

Nantwich Choral Society

Carmina Burana

by

Carl Orff

Sue Tyson - Soprano
Tim Massa - Counter-Tenor
Adrian Blakeley - Baritone

Andrew Mildinhall - Piano
Patricia Wood - Piano

Directed by Patrick Larley



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The Civic Hall, Nantwich
Saturday 2nd July 2005 at 7.45 p.m.

Carmina Burana

Carl Orff (1895 - 1982)

Carl Orff composed a number of works for the theatre and concert hall but he is chiefly remembered for his dramatic cantata, *Carmina Burana*. The piece was composed during 1935 and 1936 and received its first performance in Frankfurt Opera House, Germany, in 1937 when Orff was 42.

Orff had had a number of songs and other pieces published whilst still in his teens. His style at that time could be described as Post-Romantic, influenced as it was by Schoenberg and Richard Strauss. Later he became fascinated with the power of primitive rhythms and simple melodies, which gradually found expression in his own compositions. With *Carmina Burana* he finally turned his back on chromaticism and complex polyphony for a deliberately simplified style, characterised by its rhythmic energy and the repetition of short melodic phrases supported by elemental block harmonies. It comes as no surprise that Orff was dismissed by the critics - one called him 'a rich man's banjo player' - but the work immediately appealed to the public and has remained a great favourite ever since. Of the piece Orff said, "it begins my complete works."

The text of *Carmina Burana* is a selection from a large collection of secular poems preserved in a manuscript discovered in the Bavarian monastery of Benediktbeuren in 1803. The manuscript contained verses by 12th and 13th century wandering students, written mainly in Latin (the international language of the day), Middle-High German, and Old French. It is somewhat surprising to learn that, apart from some poems that are of a morally uplifting nature, most are bawdy student songs celebrating such un-monklike delights as drinking, gambling, dancing and lovemaking. It is easy to detect the youthful anger,

delight in parody, extremely earthy desires, and determination to accept the challenge of life felt by those young authors.

Orff described *Carmina Burana* as a 'scenic cantata' based on diatonic, strophic songs. (Diatonic meaning "involving only notes proper to the scale, without chromatic alteration". Strophic meaning "with verses using the same melody".) The work was originally designed for the stage, with dancing and mime accompanying the music.

The work divides into a three-part cycle, framed by an appeal to destiny - "*O Fortuna*" - a powerful hymn to the goddess Fortuna, the Empress of the World, seen as a monstrous whirling wheel carrying its victims first to the heights, then dashing them to the ground. This song will be familiar to many, as it was popularised by a well-known TV commercial. In between come the three main sections. Part One speaks of man's encounter with nature, illustrated by rustic songs and dances. Part Two is set in a tavern and speaks of the joys of wine; vividly described by a succession of characters including the swan on the spit (counter-tenor solo), who laments his dreadful fate. Part Three, *The Court of Love*, is an uninhibited celebration of the delights of love. The final number, *Blanziflor and Helena*, leads back to the opening hymn, thereby not only unifying the whole work, but also acting as a pertinent reminder that our lives are ever subject to the slings and arrows of outrageous Fortune.

The version of *Carmina Burana* being performed tonight, for two pianos and percussion, was arranged by Orff himself; the pianos replacing the original orchestra.

**Please note that tonight's performance will be
continuous with no interval.
The bar will be open at the end of the concert.**

Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi - Fortune, Empress of the World

1. *O Fortuna* - Chorus
O Fortune, like the moon, you are changeable, ever waxing and waning
2. *Fortune plango vulnera* - Chorus
I bemoan the wounds of Fortune with weeping eyes, for the gifts she made me she perversely takes away

