

CIRENCESTER CHORAL SOCIETY

Conductor: Carleton Etherington



Petite Messe Solennelle

Gioachino Rossini

Praise the Lord

Jenny Rees

Emily Rowley Jones *soprano*

Melanie Lang *mezzo-soprano*

Gareth John *tenor*

Philip Spendley *bass*

Jenny Rees *piano*

John Brierley *harmonium*

7.30 pm Saturday 9th December 2006
The Bingham Hall, Cirencester

PETITE MESSE SOLENNELLE

GIOACHINO ROSSINI
(1792-1868)

1. Kyrie - Christe
2. Gloria
3. Gratias
4. Domine Deus
5. Qui tollis
6. Quoniam
7. Cum Sancto Spiritu

Soloists and Chorus
Soloists and Chorus
Trio - Contralto, Tenor, Bass
Tenor Solo
Duet for Soprano and Contralto
Bass Solo
Soloists and Chorus

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Wine and soft drinks available in the Bingham Suite to the right of the hall

8. Credo
9. Crucifixus
10. Et Resurrexit
11. Preludio Religioso
12. Sanctus
13. O Salutaris
14. Agnus Dei

Soloists and Chorus
Soprano Solo
Soloists and Chorus
Harmonium and Piano
Soloists and Chorus
Soprano Solo
Contralto Solo and Chorus

Tonight's soloists are all current students on the internationally acclaimed opera course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD) in London:

Emily Rowley Jones (*soprano*) graduated in music from Southampton in 2002 and gained her Masters as the top student at GSMD in 2005. Emily has won prizes in festivals and singing competitions around the country and regularly performs as a soloist with the London Welsh and South Wales Male Voice Choirs. She has recently been accepted as a member of the extra chorus for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Gareth John (*tenor*) has a BMus from the University of Wales, Bangor and gained an MMus at GSMD in 2005. He won the David Lloyd Memorial Scholarship for 'most promising tenor' and the Blue Ribbon for 'best soloist under 25' at the 2003 National Eisteddfod of Wales. Gareth has sung at music festivals in Oxford, Chipping Campden and Machynlleth and toured Johannesburg with the South African Welsh Society.

Melanie Lang (*mezzo-soprano*) has worked as a soloist in many concerts, including 'Last Night of the Proms', and performed at the Salzburg Festival, broadcast on Radio 3 and BBC1. She has recently recorded for a Hyperion CD with the renowned vocal accompanist Graham Johnson. Melanie won the 2006 Allcard & Busenhardt-Morgan-Evans award supported by the Worshipful Company of Musicians.

Philip Spendley (*bass*) gave up his job as a bank manager to study music full time after successes in music festivals as an amateur singer. Recent awards include winner of the Guildhall's 2005 English Song competition and the Wyburd award for German Lieder. Philip has been on tour to France and Italy with the British Youth Opera and sings regularly as a soloist with a number of choral societies.

Praise the Lord

THERE ARE FEW WORKS scored for piano and harmonium with which to complement Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*. Jenny Rees has written a full choral setting of Psalm 148 with these accompaniments for the Society and we give the premiere performance tonight. The psalm, traditionally sung at Christmas, calls on the whole of creation to praise God, from the angels and heavenly hosts to birds and small creatures. Jenny has dedicated the piece to her father for his years of support and encouragement.

Petite Messe Solennelle

IT WAS ROSSINI'S OPERATIC COMPOSITIONS that made him one of the most prominent musicians of his day. By the age of 37 he had completed over 40 operas, including *The Barber of Seville* (1816) and *William Tell* (1829); this latter work, however, marked the end of his operatic career and he retired to the life of a *bon vivant*. Over the next 25 years he composed little but the anticipated good life was marred by long bouts of ill health. Finally, in 1855, he and his second wife left Italy to return to Paris, where his earlier career had been so successful. Here he recovered his health and with it the will to compose again, although his output now was mostly for his own enjoyment, largely comprising small, humorous chamber works. These would often be performed at the dinner parties he laid on for the great musicians of the day passing through the city. The only substantial work of these later years was the *Petite Messe Solennelle*, which Rossini described as 'the last mortal sin of my old age'.

Rossini dedicated his *Petite Messe Solennelle* to the Countess Louise Pillet-Will and it was first performed on 14 March 1864 at the consecration of her private chapel in Paris. Rossini wrote: "*Petite Messe Solennelle*, in four parts with accompaniment of two pianos and harmonium, composed during my country vacation at Passy. Twelve singers of three sexes – men, women and castrati – will be enough for its performance: that is, eight for the chorus, four for the solos, a total of twelve cherubim." The work tonight will be sung by a greater number of singers, but of fewer sexes and, arguably, less angelic countenance! The title is somewhat enigmatic, some suggesting it is a joke on Rossini's part. At around 80 minutes it is longer than many settings of the mass and it is the modest chamber music format, appropriate for its original purpose, rather than its duration that may explain *petite* in the title. The description *solennelle* (solemn) may simply mean that the work fits the criteria for Solemn Mass as defined by the Church. The variety of styles and moods, however, reflect more the lively spirit of a composer of light opera than the sacred nature of the liturgy.

