

# The Cherwell Singers

present

## *Dvořák* *Stabat mater*

motets by Bruckner

**Martin Cousin**

piano

**James Brown**

conductor

Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2015

University Church of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford

# Programme

Vexilla regis  
Christus factus est

Anton Bruckner  
(1824-1896)

Stabat mater

Antonín Dvořák  
(1841-1904)

Stabat Mater (solo quartet & chorus)  
Quis est homo (solo quartet)  
Eia Mater (chorus)  
Fac ut ardeat (bass solo & chorus)  
Fac ut portem (soprano & tenor duet)  
Inflammatum (mezzo-soprano solo)  
Quando corpus (solo quartet & chorus)

Susan Jiwey	Soprano
Lucy Ballard	Mezzo-soprano
Paul Badley	Tenor
Peter Willcock	Bass
Martin Cousin	Piano
James Brown	Conductor

## ***Dvořák – Stabat mater***

With the approach of Passiontide the Cherwell Singers present a rare performance of the original piano version of the most extensive setting of the thirteenth century hymn to Mary, the *Stabat Mater* by Antonin Dvořák. Written as a reaction to the death of his daughter in 1876, Dvořák had to lay aside the orchestration of the work due to his other obligations, but the smaller scale and more intimate setting provided by this original piano version is perfect for a chamber choir such as ours.

Complementing the Dvořák are a pair of unaccompanied motets by another late nineteenth century Catholic composer from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Anton Bruckner.

We hope you will enjoy this evening's programme.

James Brown

## **Notes and texts**

**Josef Anton Bruckner** is best known to classical music buffs as a symphonist, the “master-builder of cathedrals in sound” who was deeply influenced by Wagner’s grand operas and who served in turn as an inspiration for Gustav Mahler.

Bruckner’s thirty-odd motets are often ignored but they are a crucial part of his compositional output. They express his devout Roman Catholic beliefs, using the modal chords and long, Gregorian chant-like lines of the Renaissance masters. But the harmonic shifts and compositional techniques display a clearly Romantic sensibility, and the blocks of contrasting sound display Bruckner’s roots as an organ improviser.

Bruckner's last church composition, *Vexilla regis*, dates from 1892, when the ailing Bruckner was struggling to complete his ninth and last symphony. The last thing Bruckner needed at such a time was distraction, yet he insisted that the urge to compose *Vexilla regis* came 'straight from the heart'. The aspiring cadential figure at the word 'prodeunt' near the start echoes Wagner's use of the old Lutheran 'Dresden Amen' in his last opera *Parsifal*.

Vexilla regis prodeunt:	<i>The Royal Banner forward goes,</i>
Fulget crucis mysterium	<i>The mystic Cross refulgent glows:</i>
Quo carne carnis conditor,	<i>Where He, in Flesh, flesh who made,</i>
Suspensus est patibulo.	<i>Upon the Tree of pain is laid.</i>
O Crux ave, spes unica,	<i>O Cross! all hail! sole hope, abide</i>
Hoc passionis tempore	<i>With us now in this Passion-tide:</i>
Auge piis justitiam,	<i>New grace in pious hearts implant,</i>
Reisque dona veniam.	<i>And pardon to the guilty grant.</i>
Te, summa Deus Trinitas,	<i>Thee, mighty Trinity! One God!</i>
Collaudet omnes spiritus:	<i>Let every living creature laud;</i>
Quos per crucis mysterium	<i>Whom by the Cross Thou dost deliver,</i>
Salvas, rege per sæcula.	<i>O guide and govern now and ever!</i>
Amen.	<i>Amen.</i>

*Christus factus est* is used as part of the Mass on Maundy Thursday, and its text comes from Philippians 2:8-9. It is certainly the most effective motet that Bruckner wrote, though not the most fully scored, and impresses less by the drama of the setting than by the subtle intricacy of harmonic shift and motivic development. The final cadence is a fine summation of Bruckner's art, reconciling outward movement with inner stillness; all suggestion of triumphalism is avoided in the final reference to the 'name which is above every name'.

