

THE CHERWELL SINGERS

The Cherwell Singers *with*
The Cherwell Baroque Ensemble

Conductor: Julia Craig-McFeely

HANDEL

CORONATION ANTHEMS

Zadok the priest

Let thy hand be strengthened

The King shall rejoice

My heart is inditing

DIXIT DOMINUS

Soprano: Janet Lincé

Janet McMullen

Alto: William Missin

Tenor: Phillip Cave

Bass: Nicholas Jones

8.00pm

Saturday 6th July 1991
Merton College Chapel

By kind permission of the Warden

FOUR CORONATION ANTHEMS (1727)

Soprano - Janet McMullen Alto - William Missin Tenor - Phillip Cave
Bass - Nicholas Jones

ZADOK THE PRIEST

Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon King. And all the people rejoiced and said: God save the King, long live the King, may the King live for ever. Amen, alleluia.

LET THY HAND BE STRENGTHENED

I - Let thy hand be strengthened, and thy right hand be exalted.

II - Let justice and judgement be the preparation of thy seat.

III - Alleluia.

THE KING SHALL REJOICE

I - The King shall rejoice in thy strength, O Lord.

II - Exceeding glad shall he be of thy salvation.

III - Glory and worship hast thou laid upon him. Thou hast prevented him with the blessings of goodness and hast set a crown of pure gold upon his head.

IV - Alleluia.

MY HEART IS INDITING

I - My heart is inditing of a good matter; I speak of the things which I have made unto the King.

II - King's daughters were among thy honourable women.

III - Upon thy right hand did stand the Queen in vesture of gold; and the King shall have pleasure in thy beauty.

IV - Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers.

According to notes on the coronation of George II by Archbishop Wake, the first performance of the Coronation Anthems was fairly disastrous. Handel used a huge number of musicians: 40 singers, and a massive orchestra of 160, and as a result the musicians had to be accommodated on two specially erected platforms with sight lines interrupted by the altar. The first anthem was intended to be *I was glad* but 'This was omitted and no Anthem at all Sung ... by the negligence of the Choir of Westminster'. The second anthem *The King shall rejoice* did not fare much better: 'The Anthem in Confusion: All irregular in the Musick'. Next was supposed to be a hymn, but instead, the choir mistakenly sang the anthem *Zadok the priest*. By the

end of the service though, the musicians seem to have sorted themselves out, and the remaining two anthems apparently went off without a hitch.

Tonight's performance brings the forces down to a more manageable size and balances the orchestra against a choir that does not boast the operatic 'Italian Voices' that Handel had to employ to make up for the deficiency in the trebles of the Royal Chapels.

* * * * * INTERVAL 20 MINUTES * * * * *

DIXIT DOMINUS (1707)

Soprano - Janet Lincé, Janet McMullen Alto - William Missin

Tenor - Phillip Cave Bass - Nicholas Jones

- I - DIXIT DOMINUS Domino meo: Sede a dextris meis, donec ponam inimicos tuos, scabellum pedum tuorum.
- II - VIRGAM VIRTUTIS tuae, emittet Dominus ex Sion: dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.
- III - TECUM PRINCIPIUM in die virtutis tuae in splendoribus sanctorum: ex utero ante luciferum genui te.
- IV - JURAVIT DOMINUS, et non poenitebit eum: Tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech.
- V - DOMINUS A DEXTRIS tuis, confregit in die irae suae reges.
- VI - JUDICABIT in nationibus, implebit ruinas: conquassabit capita in terra multorum.
- VII - DE TORRENTE in via bibet: propterea exaltabit caput.
- VIII - GLORIA PATRI, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto: sicut erat in principio et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Handel arrived in Rome in 1707, and in the same year was commissioned to write the music for the Carmelite Vespers, a lavish festival financed by Cardinal Carlo Colonna. *Dixit Dominus* was only one of three psalms set for an occasion that also included numerous other small antiphons and anthems.

Almost nothing is known about the forces available to him for this performance, though the virtuosity of the music suggests that he must have had some of the very best musicians available in Rome at his disposal. The vocal range is unrelentingly high for all the parts, even at Baroque pitch, and the clarity and complexity of the writing indicate a small group of singers and players rather than the large forces employed for the Coronation Anthems.

Several modern writers have suggested that Handel was out to stun the Roman public with his spectacular orchestral and vocal writing, and as a result sacrificed singability to virtuosity. Compared to the Coronation Anthems, written 20 years later, when Handel was confident in his abilities, *Dixit Dominus* requires phenomenal agility, vigour and precision from the chorus as well as the soloists. The result is an unrelenting stream of magnificently energetic movements, unparalleled in his later works.

THE CHERWELL SINGERS - Conductor: Julia Craig-McFeely

SOPRANO: I - Juliet Chadwick, Sarah Franks, Louise Locock, Joanna Tucker; II - Jane Carlton-Smith, Caroline Richmond, Rachel Robinson, Elizabeth Treasure-Brown, Jenyth Worsley

ALTO: I - Jennifer Barnes, Judith Gardom, Sharon Washington; II - Glynn Butt (repetiteur), Liz Healing, Janet Jeffs

TENOR: I - Derek Fowler, Steven O'Leary, Derek Sutton; II - Bill Johnston John Tucker

BASS: I - Stephen Dunstane, Christopher Franks, Christopher Howse; II - Peter Brandon Jones, Richard Coleridge, Robert de Newtown

THE CHERWELL BAROQUE ENSEMBLE - Leader: Mark Cooper

VIOLIN I: Mark Cooper, Fiona Duncan*, Tim Cronin

VIOLIN II: Garry Clarke, Nicola Hayston*, Sarah Smythe

VIOLA: David Brooker, Pam Cresswell

'CELLO: Katherine Sharman (continuo), Melanie Woodcock

BASS: Helen Whittaker

OBOE: Jane Downer, Matthew Dixon

BASSOON: Fiona Hancock

TRUMPET: Bob Farley, Peter Rawlinson, David Hendry

TIMPANI: Neil Hitt

ORGAN: Stephen Farr

* Playing Viola II in *Dixit Dominus*

Since their foundation in 1978, THE CHERWELL SINGERS have established themselves as one of Oxford's leading amateur chamber choirs, with a wide repertory embracing many periods and styles of music, from medieval motets to 20th century light music. They give three major concerts a year, as well as providing music for weddings, conferences and other functions. Recent concerts have included music by Bononcini, Berlioz and Tippett and performances of J. S. Bach *Magnificat*, Purcell *Dido and Aeneas*, Duruflé *Requiem* and Monteverdi *Vespers*.