

Altrincham Choral Society
Rossini
Petite Messe Solennelle

Steven Roberts

Conductor

Lydia Bryan

Piano

Jeffrey Makinson

Chamber organ

Emma Morwood

Soprano

Carolina Krogius

Mezzo-soprano

John Pierce

Tenor

Thomas Eaglen

Bass

Royal Northern College of Music

Saturday 13th November 2010

7.30 p.m.

Altrincham Choral Society

Brenda Adams	Bill Hetherington	Ian Provost
Joy Anderson	Jane Hollinshead	Linley Roach *
Sara Apps	Catherine Horrocks *	Doris Robinson *
Pat Arnold *	Valerie Hotter	Kate Robinson
Ann Ashby	Gail Hunt	Christine Ross
Joyce Astill *	Rosemary Hurley	Jenny Ruff
Kate Barlow	Karen Jarmany	Stephen Secretan
Janet Bedell	Elizabeth Jones #	Fiona Simpson
Laura Booth	Rodney Jones	Isabel Sinagola
Frances Broad *	John King-Hele *	Susan Sinagola
Anne Bullock	George Kistruck	Isobel Singleton
Anthony Champion	Elisabeth Lawrence	Colin Skelton *
John Charlton *	Jan Lees	Audrey Smallridge #
Barbara Clift *	John Lees	David Swindlehurst
Barbara Coombs *	Gill Leigh	Audrey Taylor *
Michael Cummings	Keith Lewis	Brian Taylor
Adrienne Davies	Annie Lloyd-Walker	Elizabeth Taylor
Jacqueline Davies	Emma Loat	Adrienne Thompson
Marie Dixon	Rosie Lucas *	Ted Thompson *
Jean Drape *	Sarah Lucas	Pamela Thomson
Richard Dyson	Gavin McBride	Jane Tilston
Kathy Duffy	Helen McBride	Jean Tragen
Liz Foy	Tom McGrath	Gill Turner
Joyce Fuller	Hazel Meakin	Elaine Van Der Zeil
Rima Gasperas	Cathy Merrell	Joyce Venables ++
Estelle Goodwin	Catherine Mottram	Catherine Verdin
Bryan Goude *	Pamela Moulton	Christine Weekes
Ann Grainger	John Mulholland	Geryl Whitaker *
John Grainger	Jessica Murrills #	Brian Whitehouse
Margaret Greaves *	Maureen Netting *	Helen Whitehouse
John Greenan #	Norma Nock	Kath Whyte
Pauline Griffiths	Christine O'Kell	Yvette Willey *
Jane Hardman	Neville Oates	Julia Williamson
Dudley Harrop	Terence Oddy	Brenda Wood
Liz Harwood	Melanie-Anne Preston	Andrew Wragg *
John Hayes	Frances Provost	John Yates

* Denotes 20 yrs or more

Denotes 30 yrs or more

++ Denotes 40 yrs or more

Altrincham Choral Society

Altrincham Choral Society is a large mixed voice choir that offers amateur singers in the South Manchester/North Cheshire area the opportunity to learn and perform a range of music including major choral works.

There is a high standard of performance and concerts are well attended. The society is directed by an ambitious and inspirational conductor.

Altrincham Choral Society prides itself on offering a diverse, innovative and challenging programme of concerts, alongside many choral favourites. This forward thinking is complemented with a commitment to choral training and standards which provides its members with the knowledge and confidence to thoroughly enjoy their music-making.

Rehearsals are on Monday evenings at Altrincham Methodist Church, Springfield Road, Altrincham – off Woodlands Road (opposite the Cresta Court Hotel). We are only 5 minutes walk from the train/metro station.

Rehearsals are from 7.45 – 10.00 pm

For more information you can contact us in a variety of ways:

E-mail: info@altrincham-choral.co.uk

Telephone: P Arnold (Secretary) 01270 764335

Or log onto our website

www.altrincham-choral.co.uk

where you can find more information about the choir, future plans and photographs from previous concerts including Verona and Florence. You can also add your name to our mailing list and keep up to date with forthcoming concerts and events.

The Society invites our supporters to become Patrons or Sponsors of Altrincham Choral Society. They receive advance publicity, complimentary tickets, reserved seating for performances and are acknowledged on the choir website and in all programmes.

