

PRESS RELEASE - 23 February 2016

### **The Last Judgement comes to London**

A forthcoming performance of **Spohr's 'The Last Judgement'** will be the first in London within living memory. Rising conductor **Mark Austin** revives a masterpiece that used to sit alongside Handel's 'Messiah', Haydn's 'Creation' and Mozart's 'Requiem' in the repertoire of choral societies around the UK.

The performance will take place on **Friday 4 March 2016** at **LSO St Luke's**, London, featuring **Faust Chamber Orchestra** and **Cambridge University Musical Society Chorus** together with four rising star soloists under the baton of **Mark Austin**.

Louis Spohr (1784-1859) was a travelling violin virtuoso, composer and conductor whose European reputation in his lifetime equalled, and possibly exceeded, that of his near contemporary Beethoven. The first performance of 'The Last Judgement' in Kassel in 1826 overwhelmed the audience with its **dramatic power** and emotional immediacy. Spohr was invited to conduct the work in Norwich in 1830 and it became a firm favourite throughout the 19th century, until the First World War prompted its decline and it disappeared from the repertoire.

Besides a huge legacy of symphonies, operas, oratorios and chamber music, **Spohr** is credited as being the **first conductor to use a baton** in the UK, a practice which soon became mainstream. He also invented rehearsal letters, a simple idea which has revolutionised the rehearsal process for musicians all over the world.

**Mark Austin** comments: "Spohr was a musical giant of his age and this masterful oratorio has long deserved to return to London, one of Europe's leading musical cities. It's extraordinarily varied: at times it's reminiscent of Handel's majestic choruses, at others of Schumann's chromaticism. But the music has a wonderful directness that explains the effect it had on audiences of its day".

It is hoped that this performance will generate new interest in the oratorio from choral societies around the UK, the oldest of whom will have archive material documenting their own performances at the end of the 19th century. There will be a second performance at West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge on Sunday 6 March at 7.30pm.

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Notes for editors:

Spohr *The Last Judgement* (1826)

LSO St Luke's, London  
Friday 4 March 2016, 7.30pm

Rosalind Coad soprano  
Anna Harvey mezzo soprano  
Bradley Smith tenor  
Adam Green baritone

Faust Chamber Orchestra  
Cambridge University Musical Society Chorus

Mark Austin conductor

Tickets (£10-£25) are available via the Barbican Box Office 020 7638 8891 or [lso.co.uk/whats-on](http://lso.co.uk/whats-on)

**Mark Austin** is a rising conductor in a new generation with a talent and passion for communication with audiences. He studied at Cambridge and the Royal Academy of Music, and has developed a reputation for brilliant musicianship and insightful interpretations, complemented by accessible spoken introductions to the music. He is founder and artistic director of Faust Chamber Orchestra. In 2016 he performs with the orchestra at LSO St Luke's, Kings Place and West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge. Mark has worked as assistant conductor for Marin Alsop, Stuart Bedford, David Hill and the late Sir Colin Davis, with orchestras including BBC Symphony Orchestra (BBC Proms), Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the Hangzhou Philharmonic in China. Guest appearances include Orchestra of St John's, Hertford Symphony Orchestra, and Southbank Centre's Voicelab Project. In opera, credits include *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Musique Cordiale International Festival, France), *Hansel and Gretel* (Mercury Theatre, Colchester) and *La traviata* for Opera South, where he is music director. He works regularly with The Bach Choir, including on tour to China and for a recent BBC Radio broadcast.

Now in its 5th year, **Faust Chamber Orchestra** has emerged as the leading force making classical music fresh, comprehensible and inspirational in the concert hall. Under the artistic direction of conductor Mark Austin, it is the only orchestra which believes accessible spoken introductions and musical demonstrations deserve a place at the heart of every performance. Following work with international artists including Guy Johnston and James Baillieu, and a 4-star review from *The Times*, 2016 will see Faust Chamber Orchestra (formerly Faust Ensemble) perform at LSO St Luke's and Kings Place, make a debut recording and expand its educational programme.

Audiences are drawn to Faust Chamber Orchestra's distinctive programming which throws light on the hidden meanings of works using commentary and comparison, together with live musical illustrations and the chance for listeners to ask questions. Recent successes have included an eclectic mix of Haydn and Sally Beamish, as well as "Ways into Bach", an exploration of dance in the music of JS Bach alongside linked

works by CPE Bach and Grieg. The orchestra is committed to new music and recently gave the world premiere of Oliver Rudland's new opera 'Pincher Martin' at the Britten Theatre in the Royal College of Music.

Faust Chamber Orchestra's approach to music is about ensuring its vitality now and for generations to come. The ensemble leads a wide range of educational projects, working in partnership with Chiltern Music Academy, at Chickenshed Theatre and in several primary and secondary schools. These include school workshops, side-by-side sessions and joint performances. Members of the orchestra are currently involved with a major research project at Warwick University focusing on Music of the Napoleonic Era.

**Cambridge University Musical Society (CUMS)** is one of the oldest and most distinguished university music societies in the world. It offers a world-class musical education for members of the University and local residents, nurturing the great musicians of the future and providing performing opportunities for over 500 Cambridge musicians every year.

The Society has played a pivotal role in British musical life for almost 170 years. It has educated such luminaries as Sir Andrew Davis, Sir Mark Elder, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Edward Gardner, Christopher Hogwood and Robin Ticciati, has given world or UK premieres of works by Brahms, Holloway, Lutoslawski, Maxwell Davies, Rutter, Saxton and Vaughan Williams, and has given successive generations of Cambridge musicians the experience of visiting conductors and soloists including Britten, Dvorak, Kodaly, Menuhin and Tchaikovsky. Since the 1870s, CUMS has enjoyed the leadership of several of Britain's finest musicians, including Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, Sir David Willcocks, Sir Philip Ledger, and, from 1983 to 2009, Stephen Cleobury.

Recent highlights have included Wagner's Parsifal (Act III) conducted by Sir Mark Elder, a recording of The Epic of Everest's original score for the British Film Institute, a concert of Haydn and Mendelssohn at Kings Place, London conducted by Sir Roger Norrington and Britten's War Requiem in Ely Cathedral conducted by Stephen Cleobury.

In 2015, highlights for the Chorus included a joint venture in June 2015 with members of The Bach Choir in King's Chapel for a performance of Verdi's Requiem under the direction of David Hill and a live broadcast of Berlioz Te Deum on Radio 3 in King's Chapel with Stephen Cleobury. The Chorus is looking forward to performing in two venues in Rome in April under the direction of Mark Austin and a performance of Elgar's The Dream of Gerontius in June in Saffron Hall to mark Stephen Cleobury's retirement from CUMS.

For more information please contact:

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