

The Cherwell Singers

present

Mozart

Vespers K339

Missa Brevis K192

Church Sonatas K145, K336

James Brown

conductor

Saturday, 16th November 2013

The Chapel of Exeter College, Oxford

Programme

Missa Brevis in F

K 192

Kyrie

Gloria

“Epistle” Sonata in F, K 145

Credo

Canon: “Ave Maria”, K 544

Sanctus & Benedictus

Agnus Dei

Interval

Church Sonata in C

K 336

Vesperae solennes de Confessore

K 339

Dixit Dominus

Confitebor tibi Domine

Beatus vir

Laudate pueri

Laudate Dominum

Magnificat

Louise Lloyd Soprano

Lucy Ballard Mezzo-soprano

Benjamin Durrant Tenor

Duncan Saunderson Bass

Jill O’Brien violin

Nia Lewis violin

Gabriel Amherst cello

Benjamin Bloor organ

James Brown conductor

Notes on the Music

Mozart (1756-1791) spent his teens working for the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg. In the Prince's establishment, music came under the same control as the kitchens, because it was largely provided as background for meals. It might have been considered more seriously in the chapel, but even there a strict time-limit, which Mozart reports as 45 minutes, was imposed on services and hence on the length of the music played as part of them.

Thus the masses that Mozart wrote during this period were very concise – justifying the name “*Missa Brevis*”. This was achieved by not splitting the texts up into separate movements, and in the Gloria and Credo by not repeating words, and even in some masses, having different parts sing successive lines of the text simultaneously. Mozart is sometimes criticised for writing sacred music that doesn't sufficiently take into account the meaning and mood of the words; but it is perhaps more true to say that he simply did not have the luxury of being able to extend the music sufficiently to do that. These masses tend to romp along with little space for reflection.

Another feature of the chapel service in Salzburg at this time was that between the epistle and gospel, instead of a motet or hymn there would be an instrumental movement. This practice ended shortly after Mozart left Salzburg, so the fifteen sonatas written by Mozart for use in this position, which are commonly called his “church” or “epistle” sonatas, are possibly the only examples of music written specifically for this purpose; we will hear two of them tonight.

The *Missa Brevis in F*, **K192** was written in 1774, and is widely considered the best of his masses from that period. Each movement, in line with the comments above, is a single musical structure, but there is no thematic unity between the movements beyond their being in the same key. The *Kyrie* is perhaps the most out of line with the meaning of its text, being jollier than a plea for forgiveness should be by rights, making it clear from the outset that enjoyment of the music was prized above relevance in the Salzburg chapel. The *Gloria* has a more varied texture, in which overarching phrases in long notes contrast with the activity around them. Because there is no time to round off the movement with an extensive coda,

a sense of conclusion is achieved by having the choir come together for the first time to sing the final phrase in long notes in unison. Before that, even without the luxury of separate movements, Mozart has managed to fit in what feels like a sort fugue at the end of the movement, which was a common convention.

The *Sonata in F, K145* was written in the same year as the *Missa Brevis in F*, and so it is reasonable to suppose that they were expected to be performed in the same service. Accordingly, we are performing this sonata in the position in which it would have been heard.

The *Credo* has the most words to be got through, but in this mass Mozart manages to avoid overlapping them. This mass has become known as the “*Little Credo Mass*” because of the device which he uses to break up the movement and give it structure: the opening phrase (based on plainchant) is repeated at points through the movement, to the word “*Credo*”, and is used at the end to round the movement off. He used the same device in a later mass (the “*Credo Mass*”), but this is its first appearance. The same theme is also used to different words and as the subject of the fugal section (again to satisfy convention) towards the end of the movement.

At this point, where in the mass there might be an offertory motet, we will hear a canon to the words “*Ave Maria*”. Whereas most of Mozart’s music was written for income, whether on commission or speculatively, the canons were written either as technical exercises or for private amusement. The words he set are often lewd, to the extent that they were bowdlerised in the first printed editions, but some of the canons were settings of sacred words. *Ave Maria, K544* was written some ten years after this evening’s mass, and is a four-part canon at the unison.

The *Sanctus* and *Hosanna* are short and to the point, while the *Benedictus* follows convention yet again by being a somewhat longer movement sung by the soloists alone. The *Agnus Dei* alternates solo and choral phrases of suitable gravity until the final petition, at which point the choir breaks into a more relaxed dancelike style calculated to send the Prince-Archbishop away in a good mood.

