

The Cherwell Singers

Conducted by Julian McNamara

1995?

Dvořák *Mass in D*

Janáček *Otčenáš*

Bernstein

*Chichester Psalms*

Andrew Carwood *tenor*

Bernard Keavy *alto*

8.00pm

Saturday 11 November <sup>95</sup>

Magdalen College Chapel

Tickets £7.00 (concessions £5.00). Available from  
Blackwell's Music shop (01865 792792) and at the door.

# THE CHERWELL SINGERS

Conductor: Julian McNamara

Tenor: Andrew Carwood

Alto: Bernard Keavy

Harp: Emma Granger

Percussion: Chris King

Organ: Alex Mason

LEONARD BERNSTEIN

(1918 - 1995)

CHICHESTER PSALMS

I Psalm 108, v2 and psalm 100

II Psalm 23 and psalm 2, vv 1-4

III Psalm 131 and psalm 133, v1

Bernstein wrote the Chichester Psalms for the eponymous Festival of 1965, following a commission by the Very Rev Walter Hussey, the then Dean. All his trademarks are apparent in the work, even in his reduced orchestration which we hear this evening.

After the stark opening chords (*Awake psalter and harp! I will rouse the dawn!*) the music breaks into a vigorous, exuberant paean of praise (*make a joyful noise...come before his presence with singing*) characterised by strong, jaunty rhythms, catchy melodies and colourful harmony. The pace slackens briefly towards the end (*for the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting*) but picks up again for a breathless sprint to the finish.

The second movement (*The Lord is my shepherd*) starts with a boy solo and upper voices in a much more lyrical and reflective mood, but this mood is rudely broken by the ferocious middle section (*Why do the heathen so furiously rage together...the kings of the earth rise up against the Lord...*). The upper voices presently return, floating serenely above the riotous tenors and basses. Bernstein indicates in the score that they are to sing the words *thou preparedst a table for me in the face of my enemies* in a style "blissfully unaware of threat". The ladies eventually subdue the gentlemen, and the boy solo returns for a reprise of the opening material to the words *surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life*.

The last movement starts with a pompous, bad-tempered introduction from the organist, derived from themes already announced. By degrees he loses his bluster and calms down, making room for the harp and gentlemen of the choir to offer one of Bernstein's greatest melodies to the words *Lord my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty*. The upper voices join in and we hear the melody now in canon. Bernstein really knew a good tune when he wrote one, and we hear this one twice more: once from the instruments and again from the voices, this time without words. Here is a tune being sung and enjoyed simply for its own sake. The movement finishes with an echo of the opening of the first movement, but in a new, rapturous mood.

Bernstein is perhaps best known for his stage works, and the Chichester Psalms reflect this background in their vivid, colourful and at times literal response to the text. The use of canon at the mention of 'the shadow' is an obvious example. They are by turn boisterous and moving, lyrical and thrilling. Above all they are dramatic, and unashamedly adopt stage techniques to draw every last drop of drama from the text.

<p>LEOS JANACEK (1854 - 1928) OTCENAS (Our Father)</p>
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Janacek's upbringing and education centred around the church and its ceremonies. At the age of 10 he joined the Monastery Choir in Old Brno and later took over its directorship. He became involved with the Cecilian Reform Movement, a body which believed that Gregorian Chant was the true music of the church. After his training at Prague and Leipzig he settled in Brno. He was much influenced by folk music.

The Moravian *Our Father* was written in 1901 and revised in 1906. The inspiration for it came from a series of "tableaux vivants" staged by the committee of a women's home in response to pictures by the Polish painter Krzesz-Mecina. This enabled Janacek to adopt a subjective, quasi-dramatic treatment of the text rather than that which contemporary convention might have demanded. The section *Give us this day our daily bread* is full of irony, in that it is the composer's response to the picture of villagers crying in anger to Heaven after their harvest has been destroyed by a storm. The energetic *Amen* foreshadows the endings of many of Janacek's later works. The piece as a whole derives great strength from its musical frugality.

