

# The Cherwell Singers

present

## *Charpentier* *De profundis clamavi*

and other French Baroque church music

<b>James Brown</b>	conductor
<b>Steven Grahl</b>	organ
<b>Bojan Čičić</b>	leader

Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2014  
Exeter College Chapel, Oxford

# Programme

Laboravi clamans	Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)
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Lauda Sion salvatorem	François Couperin (1668-1733)
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O dulce nomen	Étienne Moulinié (1599-1676)
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Veni creator spiritus	Nicolas de Grigny (1672-1703)
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[Plein Jeu] en taille à 5  
Fugue à 5  
Duo  
Recit de Cromorne  
Dialogue sur les Grands Jeux

A custodia matutina	Jean-Joseph Cassanéa de Mondonville (1711-1772)
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## Interval

De profundis clamavi (H189)	Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704)
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Bojan Čičić	Violin
Jill O'Brien	Violin
Rachel Byrt	Viola
Thomas Kirby	Viola
Gabriel Amherst	Cello

Steven Grahl	Organ
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James Brown	Conductor
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## ***French Baroque church music***

This year sees the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Jean-Phillipe Rameau, and to mark this the Cherwell Singers present a programme of sacred choral music from the French Baroque.

Royal patronage in this period ensured an abundance of opportunities for composers associated with the court, and the major work in our concert is an example of this. The *De profundis clamavi* of Charpentier was written for the funeral ceremonies of the Queen of Louis XIV in 1683, and is a work of particular spaciousness and grandeur as befits its regal purpose. We are also presenting other smaller scale works by Couperin, Moulinié, Mondonville and Rameau himself.

Steven Grahl, recently appointed Director of Music at Peterborough Cathedral, is performing the suite *Veni creator spiritus* by Nicolas de Grigny on the French-inspired organ of Exeter College Chapel, which will be interleaved with verses of the plainsong hymn.

We are joined for this concert by a string quintet led by Bojan Čičić of the Academy of Ancient Music.

We hope you will enjoy this opportunity to hear some of the lesser-known works of choral literature from this period when the glory of France was the envy of much of the world.

James Brown

## **Notes and texts**

Baroque musicians served patrons, whether nobles, state or church. It was not until well into the eighteenth century that some musicians, like their twentieth century counterparts, began to work without patronage as independent professionals, earning a living from teaching, composing and performing.

This was also an era of absolute monarchy, where the entire government of a country could be the personal property of an individual. The monarch of the most powerful state then on the European continent was Louis XIV of France. He tersely explained his absolute monarchy with the aphorism, L'État, c'est moi - "I am the state" - which he had demonstrated by centralizing the political and artistic life of his nation at his grandiose court in Versailles. There, the unified conception of buildings, gardens and interiors served as a daily reminder of his absolute power. Lavish musical and theatrical spectacles were staged to charm and disarm his aristocratic courtiers and to dazzle and subdue his foreign visitors. Musicians at Versailles, and at the other courts of Europe, were merely a few of the myriad craftsmen whose purpose was to enhance the glory and power of the sovereign.

However, the contribution of France to baroque music, particularly in its earlier period, 1650-1700, was comparatively small. This was due largely to the influence of Lully, who as a young man took up service at the Court of Louis XIV. Here he used his influence with the king, combined with an aggressive sense of business, to create for himself a virtual monopoly over French music which was to last beyond his death and well into the early 1700s, it being only with Rameau and Couperin that France began to find itself musically once again.

There are also practical reasons why French Baroque music has been comparatively neglected in more recent times. The notation can appear forbidding – bristling with idiosyncratic ornaments, for example. The rhythms as written are often not the rhythms required (though that is also true of much other 18th century music). French music, of all periods, has tended to develop along its own lines with particularly distinctive approaches to harmony and instrumental colour.