The *Church Sonata in C, K336* was the last one that Mozart wrote before he left Salzburg. Unlike the others, which are either simple trio sonatas for two violins and continuo, or expansions of this texture with a few additional instruments, this sonata has a fully written out and independent organ solo part, giving it the feel of an isolated concerto movement.

Mozart wrote two sets of psalms for Vespers, both of which he prized highly among his works at that time. The second of these, *Vesperae solennes de Confessore, K339*, written in 1780, is the one we are to hear tonight. The psalms used in the Vespers service vary according to the place in the liturgical calendar; and by considering the psalms in this set, and the description “for a confessor”, it is possible to deduce that this set was almost certainly written for the feast of St Rupert, one of the patron saints of Salzburg. It was the last work that Mozart wrote for the cathedral in Salzburg before he moved to Vienna.

While the service of Vespers also had a time limit at Salzburg, the service itself is much shorter than a mass, and so there was more time for music. The movements are more independent than those of the mass, and are in different keys and styles. They may also have been performed individually at different services, with the other psalms being performed to plainchant, or in settings by other composers. More than the Salzburg masses that precede it, this *Vespers* setting reveals a personal side of Mozart's approach to sacred music.

The first three psalms contain some of Mozart's boldest Salzburg church music. *Dixit Dominus* has a festive feel, with declamatory choral writing and the addition of trumpets. *Confitebor tibi Domine* makes more use of the soloists, while in *Beatus vir* the soprano soloist has an almost operatic treatment of the the word “exaltabitur”. In contrast, *Laudate pueri* is a contrapuntal movement in strict, old-fashioned counterpoint, followed by the budding romanticism of *Laudate Dominum* which is the only movement in which the dynamic markings *cresc* and *pp* are used. This movement is well-known outside the context of the larger work, and is often performed in isolation. The final *Magnificat* starts with a grand introduction, harking back to the baroque French Overture style, and continues as a vigorous contrapuntal movement.

Dixit Dominus (psalm 109):

The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power in the beauties of holiness: from the womb of the morning. Thou hast the dew of thy youth.

The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Confitebor tibi Domine (psalm 110):

I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.

The works of the Lord are great: sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: The Lord is gracious and full of compassion. He hath given meat unto them that fear him.

He will be ever mindful of his covenant. He hath shewed his people the power of his works,

That he may give them the heritage of the heathen. The works of his hands are verity and judgement.

All his commandments are sure: they stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.

He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: Holy and reverent is his name.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: A good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.

Glory be to the Father ...

Beatus vir (psalm 111):

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.

His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

Wealth and riches shall be in his house. And his righteousness endureth for ever.

Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious and full of compassion and righteousness.

A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he shall not be moved for ever.

The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings.

His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. he shall not be afraid until he see his desire upon his enemies.

He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.

Glory be to the Father ...

Laudate Pueri (psalm 112):

Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord.

Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore.

From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised.

The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.

Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, yet humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth?

He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.

He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children.

Glory be to the Father ...

Laudate Dominum (psalm 116):

O praise the Lord all ye nations: praise Him, all ye people.

For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever.

Glory be to the Father ...

Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55):

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him, from generation unto generation.

He hath shewed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree.

He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy. As he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father ...

N.B. The Psalms are numbered here according to the Roman Catholic scheme, not the Protestant scheme).

Louise Lloyd soprano

Louise Lloyd was born in Wiltshire and graduated from Birmingham Conservatoire with a First Class Honours degree in Vocal and Operatic Studies. In 2009 she graduated from Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Louise recently sang the role of Musetta in OperaUpClose's Olivier award winning production of Puccini's *La Boheme*. Other operatic engagements include roles such as Barbarina in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Rowan in Britten's *The Little Sweep*, 1st Witch in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Poppea in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. Future engagements include a series of concerts and singing workshops with Operatic Trio Canteremo, and Despina in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* for Pavilion Opera.

Louise is also an experienced oratorio soloist, performing in Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Creation*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Mozart's *Coronation Mass*, and many other works, in places as diverse as St Martin-in-the-Fields, The Barbican, Perth Concert Hall, Oxford Town Hall and Chipping Camden. She is an accomplished consort singer and was choral scholar for St John's Church-Hyde Park from 2007-2009. She was also selected as one of 24 singers to form the Guildhall Consort in collaboration with Harry Christophers and The Sixteen.

Louise also enjoys managing her two vocal ensembles, The Lloyd Ensemble and Canteremo, while having a busy freelance career as a performer and teacher.

Lucy Ballard mezzo-soprano

The English mezzo-soprano, Lucy Ballard, began singing while at school in Oxford.

