

ALTRINCHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

Petite Messe Solennelle

Gioachino Rossini

‘How the Harmonium Works’

Steven Roberts - Conductor
Jonathan Scott – Harmonium
Lydia Bryan - Piano

Emma Morwood – Soprano
Katie Stevenson – Contralto
Christopher Turner – Tenor
Andrew Greenan - Bass

Saturday 16 November 2019
7.30 pm
St Peter’s Church, Hale



ALTRINCHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

www.altrinchamchoral.co.uk

Registered Charity No 500729

President: Roger Shelmerdine

Honorary Life Members: Steven Roberts, Roger Shelmerdine, Lydia Bryan

Chairman: Karen Jarman

Deputy Chairman: Ondria Williams

Treasurer: Stephen Campbell

Secretary: Pamela Moul

Altrincham Choral Society prides itself in offering a diverse, innovative and challenging programme of concerts, including many choral favourites.

We are a forward-thinking and progressive choir with a strong commitment to choral training and high standards, so providing members with the knowledge, skills and confidence to thoroughly enjoy their music-making.

Rehearsals are on Monday evenings at Altrincham Methodist Church,
Barrington Road, Altrincham.

Car Park entrance off Barrington Road. Satnavs please use WA14 1HF.

We are only a 5 minute walk from the train/metro/bus station.

Rehearsals are from 7.45 to 10.00 pm

For more information contact us

E-mail: secretary@altrinchamchoral.co.uk

Tweet us @acs1945 Like us on Facebook

ACS has a new website – www.altrinchamchoral.co.uk

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AWARD

The Award for Exceptional Service may be conferred on any member who is deemed to have given exceptional service to the society.

The award may be made to a member who has served for 25 or more years on the Committee or a Sub-Committee.

The Exceptional Service Award has been awarded to

**Pat Arnold John Greenan Melanie Jose Susan Sinagola Colin Skelton
Joyce Venables Andrew Wragg**

ALTRINCHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

Would you like to support our choir by becoming a patron or a sponsor?

We operate a well-established scheme for patrons and sponsors and hope to develop it further with the help of our supporters.

As a patron you will receive advance publicity, complimentary tickets, reserved seats at concerts, acknowledgement in all our programmes and on the website.

Michael Cummings is our Patrons Secretary. He is looking forward to hearing from you and can answer your enquiries about the scheme. Contact him on 0161 928 1179 or patrons@altrinchamchoral.co.uk

ACS is grateful to the following for their continued support this season:

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ALTRINCHAM CHORAL SOCIETY



Formed in 1945, *The Altrincham and District Choral Society* gave its first performance in the then Stamford Hall, in aid of the Altrincham General Hospital building fund.

Since then, the choir has continued to grow and offer its members and audience alike a rich tapestry of concerts and events. With around 120 singers, *Altrincham Choral Society* prides itself on producing a diverse, innovative and challenging programme of concerts and events, with a repertoire of not only choral favourites but also new commissions and collaborations with orchestras, choirs and youth groups.

Performing regularly at The Royal Northern College of Music as well as other venues across the country, including The Bridgewater Hall, Gorton Monastery, The Lowry Theatre, Huddersfield Town Hall and St Paul's Cathedral, ACS has also sung in Europe, including France, Prague, Lake Garda, Venice and Florence.

Recent events have seen the choir performing on tour with Russell Watson (*A Candlelight Christmas – 2014, An Intimate Evening with Russell Watson - 2015*), lunchtime recitals at St Paul's Cathedral (*London – 2015, 2016*) and in 2016 working with Barnsley Youth Choir (*2015 European Triple Gold Medallists and Grand Prix Winners*). This year ACS gave the world premiere of a specially commissioned work by Nigel Hess for choir and one-handed pianist, Nicholas McCarthy, and gave a recital in Lincoln Cathedral.

