

# The Cherwell Singers

present

## *Schubert*

*Miriam's Song of Triumph*

*Mass in G major*

*and other religious works*

**Anna Sideris**

soprano

**Martin Cousin**

piano

**Timothy Wakerell**

organ

**Halcyon Quartet**

**James Brown**

conductor

Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2018

University Church of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford

# Programme

Impromptu in C minor, D899/1

Ave Maria, D839

Psalm 23, D706

Miriam's Song of Triumph, D942

## Interval

Tantum ergo in Eb, D962

Mass N° 2 in G major, D167

*Kyrie*

*Gloria*

*Credo*

*Sanctus*

*Benedictus*

*Agnus Dei*

Tantum ergo in C, D461

Anna Sideris	soprano
Andrew Bennett	tenor
Patrick Keefe	bass
Martin Cousin	piano
Timothy Wakerell	organ
Halcyon Quartet	
James Brown	conductor

The Halcyon Quartet consists of: Millie Ashton and Leidy Sinclair (violins), Nathalie Green-Buckley (viola), and HeeYeon Cho (cello).

# *Schubert*

The Viennese composer Franz Schubert is famous for straddling the Classical and Romantic periods in music, and for producing over one thousand pieces of music during his brief thirty-one years of life. This term the Cherwell Singers devotes an entire evening to celebrating his best and least known works of choral music.

The *Mass in G* of 1815 is the most popular and frequently performed of his eight mass settings, and we will be performing it in its original version for strings and organ. Also accompanied by the strings and organ are two less well known settings by Schubert of the medieval Latin hymn, *Tantum ergo*.

In the first half of the concert we are joined by pianist Martin Cousin who plays a prominent role in the little known *Mirjams Siegesgesang* or *Miriam's Song of Triumph*, written in the last year of Schubert's life. This is a dramatic setting of the story from the book of Exodus of the victory of the Israelites as they crossed the Red Sea in safety, unlike the Egyptian army who drowned before their eyes. This work features soprano soloist Anna Sideris, who will also perform the much loved *Ave Maria*, probably the most often performed of all Schubert's many songs. Not to be outdone, the ladies of the choir will perform the equally well-loved setting of *Psalm 23*, also with its original piano accompaniment.

James Brown

## **Schubert and Religion**

**Franz Schubert** (1797-1828) was one of the greatest child prodigy composers in musical history. He came from a musical family, and at age eight began studying violin with his father and piano with an older brother.

As with other areas of his personal life, direct evidence concerning Schubert's religious beliefs is hard to come by. His father was a devote Catholic, and the young composer grew up singing in the choir of the imperial court chapel in Vienna. By the time he was 19, he had already composed four complete settings

of the Catholic Mass, and more would follow. However, Schubert was a free-thinker, and the churchmen in his life were all either Josephinians, or pantheists, or both - such as Johann Philip Neumann, who wrote the text of the “German Mass” which Schubert set in 1827. In addition we know that some of his closest friends argued about theological issues.

At times he found it difficult to accept what he saw as the harsh and dogmatic aspects of the Catholic Church, often challenging the established views of the church. Nevertheless, in an 1824 diary entry he wrote that “It is with faith that man first enters the world. It comes long before reason and knowledge, for to understand something one must first believe something ... Reason is nothing other than analysed faith”. In 1825, he wrote to his parents that he never “forced [himself] to prayer”.

However, he wrote almost 39 works of sacred music showing anything but cool distance. One sometimes has the impression that Schubert attempted to give his personal piety and his individual faith an equally personal space in his works of sacred music.

## Notes and Words

### *Impromptu in C minor, D899/1*

Franz Schubert’s *Impromptus* are a series of eight pieces for solo piano composed in 1827. They were published in two sets of four *impromptus* each. Only the first two pieces (of which we hear one tonight) were published in the composer’s lifetime, and it is hard to understand why it took several decades before all of this group of popular pieces were published. The name *Impromptu* was not originally chosen by Schubert – it was suggested by his publisher, following the example of another bohemian composer, Jan Václav Voříšek, and then used by Schubert himself for the later pieces.

