



Chepstow Choral Society



Musical Director – Graham Bull

Presents

***Fauré* – Requiem**
***Dvořák* – Mass in D**

with

Peter Cook – Organ

Angela Ham – Soprano

Roger Martin – Baritone

Saturday, 19th March, 2016

St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow, 7.30 pm

CCS is affiliated to Ty Cerdd – Music Centre Wales
and Making Music

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Passiontide Concert 2016

On behalf of Chepstow Choral Society I am delighted to welcome you to our Passiontide Concert, held this year on the Saturday before Palm Sunday. It is with great pleasure that we welcome back Peter Cook, our organist this evening. Tonight we are thrilled to have as our soloists, Angela Ham (Soprano) and Roger Martin (Baritone), who are both members from within CCS. We are also, as always, grateful to our Musical Director, Graham Bull, and our Assistant MD and pianist, Marjorie Duerden, for their work in preparing us for this concert.

The beautiful works of Fauré and Dvořák have been chosen for our concert this evening to reflect the close proximity to Easter.

Chepstow Choral Society is extremely keen to recruit new members in 2016. We welcome singers from all voice sections. We are a community choir and new members would be most welcome.

As always, our thanks go to Rev. Chris Blanchard and his team at St Mary's. Their support and assistance is greatly appreciated. I also wish to thank our front of house team who work tirelessly to ensure a smooth performance.

May I finish by thanking you, our audience, for without your support and encouragement works such as these would not be able to be performed in Chepstow.

Sue Carter

Chairman, Chepstow Choral Society

The next CCS concert!

Wednesday, June 29th, 2016; 7.00 pm

Summer Gala Concert – popular opera and musical theatre choruses with Stephen Hamnett (baritone), Angharad Morgan (soprano), Ruth Rusling (trumpet) and Marjorie Duerden (Piano) followed by light refreshments

Arts Hall, Chepstow School and Leisure Centre

www.chepstowchoralsociety.org.uk

Programme

This evening's concert features two settings penned and first performed within less than a year of each other, and sharing many similarities in length, design and circumstance of composition, and first performances. Both were conceived for organ accompaniment initially, before being orchestrated to meet public (and publishers') demand. In Fauré's work, soloist requirement is minimal, while Dvořák wrote for choral forces alone. 130 years on, both pieces work equally well in an orchestral context or, as tonight, with a more modest organ only accompaniment. We hope this evening's programme will prove suitable for the time of year.

Requiem Op. 48

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Introït et Kyrie

Offertoire

Sanctus

Pie Jesu

Agnus Dei

Libera Me

In Paradisum

Fauré studied composition with Saint-Saens and other leading French musicians, though he never learned formally at the great Parisian Conservatoires. A renowned organist, he spent much of his later working life as a teacher in his own right, as well as holding the prestigious post at the large and fashionable, if austere, church of La Madeleine. His compositions were not generally taken seriously in his lifetime, possibly because of their subtlety and intimate nature. He did write for orchestra, but was more at home composing songs, piano music and chamber pieces. Moreover the length of these works is not great, and in the days of Mahler symphonies and Verdi operas, it is possible that the Parisian – and wider – audience simply did not appreciate Fauré's work.

He started work on the Requiem in 1887, without specific commission, though his father's death two years earlier may have been a catalyst (his mother died just before the work was completed). Quite possibly it was composed with a purely functional purpose in mind, as it was immediately adopted at La Madeleine, and became the staple liturgical setting there for several years. This theory is further borne out by the fact that the original setting, completed in January 1888, was

scored simply for organ, with occasional parts for lower strings, timpani and harp, and a solo violin in the *Sanctus*. In fact this first version comprised only the *Kyrie*, *Sanctus*, *Pie Jesu* and *Agnus Dei* of the liturgical Requiem service, with the *In Paradisum* of the Burial rite. For a later adaptation, four years after its first performances Fauré added the *Offertoire* and *Libera me* movements, as well as scoring additional parts for bassoons and brass, and the well-known full orchestra version was published only in 1900.

Whilst several of the other well-known examples of Requiem settings from the mid and late 19th century are great dramatic statements employing huge forces (Berlioz 1837, Brahms 1868, Verdi 1874), Fauré's setting is contemplative and somewhat introspective. Fearsome and terrifying portrayals of Hell and Damnation, such as in Verdi's *Dies Irae*, give way to more angelic pictures in Fauré's *Sanctus* and *In Paradisum*. The work is often performed with its original setting in mind – with organ accompaniment alone, as in this evening's performance. In this way, Fauré's original liturgical intentions can be heard all the more clearly, with a sense of calm and peace transcending the potential drama of the text. The Day of Judgement becomes something to strive towards as the culmination of the Christian life rather than something to dread, while the plea for peace and light in the outer movements is transparent. Of the seven movements, a baritone soloist is employed in the second and sixth, and a soprano in the central fourth.