ACS also holds vocal training sessions for its membership, with singing days and termly open rehearsals for newcomers to come and meet the choir and explore their own voice potential and enjoy the thrill of singing.

The choir supports local and national charities throughout the year through retiring collections and sales of their CD, *Religion and Reel*. Previous charities have included St Ann's Hospice, The Rainbow Family Trust, Macmillan, Barnardo's, The Lord's Taverners, The David Lewis Centre, The Christie Hospital and Trafford Mencap. This year the choir is supporting the Nordoff-Robbins music therapy charity.

ALTRINCHAM CHORAL SOCIETY



| | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Brenda Adams | Helen Greig | Andy McWilliam |
| Joy Anderson | Pauline Griffiths | Ann McWilliam |
| Sara Apps * | Caroline Harris | Cathy Merrell * |
| Pat Arnold # | Dudley Harrop * | Eve Miles |
| Ann Ashby | Liz Harwood | Heather Morrey |
| Paul Ashworth | Gill Hayes * | Jen Morris |
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| Rachel Brougham | Valerie Hotter * | Jessica Murrills ++ |
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| Viv Chung | Karen Jarmany | Debbie O'Driscoll |
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| Jacqueline Davies | Gillian Jones | Christine Pidcock |
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| Richard Dyson | Keith Lewis * | Eleanor Reeves |
| Frank Estcourt | Annie Lloyd-Walker | Linley Roach * |
| Wendy Estcourt | Emma Loat | Doris Robinson # |
| Heather Falconer | Trish Lovett | Kate Robinson |
| Liz Foy * | Timothy Lowe | Olivia Robinson |
| Joyce Fuller * | Rosie Lucas # | Tony Robinson |
| Robert Gledhill | Sarah Lucas | Sarah Ruther |
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Fiona Simpson
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Colin Skelton #
Audrey Smallridge ++
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Annie Taylor
Catherine Taylor
Thomas Taylor
Malcolm Thomson
Pamela Thomson
Jean Tragen *
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Elaine Van Der Zeil

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Jo Wallwork
Christine Weekes
Geryl Whitaker
Helen Whitehouse *
Kath Whyte *
Yvette Willey #
Ondria Williams
Julia Williamson *
David Woolley
Andrew Wragg #
Cecilia Wright

**denotes 20+ years*
denotes 30+ years
++denotes 40+ years



Steven Roberts – Conductor

Steven is the Conductor and Musical Director of Altrincham Choral Society, Chesterfield Philharmonic Choir and Honley Male Voice Choir. He is an adjudicator member of The British and International Federation of Festivals and regularly adjudicates throughout the United Kingdom, as well as being Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Federation. Prior to 2006, Steven combined his musical activities with a full-time post at Barnsley College. During 17 years at the college Steven held a number of posts including Head of Performing Arts and Music, Head of Quality and Director of External Relations.

He has also been conductor of Dodworth and Skelmanthorpe Male Voice Choirs, the Allendale Chamber Orchestra, the Liverpool Welsh Choral Union, Sing Live UK, Unlimited Voices and The Huddersfield Choral Society, most notably for concerts with Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and José Carreras. He has also been chorus master for 'The Magic of Queen' and the Electric Light Orchestra (ELO), rock classics concerts with the Hallé Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Alongside his choral work he has conducted the Manchester Philharmonic, Derbyshire Sinfonia, Lancashire Chamber Orchestra, the National Festival Orchestra, the Yorkshire Wind Orchestra and a variety of other bands and ensembles. He is in demand as a choral and voice specialist, but studied piano, brass as well as voice and has equal extensive experience in each field. Since 1993, he has led choral days, workshops and coaching sessions and this has taken him as far afield as Peru and Bahrain.

He has conducted many times at the Royal Albert Hall, London and has been privileged to conduct in many of the country's most prestigious concert halls. He has also conducted in many sacred settings including St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican City and St Mark's Basilica in Venice as well as in Florence, Sorrento, Amalfi, Milan, Austria, Paris, Bavaria, Montecassino, Barcelona and Poland.

