

The Cherwell Singers

present

*Petite messe
solennelle*

Gioachino Rossini

Sunday, 27th June 2010

The Chapel of Exeter College, Oxford

Gioachino Rossini (1792 – 1868)
Petite messe solennelle

Kyrie	Chorus
Gloria	
Gloria	Chorus
Laudamus te	Soloists and chorus
Gratias	Alto, tenor and bass
Domine Deus	Tenor
Qui tollis	Soprano and alto
Quoniam	Bass
Cum Sancto Spiritu	Chorus

Interval

Credo	
Credo in unum Deum	Soloists and chorus
Crucifixus	Soprano
Et resurrexit	Soloists and chorus
Et vitam venturi	Soloists and chorus
Prélude religieux (pendant l'offertoire)	Harmonium and piano
Ritournelle	Harmonium
Sanctus	Soloists and chorus
O salutaris	Soprano
Agnus Dei	Alto and chorus

Performers

Anna Sideris	Soprano
Lucy Ballard	Mezzo-soprano
Nicholas Pritchard	Tenor
Greg Skidmore	Bass
Karen Suter	Piano
David Newsholme	Harmonium
James Brown	Conductor

Rossini wrote his *Petite messe solennelle* in the summer of 1863. It was more than twenty years since he had last produced a major work, and over thirty since he retired from the opera scene. He had lived since 1855 in retirement in Paris, enjoying the stimulation and companionship of artistic and intellectual celebrities. During this last period of his life Rossini composed over 150 chamber works which he referred to jestingly as his *péchés de vieillesse*, his ‘sins of old age’. These pieces, along with favourite arias from his operas, were frequently performed at the fashionable musical evenings hosted by Rossini and his second wife. The music of the *péchés* shows that he had lost neither his skill nor his sense of humour. Many of the pieces have witty titles or marginal glosses, and they often poke gentle fun at compositional clichés or the idiosyncrasies of other composers. Clearly, Rossini was composing simply to please himself.

The *Petite messe solennelle* dates from the same period as the *péchés* and shares with them many characteristics, most obviously the chamber-sized ensemble for which it was originally scored and the cheerful nature of much of the music. It was dedicated to Comtesse Louise Pillet-Will, whose father-in-law, the late Comte, was a benefactor of the arts and personal friend of Rossini. At the beginning of the manuscript Rossini wrote:

Petite Messe Solennelle, in four parts with accompaniment of two pianos and harmonium, composed during my country vacation at Passy. Twelve singers of three sexes – men, women and castrati – will be sufficient for its execution, that is, eight for the chorus, four for the solos, a total of twelve cherubim.

The first performance (actually using 19 singers) took place in 1864 to celebrate the consecration of a private chapel at the Comtesse’s town house. Recently a copy of the score probably contemporary with this performance was found; it shows many differences from the final version, mainly at the starts and ends of movements.

Rossini would have liked to arrange a larger-scale performance with an orchestra in a larger church; but he disliked boys’ voices, so he petitioned the Pope for a dispensation to use women’s voices in church. This was not granted. However, he still orchestrated the work himself so as to avoid others doing it after his death. The changes Rossini made in his final autograph of the chamber version, including adding *O salutaris*, were probably worked out at the same time.

Curiously, nearly all published editions of the *Petite messe solennelle* do not print Rossini’s own harmonium part, but one derived by reduction from the orchestral score; tonight we are using Rossini’s original part. We have dispensed with the second piano part, as it mainly provides simple reinforcement for the first - which is unnecessary when using a more powerful modern instrument.

The harmonium was a popular and fashionable instrument in France in the mid-nineteenth century, and many works were written for it by major French composers such as Franck and Vierne, as well as others such as Dvořák, Richard Strauss, and Mahler. The harmonium being used tonight was made in Paris by Mustel in 1880.

Kyrie

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo

et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te,

gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam
tuam,

Domine Deus, Rex cælestis, Deus Pater
omnipotens. Domine Fili Unigenite, Iesu
Christe, Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius
Patris,

qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis; qui
tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem
nostram. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus, Iesu Christe,

cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

Glory be to God on high.

And in earth peace towards men of good
will. We praise thee. We bless thee. We
worship thee. We glorify thee.

We give thanks to thee for thy great glory.

O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father
almighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son
Jesu Christ. O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son
of the Father,

Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away
the sins of the world, receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For thou only art Holy. Thou only art the
Lord. Thou only art Most High, Iesu Christ,

with the Holy Ghost, in the glory of God the
Father. Amen.