In spite of the name, there is nothing here that suggests improvisation, much less unpreparedness. Although ostensibly composed with an eye on the burgeoning amateur market, several of the pieces require something close to a virtuoso technique if they are to be brought off with the necessary panache and colour. The *impromptu* we hear tonight was used as the basis for Patrick Gower’s score to the 1982 television series *Smiley’s People*.

### *Ave Maria, D839*

In 1825, Schubert composed a selection of seven songs from Scott’s *The Lady of the Lake* in a German translation by Adam Storck (1780–1822). Number 6 “Ellen’s third song” is the piece we now know as *Ave Maria!* – though the words are not those of the prayer. In Scott’s poem the character Ellen Douglas, the Lady of the Lake (Loch Katrine in the Scottish Highlands), has gone to stay in

the Goblin's cave with her exiled father as he has declined to join the rebellion against King James. As Roderick Dhu, the rebel leader, sets off with his warriors, he hears the distant sound of Ellen singing a prayer addressed to the Virgin Mary, calling upon her for help.

The song cycle proved to be one of Schubert's most financially successful works, the Austrian composer being paid by his publisher 20 pounds sterling, a sizable sum for a musical work in the 1820s. In a letter from Schubert to his father and step-mother he writes about *Ave Maria* and the other songs in his *Lady of the Lake* cycle: "My new songs from Scott's *Lady of the Lake* especially had much success. They also wondered greatly at my piety, which I expressed in a hymn to the Holy Virgin and which, it appears, grips every soul and turns it to devotion."

Walt Disney used Schubert's song in the final part of his 1940 film *Fantasia*.

Ave Maria! Jungfrau mild,  
Erhöre einer Jungfrau Flehen,  
Aus diesem Felsen starr und wild  
Soll mein Gebet zu dir hin wehen.  
Wir schlafen sicher bis zum Morgen,  
Ob Menschen noch so grausam sind.  
O Jungfrau, sieh der Jungfrau Sorgen,  
O Mutter, hör ein bittend Kind!  
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! Unbefleckt!  
Wenn wir auf diesen Fels hinsinken  
Zum Schlaf, und uns dein Schutz bedeckt  
Wird weich der harte Fels uns dünken.  
Du lächelst, Rosendüfte wehen  
In dieser dumpfen Felsenkluft,  
O Mutter, höre Kindes Flehen,  
O Jungfrau, eine Jungfrau ruft!  
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! Reine Magd!  
Der Erde und der Luft Dämonen,  
Von deines Auges Huld verjagt,  
Sie können hier nicht bei uns wohnen,  
Wir woll'n uns still dem Schicksal beugen,  
Da uns dein heil'ger Trost anweht;  
Der Jungfrau wolle hold dich neigen,  
Dem Kind, das für den Vater fleht.  
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! maiden mild!  
Listen to a maiden's prayer!  
Thou canst hear though from the wild;  
Thou canst save amid despair.  
Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,  
Though banish'd, outcast and reviled –  
Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer;  
Mother, hear a suppliant child!  
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! undefiled!  
The flinty couch we now must share  
Shall seem with down of eider piled,  
If thy protection hover there.  
The murky cavern's heavy air  
Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled;  
Then, Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer,  
Mother, list a suppliant child!  
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! stainless styled.  
Foul demons of the earth and air,  
From this their wonted haunt exiled,  
Shall flee before thy presence fair.  
We bow us to our lot of care,  
Beneath thy guidance reconciled;  
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer,  
And for a father hear a child!  
Ave Maria!

## ***Psalm 23, D706***

Psalm 23, evoking the image of God as a Shepherd, frequently serves as a comforting message during a funeral service. Given its popularity it is hardly surprising that composers throughout the ages have set this text to music.

For his setting of *Psalm 23*, which was commissioned by his fellow choir director Anna Fröhlich in 1820, Schubert relied on the German text translation fashioned by Moses Mendelssohn. Scored for two soprano and two alto sections, the composition was specifically commissioned to serve for vocal examinations at Vienna's Konservatorium der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. The work was highly regarded from the beginning, and called "a pleasant composition, if rather too long" In this piece Schubert skilfully combines textual declamation and serenity of expression with a highly effective and nuanced musical language. The work remained among the conservatory's examination pieces for many years.

God is my shepherd: I shall not want.

He maketh me to rest in green pastures: he leadeth me beside still waters.