He has also been Musical Director for COAL, the award-winning contemporary dance piece choreographed by Gary Clarke; the piece was set at the height of the 1980s miners' strike and has successfully toured the

UK featuring live brass music. He is now touring with the sequel *Wasteland*, which features both brass and voices.

He is delighted to have worked with many well-known brass bands, including Carlton Main Frickley, Brighouse & Rastrick, Tredegar and The Fairey Band, to name but a few. In December 2018 he was made Honorary Vice President of Carlton Main Frickley Colliery Band.

He is a member of The Lord's Taverners, the cricketing charity that raises money to give 'young people, particularly with special needs, a sporting chance' and holds Honorary Life Membership with both The Royal Philharmonic Society (awarded in November 2013) and Altrincham Choral Society.

Steven is proud to be a Patron of EnRich, the charity formed for the people of Barnsley in memory of Richard Tolson, a well-loved teacher, manager and an inspirational man. "Rich T" was Head of Music & Performing Arts at Barnsley College for a number of years and had an impact on many lives. The charity set up in his name aims to promote all specialisms in the performing and creative arts.

Jonathan Scott - Organ

Jonathan Scott enjoys a hugely varied performing career on a diverse spectrum of keyboard instruments with the aim of bringing great music to as wide an audience as possible. In addition to his career as pianist and organist Jonathan is well-known for his arrangements and transcriptions and is a specialist in the music for the art harmonium. Jonathan also has a busy international concert schedule with his pianist brother, Tom Scott, performing as Scott Brothers Duo. This season their performances include concerts across UK as well as Germany (Berlin State Opera, European Harmonium Festival), Spain (Madrid National Auditorium), France (Toulouse Organ Festival), Norway (Stavanger Concert Hall), Switzerland (Festival International d'Orgue de Fribourg), Belgium (Salle Philharmonique Liège), Latvia (Liepāja Organ Festival), Taiwan (Taipei National Concert Hall, Kaohsiung Center for the Arts), South Korea (Lotte Concert Hall, Seoul) and Singapore (Victoria Concert Hall).

Born in Manchester, Jonathan studied piano and organ at Chetham's School of Music before gaining a scholarship to attend the Royal Northern College

of Music (RNCM). He continued his studies in USA and Holland, won the coveted Worshipful Company of Musicians WT Best Scholarship and gold medal, and is a Freeman of The City of London. Jonathan has been a member of the keyboard staff at RNCM since 2001 and is Associate Artist of The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester where he gives a series of popular lunchtime organ recitals which attract audiences approaching 1,000.

Jonathan's recent performances have included numerous solo recitals as pianist and organist as well as appearances at the BBC proms, broadcasts on BBC Radio 2, 3 and Classic FM, and a live recording of Copland's Organ Symphony with the BBC Philharmonic and John Wilson for Chandos Records. In 2017 Jonathan gave the world premiere of the new organ concerto '6000 Pipes!' by Sir Karl Jenkins with Hull Philharmonic Orchestra and he will be performing this work throughout 2019, including a special gala performance at The Royal Albert Hall, London in October. This season Jonathan will be appearing at concert halls and festivals across the UK with orchestras including the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hallé Orchestra, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. He will also be giving a series of concerto performances with the National Chinese Orchestra of Taiwan.

In collaboration with his brother, Tom Scott, Jonathan has released several recordings to great critical acclaim on the Scott Brothers Duo label. The discs have received wide international airplay, including their own special editions of BBC Radio 2's 'The Organist Entertains'. Their recent duo concert at Montserrat Abbey, Spain was broadcast live on Spanish TV and their online performance videos have totalled over 10 million views. The Scott Brothers Duo is the winner of the 2019 ECHO (European Cities of Historical Organs) competition to create a performance which introduces the pipe organ to a young audience. Their project combines animation and organ music and will be performed at major festivals across Europe in 2019 and 2020.

