

✻ **NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY** ✻

Rossini

*Petite Messe
Solennelle*

Soloists

Imogen Garner – Mezzo Soprano

Rachel Payne - Contralto

Kevin Matthews – Tenor

Stephen Garner – Bass

David Soward – Piano

Andrew Mildenhall - Harmonium

MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Patrick Larley

The Parish Church of St Mary, Nantwich

Saturday 5th April, 2003 at 7.30 p.m.

SOLOISTS

Imogen Garner – Mezzo Soprano, graduated in Economics and qualified as a teacher before pursuing postgraduate studies at the RNCM. Her operatic roles include Mallika and Rose in Delibes' *Lakme* for the Opera School Wales, Zulma in L'Italiana in *Algeri* at the Mananan Opera Festival, Ottone in *The Coronation of Poppea* for the Opera School Wales, Dido in *Dido and Aeneas* at the Lowry Centre, Salford, Sister Lucilla in an adapted version of *Suor Angelica* for Opera Femina at the Buxton Festival 2002, La Renomee and Junon in Dartington Opera's production of Lully's *Isis*, Despina in *Così fan tutte* for Mary Garden Opera directed by Gidon Saks and Sweite Dame in the RNCM production of *Die Zauberfloete*. She is currently covering Mercedes in *Carmen* for Opera Box.

Imogen has performed a wide range of oratorio including Handel's *Dixit Dominus* with the Sheffield Bach Choir, and Brusa's *Missa Pro Defunctis* with the Manchester Camerata. She is a guest soloist for the Northern England Chorale's Finland Tour in May 2003.

Imogen is a keen recitalist and continues to tour with her accompanist Amy Bebbington. Future operatic engagements include further performances of *Suor Angelica*, and Hansel in Opera Femina's new production of Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*.

Rachel Payne – Contralto, was born in Manchester and studied singing with Eric Greene and Olive Groves at the Royal Academy of Music, where she was a frequent soloist with the London Bach Society under Paul Steinitz.

An experienced recitalist, she has also sung with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic, the Manchester Camerata and Collegium Musicum of London. She has broadcast regularly with the BBC Northern Singers (now the Britten Singers) as both ensemble and solo singer, and sung, with viol consort, solo anthems by Byrd at the Proms. With the Singers and also as a free-lance soloist, concerts and recitals have taken her to Spain, Turkey, Australia, France and Germany, as well as all parts of the British Isles.

Rachel Payne's repertoire is extensive and includes all major oratorios, a wide range of songs and operas. It covers works by a variety of composers, especially Bach, Rossini, Verdi, Faure, Handel, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Elgar, Durufle, Vaughan Williams, Tippett, Gurney and Britten. Recent performances have been as Baba the Turk in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, in Dvorak's *Stabat Mater*, as Third Lady in *The Magic Flute* by Mozart, Beethoven's Mass in C, as Mrs Peachum in the Threepenny Opera by Weil.

Kevin Matthews – Tenor, started his initial musical training at the London College of Music in 1985 and graduated with honours in 1988. After teaching for five years Kevin entered the RNCM in 1994 to study with Anthony Roden. Whilst there roles in RNCM opera productions included Don Riccardo in Verdi's *Ernani*, the Cover of Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux* and the title role in Britten's *Albert Herring*. Concert experience during this time included the Narrator in Berlioz's *L'enfance du Christ* at the Bridgewater Hall and Haydn's *Maria Theresa Mass* at the Buxton Festival. He left the RNCM in 1997 with the PPRNCM diploma having also won the Alexander Young Prize for singing and the Ricordi Opera Prize.

Upon leaving college Kevin joined Glyndebourne Festival Opera where he worked for three consecutive seasons and tours where roles and covers included the Messenger in *Theodora*, Coryphee in *Le Comte Ory*, and the Ringmaster in *The Bartered Bride*. He was the first recipient of Glyndebourne Touring Opera's Wessex Award. He has also taken part in Raymond Gubbay's productions of *Madam Butterfly* and *Tosca* at the Royal Albert Hall where covers included Prince Yamadori and Spoletta respectively. Kevin sang with Garsington Opera for their 2000 season and joined them to sing First Priest and First Armed Man in *The Magic Flute* during the summer of 2001. Another tour with Glyndebourne in the Autumn culminated with performances of *Fidelio* at the Chatelet Theatre in Paris January/February 2002. Recent engagements include *Oedipus Rex* with Opera North and *Cavalleria Rusticana/I Pagliacci* at the Royal Albert Hall where Kevin covered the role of Beppe. Kevin returns to Opera North this year for *Idomeneo* and Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust* and is due to undertake a concert tour of Finland singing the tenor solo in Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* in May 2003.