He giveth peace unto my soul: he leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in death's dark shadowed valley, yet I will fear no evil: for thou art with me still; thy rod and staff, they comfort me.

Thou shalt prepare a table for me, in presence of mine enemies: thou hast anointed my head with oil, my cup runneth over.

Thy goodness and thy mercy shall ever follow me: and I shall dwell with God for evermore.

## ***Miriam's Song of Triumph, D942***

*Miriam's Siegesgesang* (Victory Song) was one of Schubert's last works. Although it is often assumed that Schubert intended to orchestrate the work (and it was later orchestrated by a friend of his), the piano writing is idiomatic for the instrument, and there are no indications of possible instrumentation. The original text is by Franz Grillparzer (1791-1872); it is very loosely adapted from chapter 15 of Exodus, in which, following their deliverance from Pharaoh and his army and escape through the Red Sea, Moses and the Israelites sing a lengthy song - of which Miriam the prophetess then repeats the first two lines. In ascribing his lengthy song to Miriam rather than Moses, Grillparzer has perhaps struck a blow for feminism.

Schubert's setting is his most direct homage to Handel, whose music was frequently performed in Vienna at that time. When reading Handel's music at the piano, Schubert is supposed to have remarked: "Oh, the daring of these modulations! Things like that do not occur to the likes of us even in a dream!" The setting is also filled with Schubertian touches: trumpet fanfares in the

piano, the galloping horses of Pharoah's hoards, and the masterful picture of Pharoah's death beneath the waves of the Red Sea, slowly returning to their original calm. Finally, Schubert completes the work with a fugue clearly showing his interest in the music of Handel.

Strike your timbrels, Hebrew maidens,  
Miriam bids upraise the lay,  
Mighty is the Lord at all times,  
Mightier hail we him today.

Out of Egypt, as a shepherd  
Guards his flock and shows the way,  
Thou hast led Thy chosen people,  
Fire by night and cloud by day.

Shepherd! Thou hast led us onward,  
Strong Thine arm and keen Thine eye;  
At Thy word the sea obedient  
Parts and leaves a pathway dry.

But hark! What sighings! wailings! moanings! cursings!  
Hark! the storm! 'Tis the Lord in all his fury. Headlong rush the pent-up waves.  
Pharaoh's chariots! horse and rider! Mighty waters overwhelm them.  
Fearfulness and dread upon them fall. By darkness and horror are they smitten.  
Drown'd the captains and drown'd the host.  
Egypt's King! as lead sinks he down beneath the mighty flood.  
Earth hath swallowed all.

God no more her tide restraining,  
All her shores the sea regaining,  
Ne'er restoreth King or slave – Her sad  
waste at once both shroud and grave.

At Thy blast the floods congealing  
Stand upright as crystal walls;  
Thro' the sea's heart pass we dry-shod,  
Trusting in Thy voice which calls.

As we pass the sky grows darker,  
Voices shout, "We will pursue!"  
Armour gleaming, trumpets clanging,  
Pharaoh's host bursts on the view.

Lord of hosts, this hour we perish:  
Help us, Lord, our Rock prove true.  
Voices shout, still pressing onward,  
"We will pursue and overtake."

Strike your timbrels, Hebrew maidens,  
Miriam bids upraise the lay,  
Mighty is the Lord at all times,  
Mightier hail we him today.

*Adapted by Rev W H Milman from Grillparzer's text based on Exodus Ch 15*

## ***Tantum ergo*** in Eb, D962, in C, D461

*Tantum ergo* is the incipit of the last two verses of *Pange lingua*, a Medieval Latin hymn written by St Thomas Aquinas c.1264. The *Genitori genitoque* and *Procedenti ab utroque* portions are adapted from Adam of Saint Victor's sequence for Pentecost. The hymn is one of those used in the Office of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Schubert made at least half a dozen completed settings of *Tantum ergo*, and more uncompleted. They vary in style between contemplative and grand, and we present an example of each this evening, placing one of them after the Agnus Dei of the Mass in the manner of a triumphant communion motet, and opening the second half of the concert with the other to provide a frame around the setting of the Mass.

Tantum ergo Sacramentum  
Veneremur cernui:  
Et antiquum documentum  
Novo cedat ritui:  
Præstet fides supplementum  
Sensuum defectui.