If you are interested in becoming a Patron or Sponsor of the society, please contact P Arnold 01270 764335.

Altrincham Choral Society is grateful to the following for their continued support this season:

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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 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.

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.*'

Elizabeth Jones.



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.

Part I

Kyrie

Gloria

Gratias agimus tibi

Domine Deus

Qui tollis peccata mundi

Quoniam tu solus sanctus

Cum Sancto Spiritu

Interval

Part II

Credo

Crucifixus

Et resurrexit

Preludio religioso

Ritornello

Sanctus

O salutaris hostia

Agnus Dei

Steven Roberts

Steven Roberts has combined a career in education with his work as a conductor, musical director and adjudicator, working both in this country and as far afield as Peru and Bahrain.

Despite a very busy educational career Steven has conducted numerous groups, including the Liverpool Welsh Choral Union, The Huddersfield Choral Society, Dodworth and Skelmanthorpe Male Voice Choirs and a variety of orchestras, brass bands and wind ensembles, as well as being Chorus Master for concerts with Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and José Carreras.

He is currently Musical Director and Conductor with the Altrincham Choral Society, and also holds the same position with the Chesterfield Philharmonic Choir. Steven has also worked as musical director for a number of theatrical productions, and this diversity reflects his music and drama training.

Steven is Music and Company Development Director with Sing Live UK which has seen him conduct in some of the country's most prestigious concert halls, including the Royal Albert Hall, London, the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, Symphony Hall, Birmingham, the Waterfront Hall and Ulster Hall, Belfast, Birmingham, Leeds and Huddersfield Town Halls, the Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham, the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, and Sheffield City Hall.

Steven has conducted numerous concerts throughout this country but also in Germany, France and Italy and with a variety of ensembles and orchestras.

He has acted as vocal coach for concerts at the Royal Albert Hall, London and at the FM Hallam Arena in Sheffield, as well as conducting in the College Gardens of Westminster Abbey for The Lady Taverners and at Mass in St Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, Rome and also in St Mark's Basilica, Venice.

Steven is an adjudicator member of the British and International Federation of Festivals, regularly adjudicating in this country and also acts as a Music Mentor for Music for Youth. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Federation.

Steven is an associate member of The Lord's Taverners, the cricketing charity that raises money to give 'young people, particularly with special needs, a sporting chance'.

Lydia Bryan

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

Her professional concert career started as a 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 has accompanied regularly for master lessons with John Cameron and Peter Pears, and has performed 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 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; she has worked with many eminent contemporary composers and has performed works by Alexander Goehr and David Gow at the Society for the Promotion of New Music. She was also the accompanist for the 'Art of Song' courses at Higham Hall and has been official accompanist and adjudicator for music festivals in both the UK and abroad.

Lydia teaches at Manchester Grammar School and Loreto School in Altrincham and has been resident accompanist to Altrincham Choral Society since December 1996. She has many successful professional musicians amongst her past pupils.

Jeffrey Makinson

Jeffrey Makinson is Sub-Organist of Manchester Cathedral, Tutor in Organ Studies at the Royal Northern College of Music and Manchester University and Tutor in Pianoforte at Chetham's School of Music.

He received his musical training at the Royal Northern College of Music and at Manchester University. He subsequently became Organ Scholar of York Minster from 1992-1994, before spending five years as Assistant Organist at Lincoln Cathedral.

He took up his post in Manchester in 1999 and is busy as a recitalist, accompanist, conductor, teacher and adjudicator in the city and throughout the country.

As part of his duties at Manchester Cathedral, Jeffrey accompanies the critically acclaimed Cathedral Choir for most of the choral services, assists the Organist & Master of the Choristers with the training and direction of the choir and directs the Cathedral Voluntary Choir.

As a recitalist, Jeffrey has performed throughout the country, at many of the major British cathedrals, abbeys, collegiate chapels, churches and concert halls, including recitals at Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral, St. Paul's Cathedral and King's College, Cambridge. Jeffrey has also performed in many foreign countries including Czech Republic, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy and the USA.

Jeffrey has made numerous CD recordings, with the Albany, Delphian, Herald, Lammas, Naxos, Priory and Regent labels.

