen Layton is released by Hyperion.

He has given recitals in Leeds with Graham Johnson, Zell am See with Helmut Deutch, a German song programme at Carnegie Hall with Renée Fleming's SongStudio and French song recitals at Salle Cortot, Paris and Wigmore Hall. He also presented Handel and Purcell at the Händel-Festspiele Halle.

Florian is an alumnus of the Royal Academy of Music and the Britten Pears Young Artist Programme and recevies generous support from the City Music Foundation. Having enjoyed his upbringing in the vocal music environment around Trier Cathedral, Germany he is now based in London. As a trained physicist Florian is passionate about the intersection of science and music.



In 1986, a group of inquisitive London musicians took a long hard look at that curious institution we call the Orchestra, and decided to start again from scratch. They began by throwing out the rulebook. Put a single conductor in charge? No way. Specialise in repertoire of a particular era? Too restricting. Perfect a work and then move on? Too lazy. The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment was born.

nd as this distinctive ensemble playing on period-specific instruments began to get a foothold, it made a promise to itself. It vowed to keep questioning, adapting and inventing as long as it lived. Residencies at the Southbank Centre and the Glyndebourne Festival Opera didn't numb its experimentalist bent. A major record deal didn't iron out its quirks. Instead, the OAE examined musical notes with ever more freedom and resolve.

That creative thirst remains unquenched. The Night Shift series of informal performances are redefining concert formats. Its former home at London's Kings Place has fostered further diversity of planning and music-making. The ensemble has formed the bedrock for some of Glyndebourne's most ground-breaking recent productions.

In keeping with its values of always questioning, challenging and trailblazing, in September 2020, the OAE became the resident orchestra of Acland Burghley School, Camden. The residency – a first for a British orchestra – allows the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment to live, work and play amongst the students of the school.

Now nearly 40 years old, the OAE is now part of the UK's musical furniture. It has even graced the outstanding conducting talents of John Butt, Elder, Adam Fischer, Iván Fischer, Vladimir Jurowski, Sir Simon Rattle and Sir András Schiff with a joint title of Principal Artist. But don't ever think the ensemble has lost sight of its founding vow. Not all orchestras are the same. And there's nothing quite like this one.

Andrew Mellor

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We're the UK's largest centre for the arts and one of the nation's top five visitor attractions, showcasing the world's most exciting artists at our venues in the heart of London. As a charity, we bring millions of people together by opening up the unique art spaces that we care for.

The Southbank Centre is made up of the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, Hayward Gallery, National Poetry Library and Arts Council Collection. We're one of London's favourite meeting spots, with lots of free events and places to relax, eat and shop next to the Thames.

We hope you enjoy your visit. If you need any information or help, please ask a member of staff. You can also write to us at Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX, or email hello@ southbankcentre.co.uk

Subscribers to our email updates are the first to hear about new events, offers and competitions. Just head to our website to sign up.















Clockwise from top left: Young producer training session; greeting patrons and distributing programmes at an OAE performance at the Southbank Centre; filming at *The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes* at the Southbank Centre.

Dreamchasing Young Producers

Now in its third year, the Dreamchasing Young Producers has evolved into an influential programme at the school, equipping young people with professional skillsets in project management, filmmaking, lighting, sound, set and costume design. The graduates from the first years now serve as tutormentors for new recruits and return regularly to support the OAE as valuable project support when life gets busy. The programme also supports the roll out of the T-level qualification in a new state of the art media centre at the school. This qualification, in Media, Broadcast and Production, is the equivalent of a conventional set of A levels, and prepares students for entry to work and higher

education in this important sector of the UK economy. The OAE is a proud corporate partner in this innovation.

You will see Dreamchasing Young Producers support front and backstage life at our Southbank Centre series, but this is the tip of the iceberg which, alongside routine training from OAE staff, players and guest experts, sees students from Year 7 onwards working on a range of challenging enterprises: a new podcast channel for the OAE, original film work for YouTube and Marquee TV, professional production values at school based events and new concept work with OAE partners for forthcoming seasons.