For more information please visit www.jonathanscott.co.uk

Lydia Bryan - Piano

Lydia has been our accompanist since 1996. She is also a very talented concert pianist and regularly performs solo items in our concerts. She is a

graduate of the RNCM where she studied piano, harpsichord, violin and singing. She specialized in piano accompaniment at postgraduate level.

Lydia's career has had many strands:

Her professional concert career started as winner of the North West Arts Young Musicians' Platform and also with concerts awarded through the Live Music Now scheme, founded by Sir Yehudi Menuhin. She won a British Council Scholarship towards concerts and recording work in Hungary, where she gave performances at the University of Budapest, the residence of the British Ambassador and the Kodály Institute.

Lydia regularly accompanied master lessons with John Cameron and Peter Pears as well as performing in master classes for Bernard Roberts and Vlado Perlemuter.

She has performed many times at the Royal Exchange Theatre for the Manchester Midday Concerts and also at the Purcell Room, and has appeared as concerto soloist at the RNCM as well as recording for BBC radio and television.

Lydia has toured extensively as soloist and accompanist in Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, France, Italy and throughout the British Isles. Her concert repertoire is wide-ranging.

Lydia teaches at Manchester Grammar School and Loreto Grammar School in Altrincham. She has many successful professional musicians among her past pupils.

Emma Morwood – Soprano

Born in Belfast, Emma Morwood studied at the Royal Northern College of Music where she was awarded the Dame Eva Turner Award and the Claire Croiza Prize for French Song. Currently working with Patricia McMahon, she has sung with many of Europe's finest orchestras and conductors.

Recent concert highlights include Berg's *Sieben frühe Lieder* at the Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow; Barber's *Knoxville: 1915* (Meadows Chamber Orchestra); Schoenberg's *String Quartet no. 2* with the Edinburgh Quartet; Orff's *Carmina Burana* (Ulster Orchestra); Verdi's *Requiem* (Edinburgh Royal

Choral Union (ERCU)); Christmas Gala (RTE National Symphony Orchestra); Mozart's *C Minor Mass* (Ulster Orchestra); Handel's opera Arias (Prussian Chamber Orchestra, Berlin); Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem* (City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra/Simon Halsey); and Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, (Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra/Vladimir Ashkenazy).

Recent opera performances include the role of Costanza in Vivaldi's *Griselda* with Irish National Opera and the Irish Baroque Orchestra. Other roles include Amore and Minerva in *The Return of Ulysses* (Monteverdi) with Opera Collective Ireland and the Akademie für Alte Musik, conducted by Christian Curnyn; Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin* with Edinburgh International Festival (EIF) Previews; Pamina in *The Magic Flute* (Opera Theatre Company (OTC)); Mimi in *La Bohème* (EIF previews); Morgana in Handel's *Alcina* (Buxton Festival/OTC); Micaela in *Carmen* (New Devon Opera); Lila (cover) in David Bruce's *The Firework Maker's Daughter* (Opera North); Diana (cover) in Offenbach's *Orpheus in The Underworld* (Scottish Opera/NI Opera); and Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro* (Irish tour/OTC).

Forthcoming engagements include an Irish tour of Handel's *Messiah* with the Irish Baroque Orchestra and *Carmina Burana* at the Usher Hall, Edinburgh.

As well as being a qualified paraglider pilot, Emma has two young children, Lucas and Orla, and in her spare time enjoys climbing, swimming and yoga.

www.emmamorwood.com

Katie Stevenson – Contralto

This season ENO Harewood Artist Katie Stevenson sings Kate Pinkerton in Anthony Minghella's celebrated production of *Madam Butterfly* under Martyn Brabbins, Third Nymph in Tatjana Gürbaca's new production of *Rusalka* conducted by Antony Hermus, and appears in Harrison Birtwistle's *The Mask of Orpheus* in a new production by Daniel Kramer, marking the piece's first revival since its premiere. Elsewhere Katie reprises the role of Third Nymph for Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg, as well as returning to Longborough Festival Opera for the second instalment of their new *Ring Cycle* with performances as Grimgerde in *Die Walküre* under Anthony Negus.