Stephen Garner – Bass came late to full-time singing, having practised as an Oral Surgeon. He studied at the Birmingham Conservatoire and now continues his studies with Janice Chapman. He has sung the Mandarin in *Turandot* and the Speaker in *The Magic Flute* for Mid Wales Opera. Other appearances have included the title role in Rossini's *Moise*, Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*, Konchak in *Prince Igor* and Zaccaria in *Nabucco*. He has sung as soloist with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and sang the bass solo on their recording of the Bruckner *E Minor Mass*. He has played the role of Caiaphas in *Jesus Christ Superstar* in Reykjavik and created the roles of Lord Braxfield, Captain Campbell and Count of Santa Clara in the world premiere of David Horne's *Friend of the People* for Scottish Opera, for whom he has also sung Nazarene in *Salome* and Fasolt in *Das Rheingold*. A member of the English National Opera, Stephen's debut with them was as Geronte in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*. For University College Opera he sang Kullervo in the British premiere of Aulis Sallinen's opera. Also for ENO Stephen covered the role of Bennigsen in Prokofiev's *War and Peace*. More recently he sang Sarastro in *Magic Flute* for Opera Project, and is currently heavily involved in the establishment of a new opera company, Staffordshire Opera, with performances scheduled for Autumn of this year.

Future plans include another tour of *Jesus Christ Superstar* with West End International in April.

PROGRAMME

1. Kyrie
2. Gloria
3. Gloria in excelsis
 - Laudamus te
 - Gratias
 - Domine Deus
 - Qui tollis
 - Quoniam
 - Cum Sancto Spiritu

INTERVAL Of 20 minutes

Tea/Coffee and Biscuits will be served in the Parish Room

1. Credo
 - Credo in unum Deum
 - Crucifixus
 - Et resurrexit
 - Et vitam venturi
2. Prelude religieux (pendant l'offertoire)
3. Ritournelle
4. Sanctus
5. O salutaris
6. Agnus Dei

The harmonium hired for this performance is from the Collection of Pam and Phil Fluke in the Museum of Victorian Reed Organs and Harmoniums in Saltaire. It was made by the firm of DEBAIN of Paris who are accepted as the fine makers of harmoniums. This particular harmonium was built in 1879.

Giaochino Rossini, born on February 29th 1792, was the giant of Opera Buffa during the first half of the eighteenth century. Above all, it was his ability to write wonderful melody that made him famous: "Give me a laundry list and I will set it to music" he once bragged and Wagner ruefully admitted, "Rossini turned his back on the pedantic lumber of heavy scores and listened where the people sang without a written note. What he heard there was what, out of all the operatic box of tricks, had stayed the most unbidden in the ear – the naked, ear-delighting, absolutely melodic melody, that is, melody that was just melody and nothing else!

At the age of twenty one he was world famous and, as they came out, his operas immediately entered the international repertory. It was, therefore, a great mystery and the subject of endless speculation that, after the performance of 'William Tell' at the Parish Opera in 1829 when the adulation had reached all but hysterical, Rossini retired. At that point he stopped composing and although he lived for another thirty-nine years, he never wrote another note of opera.

This long and barren period did, however, see two large-scale religious works – the Stabat Mater and the Petite Messe Solennelle. In the Messe he uses harmonics far more adventurous than anything that can be found in his operas and its chromaticisms and sweeping modulations alongside its classical melodic outline present us with a fascinating amalgam of the old and new. The original scoring for chorus, soloists, two pianos and harmonium in itself exerts a peculiar charm, and in this format it received a first performance in private. Rossini later scored it, with slight alterations, for full orchestra.

The Petite Messe Solennelle is a work of diverse moods: the jaunty and dance-like 'Domine Deus'; the great intensity of the 'Agnus Dei' and the two (almost foot-tapping) fugal subjects, developed beyond the normal bounds of sequential treatment, which bring the Credo and Gloria movements to their powerful climaxes. In contrast are unaccompanied choral passages – the motet-like 'Christe Eleison' the simple and melodic 'Sanctus' and 'Benedictus' and the 'Dona Nobis Pacem'.

By 1829 romanticism was on its way and Rossini, disillusioned with the direction in which opera and new vocal techniques were heading, wanted no part of it. The Petite Messe Solennelle was very much a swan-song and, perhaps, even a requiem for the 'Classical Period'.