Genitori, Genitoque  
Laus et iubilatio,  
Salus, honor, virtus quoque  
Sit et benedictio:  
Procedenti ab utroque  
Compar sit laudatio.

Hence so great a Sacrament  
Let us venerate with heads bowed  
And let the old practice  
Give way to the new rite;  
Let faith provide a supplement  
For the failure of the senses.

To the Begetter and the Begotten,  
Be praise and jubilation,  
Hail honour, virtue also,  
And blessing too:  
To the One proceeding from Both  
Let there be equal praise.

## ***Mass No 2 in G major, D167***

Schubert was just 18 when he composed his second mass, the *Mass in G*. The most familiar and popular of his masses, it was finished in six days during March 1815 for a performance in the Lichtenthal church where he sang as a youth. The simple setting, without brass or woodwind, was presumably to suit the limited resources of this small church, though there is recent evidence that he expanded the scoring later. The text is that of the traditional Roman Catholic Mass, but portions of the *Gloria* and *Credo* are varied: individual words are repeated, the standard order of phrases is interchanged, and most strikingly some words and phrases are deleted.

Although it was not uncommon at that time for composers to make minor variations of the words (which was not then forbidden by the church), no other composer makes as many changes as Schubert, nor is consistent in them way that he is. It has been suggested that the deletions (shown in *italics* in the text below) are simply due to carelessness, or lack of knowledge of Latin and theology - however, Schubert gained good grades in his Latin and theology studies. His changes are developed and increased in his successive masses (though the main ones are already present in this one) and so are now recognised as being clearly deliberate and thought out. Schubert cut and rearranged text, not merely to avoid affirmations he did not want to own (such as belief in the Church), but in order to help him express more fully what he had to say – for instance, already in this mass he is arranging the text around “*miserere nobis*” in the *Gloria* to match the *Agnus Dei*.

This is the gentlest of masses. Possibly the greatest section is the hypnotic *Credo* in which Schubert finds a rapt weightless tone – however, instead of setting the *Crucifixus* in the conventional hushed manner, he presents the text strongly and emphatically, preparing the way for the climax of the Mass at the joyous *Et resurrexit*.



Kyrie Eleison. Christe Eleison. Kyrie Eleison.

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 caelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.

Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu 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, *Jesu Christe*.

Cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris.

Amen.

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem,

factorem caeli et terrae, visibilium omnium, et invisibilium.

Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum.

Et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.

Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero.

Genitum, nonfactum, consubstantialem Patri:

per quem omnia facta sunt.

Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de caelis.

Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine:

Et homo factus est.

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

Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas.

Et ascendit in caelum: sedet ad dexteram Patris.

Et iterum venturus est cum gloria, iudicare vivos et mortuos:

cujus regni non erit finis.

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum, et vivificantem:

qui ex Patre *Filioque* [et Filio] procedit.

Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoraretur conglorificatur:

qui locutus est per Prophetas.

*Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam.*

Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum.

*Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum.*

Et vitam venturi saeculi.

Amen.

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth.

Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua. Osanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Osanna in excelsis.

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.

# Biographies

## **Anna Sideris** soprano

“The rich layers of Anna Sideris’ appealing lyric soprano, conveyed sensual sauciness and flashed with feistiness...” (Claire Seymour, Opera Magazine). Anna Sideris is a lyric coloratura soprano working throughout Europe, recognized for her dramatically engaging performances and richness of tone.

Anna has given recitals in Munich, Bonn, Pisa and Oxford. She performed two Fauré songs for BBC Radio 3 Music Matters and a number of recitals for the Rimbaud & Verlaine foundation at Kings Place London. Other concerts include 2nd soprano in Mozart’s *Mass in C minor* with the Bath Bach Choir and Boulez *Improvisations sur Mallarmé* for Aldeburgh festival.

Recent operatic performances include: Susanna *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Dartington Opera and Merry Opera Company; Juliette (cover) *Roméo et Juliette* for Grange Park Opera and Donna Elvira *Don Giovanni* for Opera Loki.

Anna read music at Oxford University, obtained her Masters from Royal Academy of Music, and then graduated the Opera Course at Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Anna is grateful to Help Musicians UK, Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards, Kohn Foundation and Josephine Baker Trust for supporting her studies.