Recent highlights have included Katie's critically acclaimed debut performances as Nefertiti in Phelim McDermott's production of *Akhnaten* conducted by Karen Kamensek for ENO, Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* for both ENO and Garsington in Netia Jones' new production under Christian Curnyn, the title role in Porpora's rarely performed *L'Agrippina* for Barber Opera in Birmingham, and her company debut with Longborough Festival Opera as Flosshilde in *Das Rheingold*. On the concert platform Katie recently made her BBC Proms debut in Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sakari Oramo, as well as joining the Orquesta Sinfónica Del Principado De Asturias for *Kindertotenlieder*. In recent months Katie has also added Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* and Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* to her ever-expanding repertoire.

Katie has been the recipient of all three prizes at the Wagner Society Singing Competition, culminating in an invitation to attend the Bayreuth Young Scholars Programme, as well as winning the 2016 Marjorie Thomas Art of Song prize.

Christopher Turner - Tenor

Christopher Turner was born in Birmingham and read music at the University of Hull, furthering his studies with Barbara Robotham at the Royal Northern College of Music and at the National Opera Studio, sponsored by the Scottish Endowment Trust and The Friends of Covent Garden. He has received many prizes: most recently, a Countess of Munster 'Young Star' Award and the Sybil Tutton Award from the Musicians Benevolent Fund. He was also a major scholar of the Sir Peter Moores Foundation.

Christopher made his professional début as Dr Blind in *Die Fledermaus* for Scottish Opera On Tour before joining the Young Singers Programme at English National Opera where his roles include Robert Wilson in *Doctor Atomic*, First Armed Man/First Priest in *The Magic Flute*, Beppe in *Pagliacci*, Simpleton in *Boris Godunov* and Messenger in *Aïda*. Since then he has sung many roles in the UK and in Europe, including Dr. Caius in *Falstaff*, Pong in *Turandot*, Iro in *The Return of Ulysses* and the title role in *Albert Herring*.

Recent performances include Augusto in Leoncavallo's *Zazà*, Giuliano in Handel's *Rodrigo* and Dormont in *La Scala di Seta* with La Nuova Musica in Florence, and the title role in *Jephtha* with Iford Arts. For Scottish Opera he sang Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Alfredo in *La Traviata* and Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*. For Chelsea Opera Group he has sung Tebaldi in *I Capuleti e I Montecchi*, Mambre in *Mosè in Egitto* and Polline in *Norma* to considerable critical acclaim.

Last year he sang Second Jew in *Salome*, and this year has further performances as Rodolfo for ENO, and will be singing Orontes in *Alcina* for La Nuova Musica, Lippo in *Street Scene* for Opera North, and the title role in *Idomeneo* for English Touring Opera.

He also has a successful concert and oratorio repertoire.

Andrew Greenan - Bass

Andrew Greenan's association with Altrincham Choral Society goes back some 44 years when, as a 15 year old schoolboy, he kindly helped the basses out in a performance of the Brahms' Requiem.

Not directly as a consequence of this, he has sung for many of the world's leading opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera, New York, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (with Mackerras, Solti, Haitink and Bychkov), Hamburg, Théâtre du Châtelet Paris, the Vienna Volksoper, Bordeaux, Brussels, Lyon, Geneva and San Diego Opera. Appearances have also included roles in *Tristan und Isolde* in Oviedo; *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Wozzek*, *Tannhäuser* and *Der Rosenkavalier* in Nancy; *Fidelio* in Auckland; *Die Meistersinger* in San Francisco; *Parsifal* for Seattle Opera; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Torino; *Samson et Dalila* in Tel Aviv; *Les Contes d'Hoffman* in Rennes; *Rusalka* and *A Village Romeo and Juliet* for the Wexford Festival; *Albert Herring* at the Opéra Comique, Paris, and the title role in *Falstaff* for the Prague National Theatre.