Rossini transcribed the work for orchestra in about 1867. Intent on retaining the female voices, he sought a papal dispensation to allow women to sing in churches, but to no avail. After a second private performance of the original chamber scoring in 1865 he allowed no further performances in his lifetime and it was not heard in public until 1869, the year after his death. Various versions of the score have since been produced. Tonight's performance is from the Ricordi edition, using a single piano and harmonium, matching as closely as possible Rossini's full orchestral score.

Carleton Etherington (*conductor*)

Carleton was appointed Conductor of Cirencester Choral Society in January 2005. Since 1996 he has been Organist of Tewkesbury Abbey, also directing the Abbey Choir and accompanying the Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum. After London University he studied at the Royal Academy of Music where he was awarded the Recital Diploma. In 1992 he won first prize at the Paisley International Organ Competition and the following year won the Royal College of Organists' "Performer of the Year" competition in London. He is Chairman of the Gloucestershire Organists' Association and a Council Member of the Royal College of Organists. He has performed throughout Europe, Australia and the USA, broadcasts frequently on BBC Radio and has won considerable acclaim for his CD recordings.



Jenny Rees (*composer and pianist*)

Jenny began composing while a member of the Bristol Schools Symphony Orchestra. At 16 she won the composition section of the Staple Hill Eisteddfod with a piece for solo soprano and piano and in 1987 completed a Sinfonietta for Wind Band while at the Welsh College of Music and Drama. After teaching and working for an Open University degree Jenny returned to composing, piano and clarinet. She has recently completed commissioned works for the Bristol Brass Consort and the Cardiff Amateur Flute Ensemble and has had her work published by Queen's Temple Publications. Jenny currently makes up one half of The Berkeley Duo of flute and piano, and is accompanist to Cirencester and Stroud Choral Societies.



John Brierley (*harmonium*)

John studied at Durham University and King's College London. He is currently Organist at All Saints' Church, Worcester and maintains a busy schedule as pianist, organist, teacher and conductor.

Cirencester Choral Society gratefully acknowledges the help of the
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CIRENCESTER CHORAL SOCIETY

The Society welcomes new members in all voices. If you are interested in singing with us please telephone our Membership Secretary, Anne Vickers, on 01285 770759 or email enquiries@cirencester-choral-soc.org.uk, or come and meet us at a rehearsal. These are held at St Peter's Hall, St Peter's Road, Cirencester, on Tuesday evenings, 7.30 – 9.30 pm. Rehearsals for our next concert begin on Tuesday 9th January 2007.

Soprano

Liz Beak
Anne Boydell
Sybil Bride
Sue Burton
Janine Coleridge
Diana Crane
Alison Crooks
Anne Davies
Sandra Dent
Hazel Finlayson
Jenny Hall
Emma Hayward
Diana Heywood
Judith Ivison
Patsy Jackson
Mary James
Angela Jones
Valerie Lambert
Beryl Le Bars
Billie Llewelyn
Mary Ludbrook
Diane Martin
Jane Mulraney
Jennette Murphy
Eunice Page
Susie Rigsby
Wiggy Talbot Rice
Ruth Terry
Susanna Venn
Anne Vickers
Jacqueline Wilson

Heather Church

Mary Clayton
Fiona Cordiner
Valerie Custis
Emma Hayward
Sonia La Fontaine
Lorna Lane
Liz Lewingdon
Lyn Longridge
Mary Macdonald
Pamela Mason
Liz McGlynn
Olivia Murray
Pamela Orchard
Laura Patterson
Ann Pole
Ann Price
Catherine Price
Val Price
Caroline Rae
Jane Read
Margaret Reynolds
Penelope Robson
Anne Smith
Helen Sunderland
Chris Sutton
Pamela Varey
Ghislain Venn
Liz Walters
Adrienne Winter
Gill Young
Joanna Young

Vic Gilks

Christopher Hallpike
Richard Kent
Alastair Macdonald
Joe McCall
Robin Palmer

Bass

Bernard Crooks
Richard Davies
Garth De Courcy-Ireland
Anthony Eyre
Raymond Fenton
John Hicks
Tim Hume
Nigel Kinson
Robert Llewelyn
Tim Page
Nic Pulford
Geoff Richards
Peter Schnabl
Bob Selby
Alan Huw Smith
Graeme Tonge
Phil Tubbs

Alto

Frances Angus
Una Black
Dreena Chamberlain
Barbara Chesworth

Tenor

Andrew Bowden
Derek Bristow
Andy Crane
Rob Crow



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John Rutter:

Requiem

John Rutter's Requiem, completed in 1985, includes some of his most exhilarating choral music. In the modern practice it combines the liturgy of a Requiem Mass with other texts and includes his much loved setting of 'The Lord is my shepherd'.

Edward Elgar:

Songs from the Bavarian Highlands

These six choral songs were inspired by holidays which Edward Elgar and his wife Alice spent in Southern Bavaria in the 1890s.

Franz Joseph Haydn:

Creation

Haydn was inspired to write an oratorio on hearing Handel on his first visit to England at one of the great Handel festivals in Westminster Abbey. He did not complete The Creation until 1798 and it endures as the supreme choral masterpiece of his old age.

8 December 2007
The Bingham Hall
Cirencester

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