Interval

Mass in D major Op. 86

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Kyrie Eleison

Gloria

Credo

Sanctus

Benedictus

Agnus Dei

Like Fauré, Dvořák wrote his Mass with a modest setting and performing forces in mind, and its original was also for organ accompaniment only. It was composed after a request from Joseph Hlavka, an eminent architect and patron of the arts, and founder of the Czech Academy of Science and Arts, on the occasion of the consecration of a new chapel beside his castle in Luzany. As an admirer of Hlavka's work and contribution to the Arts, Dvořák was delighted to work on the commission, penning the Mass during the summer of 1887, and conducting the first performance in the new chapel on September 11th of that year – a matter of months before the

premiere of Fauré's Requiem. As well as the original organ accompaniment being used for this evening's performance, the Mass exists in two further instrumentations – for two harmoniums, cellos and basses, and in an orchestral version, arranged in 1892 so that Novello would accept it for publication.

The *Kyrie Eleison* develops in a rich polyphony from a lilting melodic phrase, with a harmonic language that is both chromatic yet instantly appealing to both singer and listener. The central *Christe Eleison* is more modestly accompanied and in a slightly brooding G minor key, before a brief organ interlude returns the music to the opening *Kyrie* motif.

The *Gloria*, in keeping with conventions of Mass settings, is in three main sections, with a central reflective portion flanked by those set to more outgoing and exuberant music. The first *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* section is largely chordal and fanfare-like, and although the writing doesn't remain homophonic throughout, the mood is positive and sunny. The middle quieter music of the *Gratias agimus tibi* is given to first Sopranos and Altos and then Tenors and Basses, each time in a rich 3 or 4 part texture. The reflective sense of the music continues through a large amount of the *Gloria* text, including the *Qui tolis peccata mundi*, which is given to each voice in turn, before culminating in a more chordal *Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris*. The third section of the *Gloria*, *Quoniam tu solus sanctus* returns to the rousing mood of the opening section, with further fanfare-like material.

Dvořák sets the *Credo* as a gentle dance in triple time, though the melodic lines are adapted from plainsong. For this movement, the altos take the lead in presenting material, often gently and modestly, before being repeated in more declamatory fashion by the rest of the choir. In the quieter, more reflective *Et incarnates est*, the altos continue to lead, and the organ's accompaniment is thinner. Dvořák introduces much melodrama into the *Crucifixus* section, with loud emphatic dissonant chords and mysterious harmonies. The opening material is eventually heard once more at *Credo in spiritum sanctum*, and the movement ends with triumphant and joyful *Amens*.

The *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* are set in conventional ways, with chordal and fanfare-like acclamations for the former and a more reflective mood for the latter. In both movements the later phrases (*Pleni sunt caeli* and *Hosanna in excelsis*, respectively) are set in a slightly faster and more urgent fashion. The final movement of the Mass, *Agnus Dei*, is also reflective and perhaps even more imploring than the *Benedictus*. Dvořák's sense of drama is used to good effect, by building from a very quiet start to a louder climax in the final *miserere nobis*, before reverting to the quiet and reflective mood for the end of the movement, *dona nobis pacem*.

Peter Cook – organ

Peter was born near Mitcham, Surrey. After his parents moved to Devon, he was educated at Newton Abbott Grammar School and, aged 16, became organist of his local village church. Peter received his musical education at the London College of Music and then took a teacher training course at Strawberry Hill College, Twickenham. After a short period as assistant music teacher at the London Nautical School, he was appointed Director of Music in 1973. During nine years at LNS he organised and conducted concerts with the school choir at various venues including Southwark Cathedral and the Royal Naval College at Greenwich (now home to the Trinity Laban College of Music and Drama). From 1974 to 1980 he was accompanist and assistant conductor of The Young Singers' of London which performed in many London venues including Westminster Abbey and a performance of *Carmina Burana* in St Paul's Cathedral in 1980. Peter left LNS in 1980 to concentrate on freelance work. From 1977 to 1999 he was organist at St Mark's, Surbiton, where he developed and enlarged the choir, which sang in a number of England's Cathedrals including St Paul's, Southwark, Chichester, Winchester, Exeter, Ripon, Hereford, Norwich, Wells and Lichfield. In 1975, Peter was appointed an examiner to the LCM board by the late William Lloyd Webber. He also taught at the LCM's Junior College from the early 1970s and was its Director from 1995 until his retirement in 2010. From 2000, he also worked with full time students at the College teaching at Undergraduate and Post Graduate levels. Peter lives in Wimborne Minster, Dorset and since retiring from full time work at the LCM, he has remained on the board of examiners, plays locally at St Thomas More, Iford, Bournemouth and deputises at the Minster and other local churches as required. He is secretary to the Friends of Wimborne Minster and on the committee of the Friends of the Musicians' Chapel in London.