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| 1. <i>Our Father, which art in heaven,</i>           | Chorus           |
| <i>Hallowed be thy name.</i>                         |                  |
| 2. <i>Thy kingdom come!</i>                          | Tenor and Chorus |
| 3. <i>Thy will be done,</i>                          | Tenor and Chorus |
| <i>In earth as it is in heaven.</i>                  |                  |
| 4. <i>Give us this day our daily bread!</i>          | Chorus           |
| 5. <i>And forgive us our trespasses,</i>             | Tenor and Chorus |
| <i>as we forgive those that trespass against us.</i> |                  |
| 6. <i>Lead us not into temptation,</i>               | Chorus           |
| <i>But deliver us from evil,</i>                     |                  |
| <i>Amen.</i>   |                  |

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- INTERVAL (15 MINUTES) -

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ANTONIN DVORAK (1841 - 1904) MASS IN D
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The church does not seem to have played a significant part in Dvorak's musical development, although he did become an organ pupil at the age of 16. At 21 he joined the national Theatre of Prague as a viola player, but ten years later he obtained a good post as a church organist and gave up orchestral playing.

The *Mass in D* was first heard in 1887, when it was used for the consecration of Josef Hlavka's private chapel. He founded and became the first President of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts; at the consecration his wife and Dvorak's wife were soloists. The first public performance took place in the following year, still using the organ accompaniment; the composer's orchestral revision came later.

The Mass is essentially pastoral in style and displays Dvorak's great gift for melody and for unexpected, piquant harmonic twists. There are moments of grandeur in the fanfare-like opening of the *Gloria*, and the opening of the *Sanctus* is reminiscent of the peal of bells. But these are exceptions: the strongest echoes are of the bucolic peace and tranquillity only to be found in a private chapel high in the Czech mountains.

1. *Kyrie* 2. *Gloria* 3. *Sanctus* 4. *Benedictus* 5. *Agnus Dei*

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**THE CHERWELL SINGERS**

**Musical Director: Julian McNamara**

**SOPRANO:** *Julia Craig-McFeely*, Sarah Franks, Mary Lewis, Joanna Tucker  
Margrit Campbell, *Kipper Chipperfield*, Sue Dillon, Kate Wandless

**ALTO:** Rowena Cockerham, Rob Harnish, Rosemary Keavy  
Claire Singleton, Janet Jeffs, *Martin Ruck*

**TENOR:** Paul Cann, Martin Price, David Sutton,  
Bill Johnston, Paul Lewis, *John Tucker*

**BASS:** *Paul Mayhook*, Guy Peskett, Tim Wainright  
Richard Coleridge, *Chris Franks*, Peter Jones

*(Those in italics are tonight singing solos).*

The Cherwell Singers was founded in 1978 by a group of friends who wanted to perform the extensive choral chamber repertory to a high standard. The choir undertakes three or more major concerts each year and has a full diary of private functions. Recent concerts of music by composers 1500 - 1900 have included performances of Tallis *Lamentations*, J.S. Bach *Magnificat* and *B Minor Mass*, Scarlatti *Stabat Mater*, Duruflé *Requiem*, Monteverdi *Vespers*, Britten *St. Nicolas*, Langlais *Messe Solennelle*, Mozart *Vespers* and Haydn *Nelson Mass* together with music by White, Marenzio, Purcell, Elgar, Bononcini, Berlioz, Frank Martin, Pizzetti, Leighton and Tippett.

If you would like to engage the choir for a private function or would like further information, then please contact either the Chairman, Richard Coleridge on Oxford 62882 or the Conference Secretary, Christopher Franks on Oxford 723056.

The choir is always pleased to hear from prospective new members.

The next performances by The Cherwell Singers will be:

16th March 1996	Merton College Chapel	Vaughan Williams Poulenc Tallis Victoria	Mass in G Minor Lent Moteis Lamentations of Jeremiah Tenebrae Responsories
22nd June 1996	Holywell Music Rooms	Elgar Brahms Schubert	From the Bavarian Highlands Liebeslieder-Walzer Song of Miriam

If you would like to be on our mailing list for future events, then please complete the slip below and leave it on your seat or hand it to a member of the choir after the performance. You will receive full details of each concert nearer the time together with a concessionary handbill for a ticket at half-price. Your response will also help us to advertise future events.

How did you hear about this concert? (Please tick)

member of choir \_\_\_\_ poster/handbill \_\_\_\_ newspaper \_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_

I would like to be on a mailing list for future events

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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