Credo

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem
omnipotentem, factorem cæli et terræ,
visibilium omnium et invisibilium. Et in
unum Dominum Iesum Christum, Filium
Dei Unigenitum, et ex Patre natum ante
omnia sæcula. Deum de Deo, lumen de
lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero,
genitum, non factum, consubstantialem
Patri: per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui
propter nos homines et propter nostram
salute descendit de cælis. Et incarnatus
est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine, et
homo factus est.

I believe in one God, the Father
almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and
of all things visible and invisible. And in
one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of
God, eternally begotten of the Father.
God of God, light of light, very God of
very God. Begotten, not made, being of
one substance with the Father: by whom
all things were made. Who for us men
and for our salvation came down from
heaven. And was incarnate by the Holy
Ghost of the Virgin Mary: and was made
man.

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato; passus, et sepultus est.

et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas, et ascendit in cælum, sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria, iudicare vivos et mortuos, cuius regni non erit finis.

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem: qui ex Patre Filioque procedit. Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur: qui locutus est per prophetas.

Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum,

et vitam venturi sæculi. Amen.

Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.

O salutaris

O salutaris Hostia,
Quae caeli pandis ostium:
Bella premunt hostilia,
Da robur, fer auxilium.
Amen.

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; suffered, and was buried.

And the third day He rose again according to the scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life: Who proceedeth from the Father and Son. Who with the Father and Son together is worshipped and glorified: Who spake by the Prophets.

And in one holy catholic and apostolic church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead,

And the life of the world to come. Amen.

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

O saving Victim,
Who opens the gate of heaven,
Our foes wage war on us,
Give us strength; bring us aid.
Amen.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, give us peace.

Anna Sideris – Soprano

Anna Sideris is approaching her third year reading music at New College Oxford. Following that, she hopes to go on to study classical singing in London.

Anna is in much demand as a soloist in and around Oxford. Previous experience includes Iole in 'Hercules' and Esther in 'Esther' by Handel for New Chamber Opera Studio; the soprano solos in Haydn's 'Nelson Mass' and Dvorak's 'Stabat Mater' for the Oxford Harmonic Society and Poulenc's 'Gloria' conducted by Edward Higginbottom.

Previous operatic experience includes Monica in 'The Medium' by Menotti and Eurydice in 'Orpheus and Eurydice' by Gluck for New Chamber Opera Studio; Susanna in 'The Marriage of Figaro' by Mozart and Miss Wordsworth in 'Albert Herring' by Britten for Young Opera and Lady Billows in Britten's 'Albert Herring' for the Oxford Singers. Future opera plans include the Governess in Britten's 'Turn of the Screw' to be performed in Magdalen Auditorium in November and Rosina in Rossini's 'The Barber of Seville' to be performed in the Sheldonian Theatre in February.

Lucy Ballard – Mezzo-soprano

Since leaving The Royal College of Music, Lucy has enjoyed a thriving and varied career in solo and consort singing, performing and recording a wide range of repertoire with many of the leading ensembles in the UK and abroad.

She sings regularly with various internationally recognised early music groups including the Consort of Musicke, The Clerks, the Gabrieli Consort, and the Tallis Scholars, and she spent five years performing regularly all over the world with the Monteverdi Choir under Sir John Eliot Gardiner. Other recent opera work has included Purcell's Dido and Aeneas with the Purcell Quartet in Japan, and Hildegard of Bingen's Ordo Virtutum

Lucy has also had many opportunities to sing music from the contemporary end of the repertoire. With Ex Cathedra she has sung Messiaen's Cinq Rechants, the mezzo-soprano solo in Aaron Copland's In the Beginning, and Mendelssohn's Elijah.

Recently she has sung in Monteverdi's Orfeo with I Fagiolini for Radio 3, Haydn's Nelson Mass with New College Choir, and Rachmaninoff's Vespers for Ex Cathedra.

Nicholas Pritchard – Tenor

Nicholas Pritchard is currently in his third year reading Music with a Choral Scholarship at New College, Oxford.

He was a music scholar at Christ's Hospital School in West Sussex, where he took part in the first opera to be performed exclusively by school students in Britain, Mozart's The Magic Flute in which he played the lead tenor role of Tamino.

Nicholas works regularly as tenor soloist with choirs around the South and has sung in works including St. John Passion (Bach), Carmina Burana (Orff), Rejoice in the Lamb (Britten), Mass in C (Beethoven), Mozart's Requiem, and Handel's Messiah. Nicholas is also Studio Director of the New Chamber Opera Company. He is a vocal tutor at Ariel Company Theatre Drama Academy, and is employed as a rehearsal pianist around Mid Sussex.