Christus factus est pro nobis obediens  
 usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.  
 Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum et dedit illi nomen,  
 quod est super omne nomen.

*Christ became obedient for us unto death,  
 even to the death, death on the cross.  
 Therefore God exalted Him and gave Him a name  
 which is above all names.*

**Antonín Leopold Dvořák** displayed his musical gifts at an early age, playing the violin. Later, as a young composer entering an early symphony into a competition, he attracted the attention of Brahms who subsequently introduced him to a publisher and gave him advice.

Dvořák's fame in the UK and America started with the huge success in the UK of his *Stabat Mater*, in 1883. The piece had its world premiere in Prague on December 23rd, 1880 and the success of the first UK performance led to Dvořák being invited to England to conduct the work in person. His fame subsequently spread to the United States where he then worked and composed for some ten years.

The *Stabat Mater* was a work brought about by personal tragedy of almost incomprehensible proportions. In 1875, his newly born daughter died at only two days of age. The grieving father then wrote the first version of the *Stabat Mater*, as a means of coping with the child's death. It was to become a work of mourning and a work of healing, a setting of an ancient Roman Catholic poem that tells of the Virgin Mary's grief over the crucifixion of Jesus as she is standing under his cross.

Tragically, barely two years later in 1877, over just three weeks he lost both his remaining children. The Dvořáks subsequently had other children who survived, but at the time, their grief must have been overwhelming. The composer's means of emotional survival was to bury himself again in his *Stabat Mater*, to which he now added three movements, after which he orchestrated it. The final form is the largest of all settings of these words.

It has long been assumed that the first version of the work was an incomplete sketch to which Dvořák returned after the later tragedies, completing what he had for some reason left aside. But during recent work on a new edition the scholars studying the early piano score realised that it was not incomplete, but contained an essentially finished work as it stood. Admittedly, the work was not performed by Dvořák in this form; but a later remark to a friend confirms that he thought of the addition of the extra movements as an extension of an already complete work.

When Dvořák extended and orchestrated the work, he also made changes and revisions. In the earlier movements these are minor; but the last two movements were radically reworked. The mezzo-soprano solo was changed from a fragile and intimate lied to a forceful introduction to the final movement; and several pages of the last movement were totally rewritten.

Tonight's performance attempts to present the work as Dvořák originally conceived it. The piano accompaniment is that written by Dvořák, rather than a reduction of the later orchestration, and the last two movements have been recreated from facsimiles of the piano score (this early version is not yet available in published form).

## 1 *solo quartet & chorus*

Stabat Mater dolorosa  
iuxta crucem lacrimosa  
dum pendebat Filius.  
Cuius animam gementem  
contristatam et dolentem  
pertransivit gladius.

O quam tristis et afflicta  
fuit illa benedicta  
Mater Unigeniti.  
Quae mærebat et dolebat  
Pia Mater dum videbat  
et tremebat cum videbat  
nati poenas incliti.

The Mother stood grieving beside the cross weeping while on it hung her Son;  
Whose sighing soul, saddened and suffering, was pierced by the sword.

O how sad and afflicted was that blessed Mother of the Only-begotten,  
Who mourned and grieved the pious mother looked and trembled seeing the  
torment of her glorious Child.

## 2 *solo quartet*

Quis est homo qui non fleret  
Matri Christi si videret  
in tanto supplicio?  
Quis non posset contristari  
Matrem Christi contemplari  
dolentum cum filio?

Pro peccatis suæ gentis  
vidit Iesum in tormentis  
et flagellis subditum.  
Vidit suum dulcem natum  
moriendo desolatum  
dum emisit spiritum.

Who is the person who would not weep seeing the Mother of Christ in such agony?  
Who would not be saddened to behold the Mother of Christ suffering with her Son?

For the sins of His people she saw Jesus in torment and subdued with whips.  
She saw her own dear Son dying, abandoned, while He gave up his spirit.