He was a Choral Scholar at St John's College, Cambridge, where he read Modern Languages. He studied singing with John Cameron at the Royal Northern College of Music and made his operatic debut at La Scala, Milan in Schoenberg's *Die Glückliche Hand*.

Andrew has a long association with English National Opera, and elsewhere in the UK he has appeared with, among others, both the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Hallé under Sir Mark Elder, CBSO (Nelsons), BBC Philharmonic (Mena), Bournemouth Symphony (Karabits) Welsh National Opera, Opera North, Glyndebourne, and the LSO with Sir Colin Davis.

He performs regularly on the concert platform where his repertoire ranges from Bach, via Handel, Beethoven, Verdi, Mendelssohn, Dvorak and Elgar, through to Mahler, then on to Walton and Tippett and beyond.

Recent engagements have included Mozart's *Requiem* at the Royal Festival Hall; Verdi's *Requiem* in the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge; Commendatore Don Giovanni for Angers-Nantes Opéra; Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger*; Wotan in *Die Walküre*; Der Wanderer in *Siegfried* and Gurnemanz in *Parsifal* at Saffron Hall; Swallow in *Peter Grimes* with the Bergen Philharmonic under Ed Gardner at both the Bergen and Edinburgh Festivals, as well as at the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía, Valencia. He sings the central rôle of the Baron of Lindenberg in the premiere recording of *Raymond and Agnes* by Edward J Loder conducted by Richard Bonyngne, and was also seen at Glyndebourne as Ghost of Old Hamlet/Gravedigger/Player King in the inaugural production of Brett Dean's *Hamlet*.

He has recently returned from performances of Bernstein's *On the Town* in Japan and is currently appearing as Varlaam in *Boris Godunov* at Staatstheater Mainz.

Andrew Greenan is a regular Guest Tutor at the National Opera Studio.

The Harmonium

The name 'Harmonium' was patented in 1842 by Alexandre François Debain (1809-1877) of Paris. It was for a keyboard instrument which used pressurised air from bellows pumped by two foot pedals to produce sound from free-reeds (the same method of sound production found in the accordion and harmonica), creating an instrument which possessed the tonal qualities of a pipe organ and the expressive control of a string instrument. The instrument had multiple stops, like an organ, and a divided keyboard so that the player could choose different pitches and timbres in the treble and bass of a single keyboard. It was another French maker,

Victor Mustel (1815-1890), who eventually emerged as the finest maker of harmoniums in the world. His relatively small output and exceptional craftsmanship won admiration from the greatest artists of the day and his refined instruments became known as 'Art-Harmoniums'.

The popularity of the harmonium reached its peak around 1900 and its uses were widespread and varied. As an orchestral instrument it was used effectively by composers including Elgar, Strauss, Schoenberg, Webern, Mahler, Liszt and Tchaikovsky.

Its popularity declined in the 1920's as musical tastes changed, and the invention of the electronic organ in the mid-1930's delivered the final blow. Instruments were sold or scrapped and many were 'modernised' with electric blowers. However, many were saved or lay undiscovered for many years and today are being brought back to life so that audiences can once again hear the glorious sound of this uniquely expressive instrument. The instrument this evening is a Mustel harmonium which was made in Paris in 1900.

Gioachino Antonio Rossini (1792 – 1868)

Gioachino Rossini was born in Pesaro, a fishing port on the Adriatic coast, long renowned for its beautiful ceramics and delicious figs. His father, Giuseppe, was an itinerant trumpeter and horn-player from Ravenna, south of Venice. He was a well-known character in Pesaro and was twice imprisoned for his support for the Republican ideas that were spreading throughout Europe following the French Revolution. His mother, Anna, was the eldest daughter of the local baker. She was a soprano singer and worked in comic opera. From an early age the young Gioachino was taught horn by his father and no doubt saw life backstage in the various opera houses where his mother was performing. From his parents, Rossini inherited a fine singing voice, a love of music and a rebellious and vivacious spirit, a spirit that manifested itself both in his personality and his music.