Baroque French choral music is often in five or six parts, and these full ensembles are used to create some wonderfully rich harmony. The works are usually settings of words from the Psalms, in the form of "grands motets", requiring a large choir and orchestra, or "petits motets" for single voices or just a few; this limits the choice of repertoire suitable for a mid-size choir such as the Cherwell Singers!

Baroque musicians were not concerned with expressing their own feelings and emotions; rather they sought to describe objectively other feelings and emotions which might be distinct from those which they actually felt. A distinctive feature of Baroque music is that each piece (or single movement within a multi-movement piece) limits itself to only one of the emotions. The particular emotion being described in a given piece is called that piece's affect.

If you had to choose one art form that sums up the baroque era, especially in France, it would be opera. The Church and the aristocrats were being challenged by the new middle class, so they had to assert their authority by creating grand spectacles. This is why baroque church music often sounds just as grand as baroque opera; but none the less, normally it was written specifically to be performed as part of a church service.

**Jean-Phillippe Rameau** spent the first 40 years of his life working in the relative obscurity of the provinces. His treatises on music theory contain ideas which form the basis of modern harmony. Until the age of 50 he worked in the shadow of Lully, and he only wrote his first opera after Lully's death, going on to write many more. Rameau began work at court as the King's compositeur de la musique in 1745 and collaborated on several projects with Voltaire. Only three grands motets by Rameau are known, together with a few fragments, from one of which *Laboravi clamans* is taken.

### **Laboravi clamans** (Ps 68/69 v3)

Laboravi clamans, raucae

factae sunt fauces meae; defecerunt oculi mei, dum spero in Deum meum.

I am weary of crying; my throat is dry: my sight faileth me for waiting so long upon my God.

**François Couperin** inherited his father's position as organist at St Gervais in Paris at the age of 18, and eventually became the harpsichordist at Versailles as well. He is best known for his prolific output of harpsichord music, and the book he wrote to ensure that it was properly performed: *L'art de toucher le clavecin*, which included fingerings, and instructions for ornamentation and playing dotted rhythms. He also composed a number of sacred vocal works that were heavily influenced by Italian cantatas and sonatas, and his interest in the juxtaposition of French and Italian styles continued throughout his lifetime. His small output of organ music is also highly regarded. Couperin remained somewhat controversial for much of his career. While some critics dismissed him as a "dedicated servant of Italy," others viewed the quality of his playing and compositions as the epitome of the French classical tradition.

*Lauda Sion salvatorem* is a petit motet, written in Italian style during Couperin's youth.

**Lauda Sion salvatorem** St. Thomas Aquinas (1225? - 1274)

Lauda Sion Salvatorem,  
lauda ducem et pastorem  
in hymnis et canticis.

Sit laus plena, sit sonora,  
sit iocunda, sit decora  
mentis iubilatio.

Ecce panis angelorum,  
factus cibus viatorum,  
verum panis filiorum,  
non mittendus canibus.

Bone pastor, panis vere,  
Jesu nostri, miserere.  
Tu nos pasce, nos tuere,  
Tu nos bona fac videre  
in terra viventium.

Zion, to Thy Savior sing,  
to Thy Shepherd and Thy King!  
Let the air with praises ring!

Let the praise be loud and high:  
Sweet and tranquil be the joy  
Felt today in every breast.

Hail! Bread of Angels, broken,  
for us pilgrims food, and token  
of the promise by Christ spoken,  
children's meat, to dogs denied!

Jesu, shepherd of the sheep:  
Thou thy flock in safety keep,  
Living bread, thy life supply:  
Strengthen us, or else we die,  
Fill us with celestial grace.

**Étienne Moulinié** is the earliest composer in tonight's concert. He worked at a small court, as the director of music for Gaston d'Orléans, the younger brother of the king, writing sacred and secular music for voice or voices and lute or continuo. He also wrote music to accompany the ballet or other dances. Moulinié wrote airs in both courtly and rustic styles, which were printed in a number of different forms (with and without accompaniment); and many of these were changed into sacred texts for use in church.