Part One

3. *Veris leta facies* - Chorus
The merry face of spring turns to the world; sharp winter now flees, vanquished.
4. *Omnia sol temperat* - Baritone
The sun warms everything, pure and gentle.
5. *Ecce gratum* - Chorus
Behold, the pleasant and longed-for spring brings back joyfulness.
6. *Tanz* - Dance - Instrumental
7. *Floret silva nobilis* - Chorus
The noble woods are burgeoning with flowers and leaves. Where is the lover I knew? He has ridden off. Oh! Who will love me?
8. *Chramer, gip die varwe mir* - Soprano and Chorus
Shopkeeper, give me colour to make my cheeks red, so that I can make the young men love me against their will.
9. *Reie* - Round Dance - Instrumental
Swaz hie gat umbe - Chorus
Those who go round and round are all maidens, they want to do without a man all summer long!
Chume, chum geselle min - Chorus
Come, come, my love, I long for you
Sweet rose-red lips come and make me better
Swaz hie gat umbe - Chorus
10. *Were diu werlt alle min* - Chorus
Were all the world mine from the sea to the Rhine, I would starve myself of it, so that the queen of England might lie in my arms.

Part Two

11. *Estuans interius* - Baritone
Burning inside with violent anger, bitterly I speak to my heart

12. *Cignus ustus cantat* (The Roast Swan) - Counter-Tenor
Once I lived on lakes, once I looked beautiful when I was a swan. Misery me! Now black and roasting fiercely!
13. *Ego sum abbas* - Baritone and Chorus
I am the abbot of Cockaigne and my assembly is one of drinkers
14. *In teberna quando sumus* - Chorus
When we are in the tavern

Part Three

15. *Amor volat undique* - Soprano
Cupid flies everywhere seized by desire. Young men and women are rightly coupled.
16. *Dies, nox et omnia* - Baritone
Day, night and everything is against me, the chattering of maidens makes me weep and often sigh, and, most of all, scares me.
17. *Stetit puella* - Soprano
A girl stood in a red tunic. If anyone touched it, the tunic rustled
18. *Circa mea pectora* - Baritone and Chorus
In my heart there are many sighs for your beauty which wound me sorely.
19. *Si puer cum puellula* - Chorus
If a boy with a girl tarries in a little room, happy is their coupling. Love rises up and between them prudery is driven away.
20. *Veni, veni, venias* - Chorus
Come, O come. Do not let me die. Beautiful is your face, the gleam of your eye, your braided hair. What a glorious creature!
21. *In trutina* - Soprano
In the wavering balance of my feelings, set against each other lascivious love and modesty.
22. *Tempus es iocundum* - Baritone, Soprano and Chorus
This is the joyful time. O maidens rejoice with them, young men
23. *Dulcissime* - Soprano
Sweetest one! I give myself to you totally!
24. *Blanziflor et Helena* - Chorus
Hail, most beautiful one, precious jewel. Hail, pride among virgins, glorious virgin.

Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi - Fortune, Empress of the World

25. *O Fortuna* - Chorus

ADRIAN BLAKELEY - Baritone

Adrian studied singing at Huddersfield University and has been engaged as a soloist throughout the country ever since. For ten years, up to 1990, he was senior Bass Lay Clark in Manchester Cathedral Choir and is currently a member of the BBC Daily Service Singers where on many occasions he undertakes live solo performances.

Over the years, Adrian has been involved in many concerts with Nigel Ogden (presenter of BBC radio 2's *The Organist Entertains*). This has afforded him the opportunity to gain a repertoire of lighter music and Adrian's recordings have featured on two CDs with Nigel Ogden and Altrincham Choral Society. He was also involved with live broadcasts from Bethlehem as part of the BBC's millennium celebrations. Recent performances include Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *Matthew Passion* in Liverpool Anglican Cathedral. Adrian is delighted to be singing in Nantwich again and being part of Patrick's last concert.

SUE TYSON - Soprano

From an early age Sue Tyson has enjoyed singing. While a student studying Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic and then English at Cambridge University, she took leading roles in several operas such as *The Threepenny Opera* and *Iolanthe* under now-renowned directors, Nicholas Hytner and Stephen Pimlott.