## 3 *chorus*

Eia Mater, fons amoris,  
me sentire vim doloris  
fac ut tecum lugeam.

O Mother, fount of love, make me feel the strength of your grief, so that I may  
mourn with you.

## 4 *bass solo & chorus*

Fac ut ardeat cor meum  
in amando Christum Deum  
ut sibi complaceam.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,  
crucifixi fige plagas  
cordi meo valide.

Make my heart burn with love for Christ my Lord, that I may be pleasing to Him.  
Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the Crucified drive deep into my heart.

**5 (8)** *soprano & tenor duet*

Fac ut portem Christi mortem  
passionis fac consortem  
et plagas recolere.

Fac me plagis vulnerari  
cruce hac inebriari  
ob amorem filii.

Let me bear the death of Christ, share his Passion, and commemorate His wounds.  
Let me suffer his wounds, and by the cross be transported through love of the Son.

**6 (9)** *contralto solo*

Inflammatum et accensus,  
per te, Virgo, sim defensum  
in die iudicii.

Fac me cruce custodiri  
morte Christi præmuniri  
confoveri gratia.

Burning in the flames, may I be defended by you, Virgin, on the day of judgement.  
May I be guarded by the cross, protected by Christ's death, cherished by grace.

**7 (10)** *solo quartet & chorus*

Quando corpus morietur  
fac ut animæ donetur  
paradisi gloria.                      Amen.

When my body dies, grant that my soul be given the glory of paradise    Amen.

# Biographies

## **Susan Jiwey** soprano

Susan Jiwey graduated with distinction from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She is winner of the Prix Bernac for Best Singer at the Ravel International Academy and has specialised in singing lead roles with small professional companies in the UK, France and Spain.

Her busy professional stage career includes Mimi *La Bohème* in the Olivier award-winning production for OperaUpClose where she has performed the role in successful runs at the Ravenna Festival, Soho Theatre and Charing Cross Theatre. She has also sung Rosalinde *Die Fledermaus* for Opera de Bauge, Donna Elvira *Don Giovanni* with Opera Vera and Westminster Opera, Violetta *La Traviata* for Iford Festival Opera and *Madam Butterfly* for New Devon Opera. She is an experienced oratorio soloist and has recently appeared as soloist in *Messiah*, Teatro Calderon, Valladolid and Dvořák's *Te Deum* with Wimbledon Choral Society.

Please see [www.susanjiwey.com](http://www.susanjiwey.com) for more information.

## **Lucy Ballard** mezzo-soprano

Since studying as a post-graduate at the Royal College of Music, Lucy has enjoyed a wide and varied career as a freelance singer. Within the Early music scene, she has sung and traveled the world with the Tallis Scholars, the Gabrieli Consort, the Consort of Musicke, the Monteverdi Choir, the Clerks' group and many others. In the wider music world, she sings with such as the Britten Sinfonia, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Recent work has included performing Handel's Hercules with the English Concert in Paris and Vienna, followed by Marian Anthems in Oslo with the Gabrieli Consort. She is shortly to perform James MacMillan's St Luke's Passion in Cambridge and London, and will head to Aldburgh for Bach Motets with Sir John Eliot Gardiner in June.

Having grown up here, Lucy returned to live in Oxford with her family a few years ago. She is very happy to be singing with the Cherwell Singers again.

## **Paul Badley** tenor

Paul has performed as a soloist with many of today's leading conductors: Sir Simon Rattle, Richard Hickox, Serji Ozawa, Christopher Hogwood, Trevor Pinnock and Ivan Fischer, and made CD recordings which include the title role in Ken Roberts' opera "Mr Butterfly", Percy Grainger's Part Songs with Richard Hickox, Mozart's Requiem with The Chamber Orchestra of Europe, and Rachmaninov's Vespers with Tenebrae.