### **O dulce nomen**

O dulce nomen Jesu,  
o nomen admirabile, amabile  
et cunctis gentibus desiderabile.

o nomen quod est super omne nomen  
in quo flectitur omne genu,  
cælestium, terrestrium et infernorum.

Laudate igitur nomen dulce, o angeli cælorum.  
amate nomen admirabile et amabile, homines terrarum:  
Laudate nomen Jesu, amate nomen Jesu.

Ipsi soli laus, honor at gloria, per infinita sæculorum sæcula. Amen

How sweet the name of Jesus,  
O admirable and lovable name,  
the desire of all nations.

O name which is above every name  
to which every knee will bend,  
in heaven and earth and beneath the earth.

Then praise that sweet name, angels of heaven.  
Love that wonderful and lovely name, men of earth.  
Praise the name of Jesus, love the name of Jesus.

To Him alone be praise and honor and glory, forever and ever, Amen

**Nicolas de Grigny** was organist at the abbey church of Saint-Denis in Paris, but later returned to his home of Reims to be appointed organist at the cathedral there, a post he held until his death. His organ music is distinguished for its rich texture, complex counterpoint, and expressive melody and for its free exploitation of the contrasting colours of the instrument. His volume *Premier livre d'orgue* (1699) sums up the work of his predecessors and stands with that of François Couperin at the apex of the French classical organ tradition. J.S. Bach so admired it that he transcribed the entire volume for his own use. The work contains a mass setting and five hymns of which *Veni creator spiritus* is one. The sections of each piece were intended to be performed *alternatim* with the plainchant.

### **Veni creator spiritus**

Veni, creator Spiritus  
mentes tuorum visita,  
imple superna gratia,  
quæ tu creasti pectora.

Qui diceris Paraclitus,  
altissimi donum Dei,  
fons vivus, ignis, caritas  
et spiritalis unctio.

Tu septiformis munere,  
digitus paternæ dexteræ  
tu rite promissum Patris  
sermone ditans guttura.

Accende lumen sensibus,  
infunde amorem cordibus,  
infirmi nostri corporis,  
virtute firmans petiti.

Hostem repellas longius  
pacemque dones protinus;  
ductore sic te prævio  
vitemus omne noxium.

Per te sciamus da Patrem  
noscamus atque Filium,  
te utriusque Spiritum  
credamus omni tempore.

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,  
and in our hearts take up Thy rest;  
come with Thy grace and heav'nly aid,  
To fill the hearts which Thou hast made.

O Comforter, to Thee we cry,  
Thou heav'nly gift of God most high,  
Thou Fount of life, and Fire of love,  
and sweet anointing from above.

O Finger of the hand divine,  
the sevenfold gifts of grace are thine;  
true promise of the Father thou,  
who dost the tongue with power endow.

Thy light to every sense impart,  
and shed thy love in every heart;  
thine own unfailing might supply  
to strengthen our infirmity.

Drive far away our ghostly foe,  
and thine abiding peace bestow;  
if thou be our preventing Guide,  
no evil can our steps betide.

Praise we the Father and the Son  
and Holy Spirit with them One;  
and may the Son on us bestow  
the gifts that from the Spirit flow.



**Jean-Joseph de Mondonville** was a highly successful French violinist and composer who gained the patronage of the king's mistress Madame de Pompadour. Mondonville composed 17 grands motets, of which only nine have survived. Thanks to his mastery of both orchestral and vocal music, Mondonville was considered to have brought to the grand motet - the dominant genre of music in the repertory of the Chapelle royale before the French Revolution - an intensity of colour and a dramatic quality hitherto unknown.

*A custodia matutina* is just one part of Mondonville's grand motet *De Profundis*, most of which requires a much larger orchestra.

#### **A custodia matutina** (Ps 129/130 v6)

A custodia matutina usque ad noctem,  
speret Israël in Domino.