Patrick Larley

David Soward – Pianist moved to Oxfordshire last year and took over the conductorship of *Jubilate!*, the Oxford Chamber Choir, in October 2002. With them he put on a much admired first concert in November and last month they performed a moving and challenging Lenten concert in Merton College Chapel. In 1991 he founded *Cantores Novi*, a much-admired chamber choir which still sings around Cirencester and the Cotswolds. In 1996 he took on the *Birmingham Singers* with whom he conducted larger-scale works with orchestra. Highlights included a joint performance with Stone Choral Society at the Adrian Boult Hall of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with John Noble in the title role and the participation of the Regency Sinfonia. He has also variously conducted the *Cleeve Chorale* and a small vocal group called *Quorum*.

Besides directing choirs, David sings in a number of chamber groups and plays the piano both as soloist and accompanist. His piano teachers included Stephen Reynolds and Peter Lawson. Choral accompanying has taken him to Ludlow to play Britten's *St Nicholas* and Chester Cathedral, Ludlow and Stone to play Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*.

Patrick Larley – conductor and composer, has been Musical Director of Nantwich Choral Society since 1998 and holds a similar post with Ludlow Choral Society in Shropshire. During this time he has widened the choir's horizons by adding new and challenging works to the standard repertoire and by encouraging the performance of unaccompanied choral music.

Patrick studied Organ, Singing and Choral training at the RNCM, and then embarked on a career centred around cathedral music, holding posts at Wells Cathedral, St. Asaph Cathedral and St. James' Choir School, Great Grimsby. He is also founder and director of his own orchestral ensemble – *Consort*, vocal ensemble *Chudleigh's Cumpanie*, and the early music group – *The Gallery Players*. He has worked with a number of the leading professional orchestras in the North West as conductor, keyboard player and singer and has taken part in many of the country's major music festivals including Aldeburgh, Chester, Paisley, York and the Proms.

Patrick's compositions have been recorded on CD and broadcast on Radio 3. Recordings include *The Rose of Peace* – music for a capella voices, and *On a Fine Morning* – music for solo voice and piano. The cantata *Appearing, Shining, Distant or Near* (a setting of The Great Egyptian Hymn to Aten) was composed for LCS in 1998 and recorded on their CD Praise for Creation, and a *Mass of a Thousand Ages* was commissioned by NCS for the millennium celebrations and premiered on 8th April 2000 in St Mary's Church, Nantwich. Patrick is currently working on a piece for symphony orchestra, *Images and Reflection*, and his most recent choral work, the cantata *On Christmas Day*, a setting of words by Thomas Traherne and George Herbert, received its first performance on December 14th by the Bognor Regis Choir in Sussex. New commissions for 2003 include a joyful anthem for the Berkshire County Youth Choirs and Orchestra celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, to be performed in Windsor Castle on July 9th 2003, and a musical sequence on the life of St Columba commissioned by Opus Anglicanum for performances in Glasgow Cathedral and Iona Abbey in May 2004. In Nantwich Choral Society's November concert Patrick directed his own vocal ensemble, *Chudleigh's Cumpanie*, in four of his a capella works, including the first UK performance of *Songs of the Cosmos*.

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY MEMBERS

SOPRANO 1

Ann Barnard
Janice Brown
Jo Butchart
Joyce Clegg
Glenda Colemere
Gail Corfield
Rita Davies
Ann Ferguson
Cynthia Gorton
Maeve Hague
Frances Hughes
Sheila Luke
Sue Munks
Maire Pedder
Rachel Pentecost
Jacqueline Weatherill
Helen Kerr
Elizabeth Kirby

SOPRANO 2

Sue Briscoe
Christine English
Joyce Foster
Gill Handford
Dorothy Layfield
Anne-Dorothee Maechtig
Eileen Robertson
Barbara Shone
Christine Thomas

ALTO 1

Jean Atkin
Alison Bailey
Diane Disbury
Susan Elliott
Isobel Hope
Linda Lewis
Jane Lincoln
Ann Nicol
Sue Sherwood
Margaret Smith
Gillian Wakeley
Diane Wheatley

ALTO 2

Shirley Burton
Rita Donnelly
Angela Greaves
Joy Guest

Nancy Kellett

Anne McKay
Brenda Midgley
Brenda Morris
Jean Nurse
Sheila Pemberton
Joan Shaddick

TENOR

Martyn Colley
Wal Kaye
Thomas Maechtig
Mike Moore
Mike Moores
Peter Pedder
Ian Robertson
Jeremy Rogers
Nick Smith
Philip Trinder
Joe Watson

BASS

Roger Boulbee
Christopher Findlay
David Foster
Nick Green
Martin Jones
Ron Kelly
Jock Knight
Jonathan Layfield
Ray Potts
Bob Pugh
John Saunders
Simon Stubbington
David Walker