

The Cherwell Singers

Director: John Padley

Organ: David Bednall

*Parisian
Fireworks*

Langlais, Widor, Duruflé, Dupré

Friday 17 March 2006, 8.00pm

University Church of
St Mary the Virgin, Oxford

Messe pour 2 Chœurs et 2 Orgues

Charles-Marie Widor

Laudate Dominum

Marcel Dupré

Incantation pour un Jour Saint

Jean Langlais

Organ

INTERVAL

Quatre Motets sur des themes Grégoriens

Maurice Duruflé

*Ubi caritas
Tota pulchra es
Tu es Petrus
Tantum ergo*

Messe Solennelle

Jean Langlais

Charles-Marie Widor (1844 – 1937) was organist of St Sulpice on the South bank of the Seine in Paris. He was appointed in 1869 and relinquished the post in 1934 when he was 90 years old! Widor was predominantly a composer for the organ in the grand symphonic style. The *Messe* for 2 Choirs and 2 Organs was composed for St Sulpice with its large choir of seminarians who took the part of the 1st Choir as a baritone chorus. This is very powerful writing with antiphonal exchanges between the two choirs and the west end *grande orgue* and the *petit orgue* in the Choir which is so typical of French late nineteenth century works for the Mass. Widor mixes moments of brilliant fortissimo organ and singing with quiet lyrical episode which give a real picture of the style of writing of this era.

Marcel Dupré succeeded Widor, his former teacher, as organist of St Sulpice. He was a distinguished performer on the world circuit especially known as an improviser from which many of his choral works stem. *Laudate Dominum* is very much in the style of the Widor with loud exchanges between organ and choir and a slower and quieter section before returning to the fireworks of the opening.

Maurice Duruflé was a member of the modern French school and is particularly well-known for his setting of the *Requiem*. Although not very prolific as a composer (he only published 14 works) all his works are meticulously written. Much of his music is based on Gregorian chant and the *Quatre Motets* show this particularly with the *cantus firmus*. Around this he winds glorious harmony to create the most ethereal effect.

Jean Langlais completes the progression from the nineteenth to the twentieth century both harmonically and stylistically. The *Messe Solennelle* was written in 1952 and though in the bombastic style of the Widor, displays a whole new harmonic language and clearly shows the colossal advances in French writing as portrayed by both Langlais and his contemporary Olivier Messiaen.

The Cherwell Singers was founded in 1978 by a group of singers who wished to perform the vocal chamber music repertory, and several of the original singers are still part of the choir. Our repertory covers sacred and secular music from the late Medieval period to 20th-century works (some written especially for the choir), and includes not only central compositions of the choral repertory but many lesser-known pieces. The choir accepts bookings for weddings, dinners and other events, formal and informal, and we welcome enquiries from prospective new members.

Sopranos — Claire Appleton, Sue Bignal, Kipper Chipperfield,
Sarah Franks, Claire Gill, Lucy Goodwin, Nathalie Rowell, Joanna Tucker

Altos — Virginia Allport, Julia Aston-Smith, Julia Craig-McFeely
Caroline Higginbottom, Helen Maidlow, Sally Prime

Tenors — Philip Endean, Ben King, Paul King, Tim Nixon, Guy Peskett,
David Sutton, John Tucker

Basses — Christopher Franks, Neil Herington, Paul Hodges, Simon Jones,
Paul Lewis

Forthcoming concerts:

15 July 2006, University Church of St Mary the Virgin
Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle*; Brahms *Liebeslieder Waltzes*

Contact the choir: www.cherwellsingers.org or 01865 723056

Visit our website at www.oxfordsinfonia.co.uk or 07775 904626