Nicholas has been invited as a guest performer in the Hurstpierpoint Festival, and has performed at the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival in Buxton Opera House - where he will return this August to play the part of Hilarion in Sullivan's Princess Ida. His future engagements include Britten's The Turn of the Screw, Bach's Christmas Oratorio, a concert of works by Handel, and Rossini's The Barber of Seville.

Greg Skidmore – Bass

Born in Canada, Greg graduated in 2005 from Royal Holloway College, University of London. He has sung with the choirs of Wells and Gloucester Cathedrals and is currently a lay clerk at Christ Church Cathedral. He has sung with I Fagiolini, Tenebrae, The Gabrieli Consort, Ex Cathedra, Capella Nova and Chapelle du Roi. He is currently engaged in doctoral research in musicology at Oxford University.

Karen Suter – Piano

After winning the ‘Young Pianist of the Year’ competition Karen Suter won a post-graduate scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Music with Hamish Milne and Geoffrey Pratley. Specialising in chamber music there, she won the major accompaniment and chamber music prizes, going on to make appearances at the Purcell Room, including the Park Lane Contemporary Series, the Wigmore Hall, on BBC Radio, Classic FM as well as on television. Tours in Great Britain have been under the auspices of the Countess of Munster, John Tunnell, the National Federation of Music Societies and, most recently, the Making Music Recital Scheme. Recitals abroad have been in Spain, Turkey, Italy, and the United States.

Karen tours extensively with the clarinetist, Sue Gill, both as a duo and as members of the ensemble ‘Erard’. Recent projects have also included concerts with members of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in the orchestra’s ‘Chamber Music Series’.

As well as performing, Karen also has an active teaching career, teaching both at New College School and at the Dragon School, where she is Head of Keyboard.

David Newsholme – Harmonium

David’s earliest musical experiences were with the choir of Worcester Cathedral, where he was a chorister and later an Assistant Bass Lay Clerk. After spending a gap year as Organ Scholar at Salisbury Cathedral, David went up to Oxford to read music at New College, where he held both an Academic Scholarship and the Organ Scholarship. Before taking up his current post as Assistant Director of Chapel Music at Winchester College, David spent two years as Organist at Bury Parish Church in Lancashire. During this time, he gained a Postgraduate Certificate in Secondary Education and began work on a Ph.D thesis at York University, researching cathedral music of the Restoration period.

David studied the organ with David Sanger, has received tuition on the Harmonium from Anne Page, and continues to have harpsichord lessons with David Ledbetter. He has recently been awarded the W.T. Best Scholarship by the Worshipful Company of Musicians that will assist with his continuing keyboard studies.

James Brown – Conductor

James was organ scholar of Girton College, Cambridge, and after graduating studied organ at the Geneva Conservatoire with world renowned organist Lionel Rogg. He then spent two years as Guest Artist in Residence at First United Methodist Church, Lubbock, Texas, USA, and was a graduate research assistant in music at Texas Tech University. James has held positions as organist of Dean Close School and Cheltenham College. He moved to Oxford in 2006 where he is organist of the University Church, a tenor lay clerk in the acclaimed choir of New College and teacher of organ at Abingdon School and New College School. He has conducted the Cherwell Singers since 2007. His work as a musician takes him in 2010 to the USA, France, Italy, Germany and Bermuda.

The Cherwell Singers

Soprano

Claire Appleton
Clare Scott-Dempster
Rachel Smith
Rachel Slade
Beatrix Stewart
Marie Thebaud-Sorger
Lucy Watson

Alto

Virginia Allport
Jenny Ayres
Katherine Butler
Gillian Hargreaves
Clare Jarvis
Jo McLean
Lizzie Newton
Sally Prime

Tenor

Philip Booth
Paul King
Guy Peskett
Andrew Pritchard
David Sutton

Bass

Neil Herington
Paul Hodges
Simon Jones
Iain McLean
Tim Wainwright

The harmonium used in tonight's performance is supplied by
Harmonium Services of Saltaire, Shipley, West Yorkshire.

Next concert:

An American Christmas

Christmas music from the USA

Sunday, 12th December, 7.30pm

The Chapel of St Peter's College, Oxford

Please visit our web site to learn more about the choir, and listen to some of our recordings online. Use the web form to register yourself on our email list, to ensure you receive notification and full details of future concerts.

www.cherwellsingers.org