Paul performed the role of Michael De Haughton-Tours in the musical comedy *A Perfect Picnic* for Opera on the Run, based on the operatic music of Mozart. He has given a master-class at The Bermuda Festival, performed Bach's *Matthew Passion* with The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment conducted by Ivan Fischer, and gave performances of Finzi's *Dies Natalis*, Elgar's *The Kingdom*, and Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ*.

In contrast to his classical work he sang in Kurt Weil's *Die Todsunden* with Ute Lemper and recorded a rock album with Gregorian.

His recent oratorio performances include Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Haydn's *Sancta Nicolai Messe*, Handel's *Judas Maccabeus*, *Israel in Egypt* and *Messiah*, Bach's *Magnificat* and Britten's *St. Nicolas*.

## **Peter Willcock** bass

Peter Willcock is currently a chorister at English National Opera and in the last few years has worked as a soloist for Garsington Opera, Grange Park Opera and Royal Opera House 2. He has been a chorister at St John's Wood Church for the past 8 years and is a regular recitalist and oratorio singer.

Oratorio solo work includes requiems by Verdi, Mozart, Faure and Brahms, Handel's *Messiah*, Bach *St Matthew*, *St John Passion* and *B Minor Mass*, Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ*, Stainer's *Crucifixion* and numerous others.

His more enjoyable/notable roles to date include 'Owl' in 'The Owl and the Pussycat' and 'Rover-the headmaster dog' in 'A Doctor's Tale'; both written by Monty Python Terry Jones and composer Anne Dudley for the Royal Opera House.

He works a great deal in Opera Education as an animateur and choral trainer for the Royal Opera House, Opera North and Streetwise Opera; as a high school and university vocal tutor, and also lectures at Durham University and Royal Holloway University London in contemporary performance practice.

## **Martin Cousin** piano

Martin is regarded as one of the most exceptional pianists of his generation, having been awarded 1st Prize at the 2005 Ettore Pozzoli International Piano Competition (Seregno, Italy) and Gold Medal at the 2003 Royal Over-Seas League Music Competition (London).

He has appeared regularly in the major British musical venues since graduating from the Royal College of Music, making his London solo debut at the Purcell Room in 1998. He has performed as concerto soloist with the London Philharmonic, Halle, Royal Philharmonic, Philharmonia and BBC Concert Orchestras. Performances further afield have included tours of New Zealand, the US, Italy, and concerts in Stockholm, Brussels, Toronto, Tokyo, Berne and The Hague.

2006 saw the release of his debut CD with SOMM Recordings, and his second CD for them, featuring Glazunov's piano sonatas, was released in 2010 to great acclaim, with International Piano remarking "this new disc showcases playing that is both seemingly effortless in its technique and yet utterly natural and sympathetic in its musical narrative and characterisation."

Highlights of recent seasons have included Rachmaninov's 2nd Concerto, Grieg's Concerto, Mozart's Concerto K488, and a solo recital at Wigmore Hall.

Alongside his solo schedule, chamber music has taken him to Prague, Tokyo, Indonesia and Thailand, Zimbabwe and Barbados and he is a founder member of the Aquinas Piano Trio.

Martin's hands are also featured on the big screen in the Oscar-winning film "Shine", for the scenes involving Rachmaninov's 3rd Concerto.

## **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  
Janet Johnson  
Dorien Schouten  
Clare Scott-Dempster  
Rhiannon Stubbs  
Stephanie Sumner-Jones  
Judith Ward

## **Tenor**

Jeremy Bryans  
Guy Peskett  
Mike Smith  
David Sutton  
Frits Veerman

## **Alto**

Virginia Allport  
Rachel Bryans  
Julia Middleton  
Lizzie Newton  
Anna Orlovska  
Joanna Poulton

## **Bass**

Paul Hodges  
Jack Lovell  
Iain McLean  
Jonathan Mapley  
Simeon Mitchell  
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](mailto:director@cherwellsingers.org)

## **Next Concert – 5<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

In the Grove Auditorium, Magdalen College

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