After graduating, she went on to sing with the BBC Northern Singers and other noteworthy choirs in the North-West, and to perform as soloist with many choral societies.

She specialises in early music and contemporary music, her engagements ranging from soprano soloist in the Monteverdi *Vespers* with 'His Majesty's Sagbutts and Cornetts' and 'The Orchestra of the Golden Age', to the dramatic and spectacularly high soprano solo in the premiere of 'Appearing, Shining, Distant or Near' by Patrick Larley.

She also appears as a soloist on three CDs featuring contemporary works and has been on Radio 3 as a soloist with the prestigious chamber choir, 'Canzonetta', with whom she has also appeared on television.

She belongs to two small professional ensembles, 'The Gallery Players' and 'La Brigata', in which she plays early wind instruments as well as singing. As a member of 'La Brigata' she has performed in various music festivals including the Edinburgh Fringe, Bath Festival and Birmingham Early Music Festival. As part of the year 2000's BBC 'Music Live' Festival, her versatility was demonstrated over a wide range of musical idioms in her four-woman production, '1000 Years of Women in Song'.

TIM MASSA - Counter-Tenor

Timothy Massa studied at the Royal Northern College of Music. Career highlights include recitals of contemporary music in the Purcell Room and Queen Elizabeth Hall with Paul Robinson's Harmonie Band, for which he received high critical acclaim; he was soloist in *Messiah* at the Storkyrkan, Stockholm for Gustav Sjöqvist in 2001; he performed lute songs for BBC 2's documentary series: *Aberglasney, A Garden lost in time*. Timothy sings regularly with the choirs of Westminster Cathedral and the Temple Church, and has also performed with baroque and Tudor instruments in the Georgian rooms and apartments of Henry VIII at Hampton Court Palace. Recordings of renaissance music include Classic FM 'CD of the Month' *Rites of Spring* with Trinity Baroque (Cantoris) and *Elisa is the Fairest Quene* with Quintessential Sackbut and Cornett Ensemble (Chandos). He has sung frequently with renowned period orchestras such as the Gabrieli Consort and Florilegium, with whom he performed a programme celebrating the life of M-A Charpentier this year at London's Wigmore Hall. Future plans include a tour of Europe with the Gabrieli consort with Handel's *Athalia*, a recording of Gluck's *Paride ed Elena*, plus a tour of Europe with the Harmonie Band performing live contemporary soundtracks to classic silent films.

A Message from the Chairman

Dear Friend,

This concert brings to a close another successful and enjoyable season for Nantwich Choral Society. Sadly, this concert also brings to an end the tenure of Patrick Larley as Music Director of the Choir. Patrick takes up a new post in the autumn with the Birmingham Festival Chorus and we all wish him well for the future. Patrick has been with the Choir for nearly 8 years and to mark this occasion, there will be a short presentation at the end of this evening's concert.

We hope that as many of you as possible will be able to join us in the bar after the concert and say 'au revoir' to Patrick. We look forward to seeing you all next season at our first concert on November 26th at St. Mary's under our new Music Director, John Naylor.

We wish you all the best for the summer and look forward to seeing you again soon.

Ron Kelley
Chairman

We would like to express our grateful thanks to N. J. Tostevin and Son of Stoke on Trent and "Making Music", formerly known as The National Federation of Music Societies, for the loan of the two pianos being used in tonight's performance

Forthcoming Concerts

The first concert of our 2005 / 2006 season will be on
Saturday 26th November 2005
under the baton of our new Musical Director John Naylor

Tickets will be available from the Box Office at
"Sounds Musical" : 01270 625579
Tickets will also be available from the Nantwich Information Centre
or at the door

For more information visit our website at www.nantwichchoral.org.uk

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY MEMBERS

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Jane Lincoln
Anne Nicol
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BASS

Christopher Findlay
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