

# THE CHERWELL SINGERS

## CHERWELL SINGERS AND ORCHESTRA

Conductor: Andrew Carwood

BONONCINI - Stabat mater dolorosa

Jayne Whitaker - soprano

Stephen Carter - alto

Edwin Simpson - tenor

Michael McCarthy - bass

### INTERVAL

PURCELL - Thy word is a lantern  
Remember not Lord our offences  
Rejoice in the Lord alway

BACH - Brandenburg Concerto No. 5  
(Allegro-Affettuoso-Allegro)

HANDEL - Let thy hand be strengthened  
Zadok the Priest

SATURDAY 13th FEBRUARY 1988  
at 8.00pm

The University Church of St. Mary the Virgin  
High Street, Oxford

Admission by programme

The text of the 'Stabat Mater dolorosa' is a sequence from the Roman Catholic liturgy appointed for the Friday of Passion Week and, in previous years, on September 15th (the feast of the Seven Dolours of Our Lady). Its authorship is unknown but it is often attributed to the Franciscan monk, Jacapone di Todi(c.1228-1306).

Apart from its traditional plainsong form, the 'Stabat Mater' has had many composed settings as by Lassus, Josquin, Palestrina (eight part), Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti (the latter in ten parts), Pergolesi (for treble voices), Haydn, Schubert, Rossini, Verdi, Stanford and Poulenc. The virgin-centred text appealed especially to composers associated with the first flourishing of opera in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who used the devotional poetry with dramatic, colourful music to fuse the expressive style of the new genre with the music of the Church.

Antonio Bononcini was born in 1677 and studied harmony and counterpoint with the Bologna school. This 'Stabat mater' was probably composed in Vienna sometime before 1716. For some reason this setting has been neglected over the years. Its skilful craftsmanship, dramatic qualities, fine sense of vocal line and richness of harmony should, however, allow it to be placed amongst the greatest interpretations of the text.

Henry Purcell was born in London in 1659 and died there in 1695. In his unfortunately short life, he composed a remarkably large amount of beautiful and sometimes very intense music.

'Thy word is a lantern' and 'Rejoice in the Lord alway' are both examples of the verse anthem style which flourished in Restoration England. In each case, three solo voices are contrasted with short choruses which punctuate the narrative with exhortations or requests — 'Quicken me O Lord' in the first and 'Rejoice in the Lord alway' in the second.

'Remember not Lord our offences' is a full anthem (ie. without solos), which features the kind of harmonies particularly associated with Purcell, in order to create a mood of penitence or regret.

J.S.Bach's musical output was so prolific that to discuss it in such a short space is virtually impossible! The Brandenburg Concerti are a set of six Concerti Grossi for various combinations of instruments, commissioned by Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg in 1721.

The fifth concerto has three solo instruments — flute, violin, and harpsichord with a concertino of strings and continuo. Perhaps the most unusual feature is the use of the harpsichord as a solo instrument within a concerto. It is particularly in evidence in the long cadenza before the final ritornello in the first movement.

Alongside the 'Messiah', the Coronation Anthems must be amongst the best loved pieces written by George Frederick Handel (1685-1759). 'Let thy hand be strengthened' and 'Zadok the Priest' were two of the four anthems written for the coronation of George II in 1727. By all accounts the first performance did not run smoothly: one of the anthems was accidentally omitted, whilst 'Zadok the Priest' was sung at the wrong time. Nevertheless the bright, colourful, ebullient music (contrasting with the slow, lyrical second movement of the first anthem) still provided a fitting welcome for the new sovereign.

## STABAT MATER

Stabat Mater dolorosa  
Iuxta crucem lacrimosa,  
Dum pendebat filius.

Cuius animam gementem,  
Contristatam ac dolentem,  
Pertransiuit gladius.

O quam tristis et afflicta  
Fuit illa benedicta  
Mater unigeniti.

Quae moerebat et dolebat,  
Et tremebat, cum videbat  
Nati poenas incliti.

Quis est homo, qui non fletet,  
Christi Matrem si videret  
In tanto supplicio?

Quis non posset contristari,  
Piam Matrem contemplari  
Dolentem cum filio?

Pro peccatis suae gentis  
Vidit Iesum in tormentis  
Et flagellis subditum.

Vidit suum dulcem natum  
Morientem desolatum,  
Dum emisit spiritum.

Eja, Mater, fons amoris,  
Me sentire vim doloris  
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.

Fac, ut ardeat cor meum  
In amando Christum Deum,  
Ut sibi complaceam.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,  
Crucifixi fige plagas,  
Cordi meo valide.

Tui nati vulnerati,  
Tam dignati pro me pati,  
Poenas mecum divide.

Fac me vere tecum flere,  
Crucifixo condolere,  
Donec ego vivero.

At the Cross her station keeping  
Stood the mournful Mother, weeping,  
Close to Jesus at the last.

Through her soul, of joy bereaved,  
Bowed with anguish, deeply grieved,  
Now at length the sword hath passed.

O, that blessed one, grief-laden,  
Blessed Mother, blessed Maiden,  
Mother of the all-holy One.

O that silent, ceaseless mourning,  
O those dim eyes, never turning  
From that wondrous, suffering Son.

Who on Christ's dear Mother gazing,  
In her trouble so amazing,  
Born of woman, would not weep?

Who on Christ's dear Mother thinking,  
Such a cup of sorrow drinking,  
Would not share her sorrow deep?

For his people's sins, in anguish,  
There she saw the Victim languish,  
Bleed in torments, bleed and die.

Saw the Lord's Anointed taken;  
Saw her Child in death forsaken,  
Heard His last expiring cry.

In the Passion of my Maker  
Be my sinful soul partaker  
May I bear with her my part.

Of his Passion bear the token,  
In a spirit bowed and broken  
Bear His death within my heart.

Thou, who on the Cross art bearing  
All the pains I would be sharing,  
Glows my heart with love for Thee.

By Thy glorious Death and Passion  
Saving me in wondrous fashion,  
Saviour, turn my heart to Thee.

At Thy feet in adoration,  
Wrapt in earnest contemplation  
See, beneath Thy Cross I lie.

Iuxta crucem tecum stare,  
Te libenter sociare  
In planctu desidero.

Virgo virginum praeclara  
Mihi iam non sis amara,  
Fac me tecum plangere.

Fac, ut portem Christi mortem,  
Passionis fac consortem  
Et plagas recolere.

Fac me plagis vulnerari,  
Cruce hac inebriari  
Ob amorem filii.

Inflammatum et accensus,  
Per te, virgo, sum defensus  
In die iudicii.

Fac me cruce custodiri,  
Morto Christi praemuniri,  
Confoveri gratia.

Quando corpus morietur,  
Fac, ut animae denetur  
Paradisi gloria.  
Amen.

*anonymous (13th century)*

*There, where all our sins Thou bearest  
In compassion fullest, rarest,  
Hanging on the bitter Tree.*

*Thou who art for ever blessed,  
Thou who art by all confessed,  
Now I lift my soul to Thee.*

*Make me of Thy death the bearer,  
In Thy Passion be a sharer,  
Taking to myself Thy pain.*

*Let me with Thy stripes be stricken!  
Let Thy Cross with hope me quicken,  
That I thus Thy love may gain.*

*All my heart, inflamed and burning,  
Saviour, now to Thee is turning;  
Shield me in the Judgement Day.*

*By Thy Cross may I be guarded,  
Meritless - yet be rewarded  
Through Thy grace, O living Way.*

*While my body here is lying  
Let my soul be swiftly flying  
To Thy glorious Paradise.  
Amen.*