In 1805 the family moved to Bologna where, the following year, Rossini entered the Liceo to study singing, cello, keyboard and counterpoint. Still only fourteen years old, he was honoured in recognition of his singing voice by being elected to Bologna's prestigious Accademia Filarmonica. Rossini quickly learnt his craft. He was soon involved in public concerts as singer, instrumentalist and composer. His first opera was composed in 1810 and

performed in Venice. It was an immediate success, and he rapidly established a reputation as a brilliant young composer of operas.

During the next ten years he composed frenetically at the rate of three or four operas a year. These were not all successes and he did not hesitate to borrow extracts from his own works for re-use in new compositions. But he quickly made a name for himself as an opera composer, greatly helped by two qualities very dear to the public – a sense of melody and a sense of humour. He had contracts with various opera houses, including La Scala Milan and San Carlo Naples. In less than three weeks during January 1816, he composed his most famous opera and perhaps the greatest opera buffa of all time, *The Barber of Seville*, which was received in Rome with enthusiasm despite a disastrous opening night.

Rossini was now famous throughout Europe, and lucrative offers came from various cities. In 1821 Rossini married a beautiful Spanish singer, Isabella Colbran, who performed several of his leading roles. Seven years his senior, she was at the height of a successful career, and brought with her a substantial dowry.

Spring 1822 saw a Rossini Festival in Vienna, where he met Beethoven, who observed that Rossini's music fitted in with the frivolous spirit of the times, adding that 'Rossini is a man of talent and an exceptional melodist. He writes with such ease that for the composition of an opera he takes as many weeks as a German would take years'.

After Vienna came London, where he conducted and sang in concerts with his wife before the English King George IV. In 1824 he moved to Paris to become Director of the Théâtre-Italien. Under his influence, it underwent something of a renaissance. He adapted several of his works to French taste and became as influential in France as he was in Italy. Over the next five years he wrote compositions in the French language and in 1829 *Guillaume Tell* was first performed. Arguably his greatest work, it was written in a nobler style than his Italian operas. This was to be Rossini's last stage work though he lived for almost another forty years. He had written thirty-nine operas in nineteen years.

So at the age of thirty-seven Rossini abandoned a successful career as an opera composer, withdrawing from the centre of musical life. He continued to write vocal and chamber music, including his *Stabat Mater* (1841), but

after moving back to Bologna in 1836 he suffered both physical and mental illness for almost twenty years.

About this time he separated from his wife and when she died in 1845, he felt free to marry Olympe Pelissier, a former courtesan who had been his companion and nurse.

In 1855 Rossini returned to Paris. The change of environment suited him. His health improved and he never went back to Italy. Over the next ten years the Rossinis hosted soirées musicales for the Paris elite. Artists, politicians, diplomats and fellow composers such as Liszt, Verdi, Gounod, Bizet, and Saint-Saëns attended their salons. Invitations were prized. For these occasions Rossini composed a host of engaging trifles, which he referred to as his 'péchés de vieillesse', or 'sins of old age'.

During this time he also composed the *Petite Messe Solennelle*, his last substantial work. Ill health returned in 1866 and Rossini died on Friday 13 November 1868, and was buried in Père Lachaise cemetery Paris, near Cherubini, Chopin and Bellini.

Olympe, who survived him by ten years, finally gave consent for his body to be returned to Italy. So in 1887 it was handed over to the city of Florence for reburial in Santa Croce, with a procession of more than 6,000 mourners.