From the morning watch even until night,  
let Israel hope in the Lord.,

**Marc-Antoine Charpentier** is believed to be from a family of royal painters. He studied with Carissimi in Rome in the 1660s before returning to Paris around 1670. In addition to his position as maître de musique at the residence of Marie de Lorraine, Mademoiselle de Guise, which lasted until her death in 1688, he became Molière's musical collaborator when the dramatist broke with Lully in 1672. Although Molière's death in 1673 put a premature end to their partnership, Charpentier continued working with the Comédie-française. Louis XIV liked his theater music so much that he granted him a pension in 1683.

In addition to his employment in the secular realm, Charpentier held several posts in the church during the final decades of his life. After serving as the maître of the Jesuits' St. Louis church, Charpentier

became the maître de musique des enfants at the Sainte Chapelle in 1698. As a result of these positions, Charpentier's repertoire includes 11 Mass settings; a large number of Psalms, antiphons, sequences and lessons; more than 200 motets; and many instrumental works intended for performance in church. He made two settings of the psalm *De profundis*, of which this is the grander.

### **De profundis clamavi** (Ps 129/130 + Requiem)

De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine; Domine, exaudi vocem meam.  
Fiant aures tuæ intendentes in vocem deprecationis meæ.  
Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine, Domine, quis sustinebit?  
Quia apud te propitiatio est; et propter legem tuam sustinui te, Domine.  
Sustinuit anima mea in verbo ejus: speravit anima mea in Domino.  
A custodia matutina usque ad noctem, speret Israël in Domino.  
Quia apud Dominum misericordia, et copiosa apud eum redemptio.  
Et ipse redimet Israël ex omnibus iniquitatibus ejus.

Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice.  
O let thine ears consider well: the voice of my complaint.  
If thou, Lord, were to mark our iniquities: O Lord, who may abide it?  
For there is mercy with thee: therefore shalt thou be feared.  
I look for the Lord; my soul doth wait for him: in his word is my trust.  
My soul fleeth unto the Lord:  
From the morning watch even until night, let Israel hope in the Lord.,  
For with the Lord there is mercy: and with him is plenteous redemption.  
And he shall redeem Israel: from all his sins.

Give them eternal rest, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine on them.

# Biographies

## **Steven Grahl** organ

Steven Grahl recently took up the post of Director of Music at Peterborough Cathedral. Previously he was Assistant Organist at New College, Oxford, and alongside this post, he held the position of Organist & Director of Music at St Marylebone Parish Church, London. He is a member of the Oxford University Faculty of Music, and since 2006 he has been Principal Conductor of the Guildford Chamber Choir.

Steven enjoys a varied career as both keyboard player and conductor. Recent years have seen performances in America, France, Germany, Italy and Spain, and at numerous prestigious UK venues, such as Westminster Cathedral and St John's Smith Square.

A prize-winning graduate of Magdalen College, Oxford (where he was Organ Scholar) and the Royal Academy of Music, Steven gained the Limpus (highest mark) and Dixon (improvisation) prizes in his FRCO examination, and he is also a holder of the Worshipful Company of Musicians' Silver Medallion.

## **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 regularly as well as participating in broadcasts and recordings. James is also a pianist for the cruise lines Swan Hellenic and Fred Olsen, and future cruises for 2015 include South East Asia and North Africa.

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**

Marie Crossland  
Katherine Doherty  
Janet Johnson  
Clare Scott-Dempster  
Rhiannon Stubbs  
Stephanie Sumner-Jones  
Lucy Watson

## **Alto**

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

## **Tenor**

Jeremy Bryans  
Guy Peskett  
David Read  
Mike Smith  
David Sutton

## **Bass**

Neil Herington  
Paul Hodges  
Jack Lovell  
Iain McLean  
Jonathan Mapley  
Gerald Pickford

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](mailto:director@cherwellsingers.org)

## **Next Concert – March 2015**

### **Dvořák – Stabat Mater**

*in the version with Dvořák's own original piano accompaniment.*

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