He works extensively for the BBC, as regular musical director and organist for Radio 4 Daily Service. In addition, he has worked on programmes such as Songs of Praise, Chorister of the Year, Choral Evensong, Minstrels in the Gallery, Young Musician of the Year, Sunday Morning Worship and the Radio 4 Pilgrimage to Rome. Since 1998, he has been Organist in Residence at the Exon Singers Festival.

Jeffrey has a keen interest in promoting new music and has given first performances of works by numerous leading composers, including Mark Blatchly, Martin Bussey, Bob Chilcott, Naji Hakim, Grayston Ives, Francis Jackson, George Lloyd, Richard Lloyd, Philip Moore, Andrew Sallis, Howard Skempton and Philip Wilby.

Emma Morwood

Born in Belfast, Emma Morwood trained at the University of Edinburgh and the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM). Emma was a major award winner at the RNCM, including the Dame Eva Turner Award, the Claire Croiza Prize for French Song and the Brigitte Fassbaender Award for Lieder.

Described as 'enchanting' (The Times), 'superlative' (Opera Magazine) and 'brilliant' (The Telegraph), and now working with many leading orchestras and conductors, she is fast establishing a reputation as one of our finest young sopranos both on the opera stage and the concert platform.

Emma has engagements with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra (RLPO) and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Ensemble 10/10, the Philharmonia, Northern Sinfonia, Manchester Camerata, and the Ulster Orchestra, and has worked with conductors including Vladimir Ashkenazy, Vasily Petrenko, Simon Halsey, Clark Rundell, Nicholas Kraemer and Baldur Brönnimann. She has performed a number of world premieres with the RLP Ensemble 10/10, most recently singing the title role in Mieczysław Weinberg's *Lady Magnesia*, and performing Capital of Culture commission *The Punishment of Lust* by James Wishart. Emma has also appeared with the RLPO as soloist in Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* (Ashkenazy) and Grieg's *Peer Gynt Suite* (Petrenko).

In Buxton Opera Festival this year, Emma sang the role of Morgana in Opera Theatre Company's award winning and critically acclaimed production of Handel's *Alcina*, directed by Anneliese Miskimmon. Other roles include Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro* with Opera Theatre Company (Irish tour), Spirit in *Alfred* (Thomas Arne) with Classical Opera Company, Elsie in *Yeomen of the Guard* (Gilbert and Sullivan) with the Gilbert and Sullivan Society, Aline in Opera Della Luna's new production of *The Sorcerer* (Gilbert and Sullivan), the title role in Ravel's *L'enfant et les Sortilèges* (RNCM), Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (Manchester Camerata/Nicholas Kraemer), *Fiordiligi* in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* (Lyric Opera Studio, Weimar), Carmela in the Scottish premiere of Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Saint of Bleeker Street* (Edinburgh Grand Opera), and Clorinda in *La Cenerentola* (Mananan International Opera Festival).

Other recent performance highlights include her Royal Festival Hall début with The Philharmonia, Brahms' *Requiem* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in Birmingham Symphony Hall, a solo lunchtime recital at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, Mozart's *Exsultate Jubilate* with the Ulster Orchestra, opera gala with RLPO (Petrenko), Mozart's *Coronation Mass* with Northern Sinfonia (Halsey), James Macmillan's *Búsqueda* with the RLP Ensemble 10/10 and Vivaldi's *Gloria* with Manchester Camerata.

Carolina Krogius

Carolina Krogius was born in Finland and commenced her singing studies at Turku Conservatory, where she graduated in 2006. She continued her studies at The Royal Northern College of Music with Susan Roper and graduated with Distinction in July 2009. She is currently a member of Thüringer Opernstudio in Weimar and has taken roles at Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar and at Theater Erfurt. In the season of 2010/2011 she will among other roles sing Cherubino, Zerlina and Second Lady at Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar. Other operatic roles include Dido, Dorabella, Orlofsky, Conception, Fortune and Venus.

Performance highlights include MacMillan's Raising Sparks with the RNCM New Ensemble at the Wigmore Hall, de Falla's El amor brujo and Haydn's Nelson Mass with Manchester Camerata, Weinberg's opera Lady Magnesia and James MacMillan's Busqueda with the 10/10 Ensemble of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Mozart's Coronation Mass and Mendelssohn's Elijah with Northern Sinfonia, Mahler's 8th Symphony with Newcastle University at The Sage, Gateshead and performances with Ensemble Iberoamericano in Weimar, Leipzig and Berlin. Carolina has also recorded Stephen McNeff's song cycle Image in Stone with Mark Heron and the RNCM Wind Orchestra.