The organ For tonight's performance CCS has hired an Eminent DCS386 digital organ from Cathedral Organs Ltd, Wincanton, Somerset. This is not like the old "electronic" organs which tried to imitate the sound of a pipe organ, but has "real" organ sounds recorded and managed by computer software. It will enable the organist to be placed much closer to the choir and conductor without the need for any CCTV and will also give the player a much clearer idea of the balance of sound between him and the choir. In addition it has a wider range of stops and sounds than St Mary's historic pipe organ and is fully equipped with modern playing aids which enable the organist to make quick changes in colours and timbres at the touch of a button to provide a varied and subtle accompaniment to support the choir.

Angela Ham – *soprano*

Angela has been a member of CCS since 2002, when the family moved to Wales. Originally from Sheffield, she was trained by Vivian Pike and was a regular soloist and member of the highly successful City of Sheffield Girls Choir, winning many major festivals at home and abroad, including the International Eisteddfod in Llangollen. As well as female choirs, she has been a member of several chamber choirs, a Gilbert & Sullivan society and even sang with a male barbershop group! Singing the Faure Requiem tonight is a particular pleasure for her, as she first performed it aged 12 in York Minster, and has never forgotten the experience. When she is not singing, she is a full time working mum and happily encouraging Rebecca and Jessica in their developing musical and dramatic talents - though sadly gave up on husband Richard long ago!

Roger Martin – *baritone*

Roger has been a member of CCS since its inception in 1979. After school at Christ's Hospital, Horsham, where it was discovered he could sing and started his love of choral and solo singing, he had singing lessons for several years and was successful at Bath and Cheltenham Festivals, winning many classes and being invited to sing in the closing concerts. As a result he was asked to sing as soloist with various Gloucestershire Choral Societies. He also ran a madrigal group and has been leading his Singers wherever work and life have taken him since then. Although he does not sing opera, he has a love of Lieder and a passion for the English Song genre. He has no formal musical training but confesses to being "a privileged and enthusiastic amateur".

Graham Bull – *Conductor and Musical Director*

Graham started his musical career as a chorister at Christ Church Cathedral School, Oxford. He gained his Music degree from Exeter University in 1981, specialising in conducting and composition. As a member of the BBC National Chorus of Wales for many years, he enjoyed singing under many leading conductors including Simon Rattle, Neville Marriner and John Elliott Gardiner, and being involved in countless broadcasts and recordings for BBC Radio 3 and TV, including several BBC Proms concerts. During the 1980s and 90s he also sung for and conducted the Exeter Cathedral Chamber Choir – directing services in St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, as well as in provincial city cathedrals. Graham was appointed Musical Director of Chepstow Choral Society in 1998 and has helped the choir to build an enviable repertoire of classics and less frequently performed works. He is also Principal Conductor of Bristol Millennium Orchestra.

CCS always welcomes new members!

Singing lifts the spirits and brings happiness to those that do it! – singing in a choir also gives a sense of collective pleasure. Everyone in CCS just loves singing. We welcome new singers in all voice sections – soprano, alto, tenor and bass. If you would like to sing with us, we would love to hear from you. We do not have a formal audition policy. Prospective members should contact Marjorie Duerden (tel. 01291 623310 or through the website link). **No-one** is excluded from singing membership on grounds of lack of previous choral experience, ability to play instruments, etc, - many members have joined without any of these experiences.

Patrons, Supporters and Friends

Chepstow Choral Society strives to promote and encourage the art of music within the community by giving three or more public concert performances of choral music per year, often with orchestral accompaniment. While presenting these programmes, we foster and support young and aspiring musicians. This can only be done with financial support from the community as our ticket sales rarely cover the costs of our concerts.

In return for your annual subscription (minimum £30.00) you will receive: a complimentary ticket for each concert; an invitation to our Patrons' Supporters' and Friends' evening and your name will be printed in each concert programme.

You will also have the satisfaction of knowing that your patronage will help us to arrange concerts confident in the knowledge that we have a secure income to cover at least some of our costs.

If you would like to join us please complete the membership form and return to:-

***Jean Parkes, Patrons and Membership Secretary, 13 Orchard Avenue,
Chepstow NP16 5RD*** or contact on 01291 620414.

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Chepstow Choral Society: Musical Director Graham Bull

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