Anna has previously sung with this choir in Rossini’s *Petite Messe Solennelle*.

## **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.

Martin has made CD recordings of Rachmaninov, Glazunov, and Chopin, as well as recordings of chamber music by Janacek, Strauss, Ravel, and Saint-Saëns. He is a founder member of the Aquinas Piano Trio, and has travelled widely with them.

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

This is Martin’s third appearance with the Cherwell Singers.

## **Timothy Wakerell** organ

Timothy Wakerell has held the post of Assistant Organist at New College, Oxford since September 2014 where he accompanies the Chapel Choir in services,

broadcasts and concerts. Prior to this he was Sub-Organist of St Paul's Cathedral between 2008 and 2014 and played for important services such as the Funeral of Baroness Thatcher and the Diamond Jubilee Service.

A prize-winning graduate of the Royal College of Music, Timothy also won Second Prize at the 2011 Carl Nielsen International Organ Competition in Odense, Denmark. He has performed throughout the UK and abroad; recent venues include the Marienkirche, Berlin, St Augustin, Paris and St Paul's Cathedral. In 2014 Timothy completed the premiere recording of the 2012 William Drake Organ in the OBE Chapel of St Paul's Cathedral (Priory Records) which features works by J.S. Bach, Buxtehude, Saint-Saëns and Sweelinck.

## **Halcyon Quartet**

Described as the "future stars of British Chamber Music", the Halcyon Quartet is a passionate and dedicated ensemble that formed in 2012 at the Royal Academy of Music. For the last four years they have been recipients of the Academy's Davey Posnanski Quartet Scholarship. They made their debut on BBC Radio 3 in 2015 as part of the BBC Proms Composer's Portrait of Hugh Wood and, more recently, at the Wigmore Hall as part of their "For Crying Out Loud" Series. The quartet is the current Ensemble in Residence at Holy Sepulchre London

The past year has seen the Halcyons perform in numerous venues across the UK. The quartet recently returned from a tour to Bermuda where they performed in the Bermuda Festival for the Performing Arts. More recently, the Halcyons participated in masterclasses as part of West Cork Chamber Music Festival.

The Halcyons enjoy sharing their passion for chamber music with others: in 2016 they were Teaching Quartet-in-Residence at the Dartington International Summer School; and during their recent Bermuda tour the Halcyons enjoyed an evening spent with the string players studying at the Menuhin Foundation, performing in chamber ensembles and enhancing musicianship skills.

## **James Brown** conductor

James Brown was organ scholar of Girton College, Cambridge before doing further study of organ with Lionel Rogg at the Geneva Conservatoire, Switzerland. After two years as Guest Artist in Residence at the First United Methodist Church, Lubbock, Texas, USA, he returned to England where he was Organist of Dean Close School.

In 2006 James moved to Oxford where he is Organist of the historic University Church, and teaches organ at Abingdon and New College Schools as well as pursuing freelance work as an organist and pianist. James has given recitals in the UK, USA, Belgium and Switzerland, and appeared on both BBC radio and television. He is a tenor lay clerk in the choir of New College. He also performs solo classical piano recitals for P&O and Fred Olsen cruise lines, and during 2018 he has been performing in the USA, the Caribbean, Germany and the Baltic States.

James has been conducting the Cherwell Singers since 2007.

# The Cherwell Singers

## **Soprano**

Angelika Albert  
Helen Duncan  
Stephanie Gilroy  
Rhiannon Lovell  
Vanessa Moir  
Elina Screen  
Stephanie Sumner-Jones  
Marie Thebaud-Sorger  
Lucy Watson

## **Tenor**

Jack Lovell  
David Read  
Alistair Sterling

## **Alto**

Virginia Allport  
Christy Callaway-Gale  
Elizabeth Kreager  
Alison Le Cornu  
Anna Orłowska  
Joanna Poulton

## **Bass**

Paul Hodges  
Iain McLean  
Jonathan Mapley  
Simeon Mitchell  
Tom Robinson

If you are interested in joining us please contact James Brown at:  
[director@cherwellsingers.org](mailto:director@cherwellsingers.org)

## **Next Concert**

A celebration of the organ and organists

**Kodaly: *Laudes Organi***

Harris Manchester College chapel, Oxford  
March 2019

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