She sang the role of Dido in Dido and Aeneas with Manchester Camerata and Nicholas Kraemer which was broadcast on BBC Radio 3 in March last year.

John Pierce

John Pierce trained at the Royal Northern College of Music with Jeffrey Lawton. Currently a student at the National Opera Studio in London he was awarded an Independent Opera Scholarship to continue his studies with Ryland Davies.

Operatic roles at the RNCM included Rodolfo La Bohème, and full-scale productions of Die Fledermaus (Alfredo) and Katya Kabanova (Boris). He was a winner of the Joyce and Michael Kennedy Strauss Prize, Elizabeth Harwood Memorial Prize and more recently, first prize in the MOCSA Young Welsh Singer of the Year and 2010 Welsh Singers Competition.

As a recipient of the Prince of Wales Advanced Study Award he performed for Prince Charles at an event celebrating his 50th year as Prince of Wales. John joined Glyndebourne Festival Opera chorus and took part in their productions of Falstaff, L'Elisir d'Amore, Rusalka and Tristan und Isolde. His many concert and oratorio appearances include Handel's The Messiah, Beethoven's 9th Symphony, Mozart's Requiem, Karl Jenkins', The Armed Man, Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle and Stabat Mater, Puccini's Messa di Gloria and Mendelssohn's Elijah.

Sponsored by Welsh National Opera at the NOS, John also receives support from the Lionel Anthony Scholarship and the Susan Chilcott Scholarship.

Future engagements and commitments include performing the role of Rodolfo in La Bohème for British Youth Opera and covering the same role at English National Opera in the Autumn, Verdi's Requiem in April 2011 and representing Wales in Cardiff Singer of the World in June.

Thomas Eaglen

Thomas Eaglen was born and grew up in the beautiful countryside of North Yorkshire. His musical ambitions evolved from the age of eight as a chorister in Durham Cathedral where he achieved the position of Head Chorister in his final year.

Thomas is a first class honours graduate of the RNCM.

Principal operatic roles include most recently Maceath in Gay's *The Beggars Opera*, Aeneas in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, and Papageno in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* for Heritage Opera, and *Il Conte* in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for The Armonico Consort which toured England and Ireland.

Preceding this Thomas sang the same role for the RNCM, before which he had taken the title role in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, also for the RNCM and Heritage Opera.

In the presence of HRH the Prince of Wales, Thomas took the part of Manoah in a period production of Handel's *Samson* for the Yorke Trust. His work with the Yorke Trust led to Thomas being offered the principle role in Gerard McBurney's new opera *The Airman's Tale*. Premiered at the Imperial War Museum London in celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War II, Thomas was first to create the role of the Airman to great reviews.

Once again to excellent reviews, the European premier of American composer Daron Aric Hagan's opera, *Bandanna*, saw Thomas sing the role of Lieutenant Jake Lopez.

Solo concert performances demonstrate Thomas' popularity on the national concert platform. Recent performances include Haydn's *Harmoniemesse* in Cadogan Hall with the Parliament Choir, Bach's *St John Passion* with the Manchester Camerata, Bach's *B Minor Mass* in Sheffield Cathedral and Handel's *Messiah* in St Albans Cathedral with the London Gala Orchestra. Having appeared frequently with the Northern Symphonia at the Sage Gateshead, Thomas is becoming a familiar soloist at many of the country's great concert venues.

From a critically acclaimed performance of Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* in Ripon Cathedral to a performance of Handel's *Messiah* in St. Alban's Cathedral with the Malcolm Sergeant Festival Choir, Thomas' reputation as an outstanding soloist continues to grow.

Thomas recently recorded a television advert for Filippo Berio Olive Oil based on the famous aria, *Largo al Factotum* from Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*.

CHORAL RIFF

Fresh wonders revealed beneath the surface at

Altrincham Choral Society



Fishy revelations by

John Greenan

A new book with the full history of ACS
flavoured by John's quirky humour!
Meet the author during the interval and treat
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A delight for singers and grammarians alike!