Since leaving the Royal College of Music in 1995, Lucy Ballard has enjoyed a thriving career in solo and consort singing, performing and recording with many of the leading early music ensembles both in the UK and abroad. These include Anthony Rooley's Consort of Musicke, with whom she has recorded Dowland and his contemporaries.

She spent five years performing all over the world with the Monteverdi Choir and orchestra under Sir John Eliot Gardiner, working on a wide range

of projects and opera productions in Paris (Gluck's *Orphée et Euridice* and *Alceste*), New York and Salzburg (L.v. Beethoven's *Leonora*), Baden-Baden and Cagliari (Verdi's *Falstaff*). She also took part in their millennial J.S. Bach Cantata Pilgrimage.

Other opera work has included touring Japan performing Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with the Purcell Quartet, and Hildegard of Bingen's *Ordo Virtutum*, which she has performed all over Europe. Lucy is a member of the Clerks' Group, and also performs regularly with the Gabrieli Consort, the Cardinal's Music, The King's Consort, Ex Cathedra and the Tallis Scholars.

2005 saw Lucy Ballard singing a quantity of Tallis and Obrecht with the Clerks' Group in their 500th anniversary year, and having a live Early Music Show on Radio3 showcasing the group. She has taught at Dartington Summer School with Ex Cathedra.

All this while juggling two small sons...

Benjamin Durrant tenor

Benjamin Durrant is a Lay Clerk at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. He started his singing at St. John's College, Cambridge, becoming head chorister in his final year.

Having won a music scholarship, Benjamin continued to sing during his time at Eton College, and went on to spend a year as a Choral Scholar at Norwich Cathedral. At Magdalen College, Oxford, Benjamin sang as an Academical Clerk at the college for three years.

In addition to his duties as a Lay Clerk, Benjamin sings with various other ensembles, including The Blenheim Singers and the Philharmonia Chorus, and has toured to Granada and The Edinburgh Festival with The Sixteen.

Benjamin is also an active soloist in Oxford, with recent solo appearances including Mozart's *Requiem* in the Sheldonian Theatre,

Duncan Saunderson bass

Duncan graduated from The Guildhall School of Music, as a countertenor, in 1985. He regularly deputised in the Choirs of Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral under some of the finest choral conductors in the world including John Scott, Simon Preston and Barry Rose.

In 1990, Duncan was appointed Alto Lay clerk in the choir of New College, Oxford before retraining as a bass. During term, he sings 6 evenings a week under Dr Edward Higginbottom, Oxford University's first Professor of Choral Music. With this distinguished and busy touring Choir, he has recorded over 50 discs including Best Selling Classical Recording and Best Early Music Recording (International Gramophone awards 1998/2008).

Duncan has conducted Summertown Choral Society in North Oxford since 1996.

He combines singing and conducting with singing teaching, mostly in London, and Oxfordshire where he presently teaches *Oliver* in the latest West End production.

James Brown conductor

James was Organ Scholar of Girton College, Cambridge and upon graduating studied organ at the Conservatoire de Musique, Geneva with Lionel Rogg. After two years working as an organist in Texas, James returned to England where he is currently Organist of the University Church, Oxford and a lay clerk in New College Choir, with whom he tours this year to the USA, France and the Netherlands as well as participating in broadcasts and recordings. He is also a pianist for the operatic trio Canteremo, and performs with them on the Swan Hellenic Cruise line and has recently completed a five nation tour of South East Asia.

James teaches organ at Abingdon School and New College School and performs regularly with various choirs and choral societies.

James has conducted the Cherwell Singers since 2007.

The Cherwell Singers

Soprano

Rebecca Bullard
Laura Ciccolallo
Marie Crossland
Penny Jaques
Janet Johnson
Stephanie Sumner-Jones
Lucy Watson
Steph White
Lucinda Williams

Tenor

Jeremy Bryans
Guy Peskett
Matthias Range
David Sutton

Alto

Virginia Allport
Jenny Ayres
Rachel Bryans
Katherine Butler
Julia Middleton
Lizzie Newton
Joanna Poulton
Sally Prime

Bass

Neil Herington
Paul Hodges
Simon Jones
Jonathan Mapley
Iain McLean
Tim Wainwright

The Cherwell Singers is looking to recruit voice members in all parts.

If you are interested in joining us please contact James Brown at:

director@cherwellsingers.org

The choir is available to hire for weddings and other events.
To discuss prices and possible repertoire, please contact James Brown at:

director@cherwellsingers.org

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