Musical Connections



Musical Connections is a three-year arts-based learning project, bringing together students with additional needs and mainstream students in London and Ipswich to work together creatively. Across the four schools involved in the project – two in London and two in Ipswich – we have consistently found that music breaks down barriers, while working across year groups enables students to build both skills and friendships.

"It's been an absolutely amazing experience. [...] I've seen the children grow in confidence, I've seen them learn new skills, I've seen them throw out ideas to make compositions that you would never ever expect them to do that kind of thing. They've just gained so much from it."

TEACHER (IPSWICH)

"Musical Connections was absolutely the highlight. Seeing such a varied group of students, who would be invisible or neglected in many schools, take centre stage with a world-renowned orchestra, in front of their parents and peers to perform good quality music, exceptional in some cases, was truly magnificent." – Staff member (London)

In Ipswich, Thomas Wolsey Ormiston Academy and Northgate High School students recently took part in a culmination performance to peers and family members. "Thank you for amazing songs and jams on piano. Helly Shumray is my favourite song. It's overwhelming. Thank you for brilliant sessions. I want to do more songs and sing songs with Alice and James and John-Henry. Please do more songs. Thank you." – **Student (Ipswich)**

"Thank you for the music.
When I play music I feel happy and free."
STUDENT (IPSWICH)

At Swiss Cottage School, this term we have been using Vivaldi's Four Seasons as our inspiration for new compositions that will be performed in two concerts at the school in late March alongside composer Raph Clarkson. We are also preparing a piece for the Camden Celebration concert at the Royal Albert Hall 'Music Brings Us Together' by James Redwood which will feature our Musical Connections students and Swiss Cottage school choir on stage with a choir of 1,000 primary voices – something which we hope will raise the roof!

Musical Connections is entirely funded through donations. If you're interested in supporting this work, please contact development@oae.co.uk

"He absolutely adored it.
We loved it too but he adored it."
PARENT (IPSWICH)



Read our Education 2023/24 Review

Over the past 25 years, the OAE's Education department has grown in stature and reach to involve thousands of people nationwide in creative music projects.

The programme takes inspiration from our repertoire, instruments and players. This makes for a vibrant challenging and engaging programme where everyone is involved; players, animateurs, composers, participants, teachers, partners and stakeholders all have a valued voice.

From our base in Acland Burghley School in north London, we travel the length of England to deliver our work. In 2023 / 24 we

visited County Durham, East Riding, Yorkshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Wiltshire, Somerset, Plymouth and Brighton and Hove as well as the London boroughs of Brent, Camden, Ealing, Greenwich, Harrow, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Merton, Newham and Wandsworth.

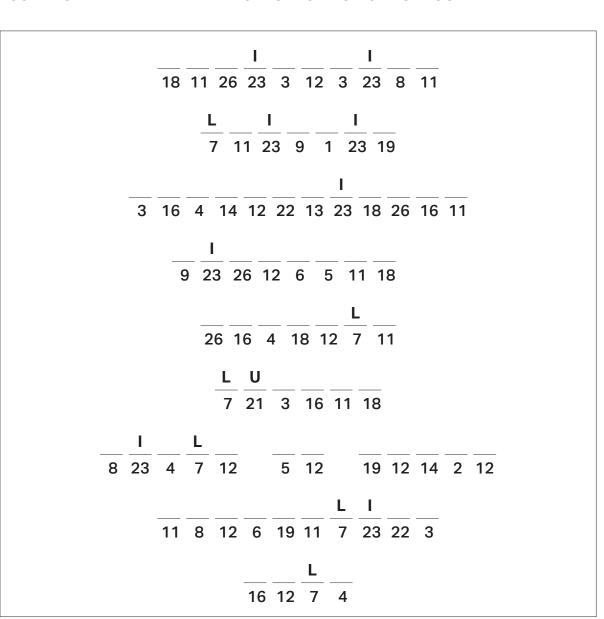


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