Rossini was a spectacularly successful composer during his lifetime. He amassed riches, tens of thousands of pounds – millions - by today's standards and lived the life of a celebrity. He left a large fund to establish a conservatoire in Pesaro and also a home for retired opera performers, the Maison de Retraite Rossini. He helped to form the nineteenth century Italian operatic style that became the inheritance of Verdi, and for us, the listener, he left a legacy of memorable operas and beautiful melodies.

Petite Messe Solennelle

Rossini wrote the *Petite Messe Solennelle* during the summer of 1863 while staying in the Parisian suburb of Passy. It shares with other 'pieces of his old age' many musical characteristics, most obviously the chamber-sized ensemble for which it was scored. The '*Petite*' in the title most probably reflects the tiny forces that Rossini envisaged – twelve singers, with

accompaniment for two pianos and harmonium. But some like to think the title was a Rossini joke, for the piece is neither little nor solemn but a monumental work with passages of great joy.

It was dedicated to his friend the Countess Louise Pillet-Will and the first performance was given in March 1864, at the consecration of the private chapel of the Count and Countess, in front of a small invited audience. The 72-year-old Rossini acted as a page-turner for the principal pianist, nodding his head to set the tempo at the start of each movement. A second performance was given the following day in front of a larger very distinguished audience, including the press, who gave it ecstatic reviews. Very soon Rossini was being urged to provide an orchestral version. This he eventually did, lest someone else should do it for him, but it was never played during his lifetime, and Rossini always maintained a preference for the original. The *Petite Messe Solennelle* was performed for the first time in public at the Théâtre- Italien in Paris on the evening of Sunday 28 February 1869, three months after the composer's death, on the seventy-seventh anniversary of the composer's birth as nearly as that could be, seeing that he was born in a leap year on 29 February.

Rossini wrote on the manuscript, to be seen today at La Scala: 'Dear God... I was born for opera buffa, as well Thou knowest. Little skill, a little heart and that is all. So be Thou blessed and grant me a place in Paradise.'

Sources: The Oxford Companion to Music, Chambers Biographical Dictionary, The Lives and Times of The Great Composers (Steen), Groves Dictionary of Music & Musicians, The Oxford Dictionary of Opera and previous ACS programme notes. Jonathan Scott.

Programme Notes: Elizabeth Jones

Programme Editors: Liz Foy, Julia Williamson



Programme

How the Harmonium Works

Jonathan Scott

Petite Messe Solennelle

Gioachino Rossini

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.

Glorify be to God on high, and on earth
peace, good will towards men.
We praise thee, we bless thee, we
worship thee, we glorify thee.

Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam
gloriam tuam.

We give thanks to thee for thy great
glory.

Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus
Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius
Patris.

Lord God, heavenly King, God the
Father Almighty. O Lord, the only-
begotten Son, Jesus Christ; O Lord
God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

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

He 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 hand of
God the Father, have mercy upon us.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus. Tu solus Dominus.
Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.

For thou only art holy; thou only art the Lord; thou only, O Christ,

Cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

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

INTERVAL

Credo

Credo in unum Deum.
Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem caeli et terrae,
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.
Et in unum Dominum
Jesum Christum,
Filius Dei unigenitum,
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia
saecula.
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 salutem
descendit de caelis.
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,
Only begotten Son of God,
Begotten of his Father before all
worlds.
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.

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

*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.*

Preludio religioso - Harmonium

*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 saeculi.
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.*

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 (I believe in) the Holy Ghost, 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 salutaris hostia

O salutaris hostia
quae caeli pandis ostium,
bella premunt hostilia:
da robur, fer auxilium

Uni trinoque Domino
sit sempiterna gloria,
qui vitam sine termino
nobis donet in patria.

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.

O saving victim
who opens the gate of heaven,
hostile wars press on us:
give strength, bring aid.

To the Lord, three in one,
be everlasting glory,
for life without end
he gives us in (his) Kingdom.

Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins
of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins
of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins
of the world, grant us peace.



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Carols with the Choral

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In Paradisum - Favourite Choruses from Sacred Oratorios

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