

CHEPSTOW CHORAL SOCIETY

Musical Director – Graham Bull

With professional orchestral musicians & soloists



Music Fit for a King!

Saturday 25th March 2023

7.30pm

St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow

www.chepstowchoralsociety.org.uk

Welcome!

On behalf of Chepstow Choral Society may I warmly welcome you to our concert this evening, in the historic St Mary's Priory church, where we are absolutely delighted to be joined by our wonderful soloists Sophie, Molly, Samir and Andy – who are all singing with us for the first time. We are also privileged to once again be accompanied by the CCS professional orchestra, including both new & returning musicians, and led for the first time by Elliot Kempton, a talented young violinist who has played with us on many occasions over the years.

As the concert title suggests, our programme this evening includes beautiful celebratory & moving choral music which is certainly fit for our new king! And of course, with the Coronation of King Charles III in just a few week's time, we couldn't resist adding in the iconic "Zadok the Priest" which we hope you enjoy along with the other amazing items. CCS continues to be proud to be able to perform live four part choral music of this standard in Chepstow and we thank you for supporting us tonight.

Sue Carter, Chair Chepstow Choral Society

Future Concerts

Wednesday 5th July - Summer concert with light refreshments – The Arts Hall, Chepstow School @ 7.00pm

Wednesday 13th December – Our festive Christmas concert - The Arts Hall, Chepstow School @ 7.00pm

We would kindly ask that you switch off all electronic recording devices during the concert, including cameras and mobile phones. Thank you.

Programme

Insane et Vanae Curae

J Haydn

Stabat Mater

G Pergolesi

- 1 Stabat Mater
- 2 Cujus Animam Gementum
- 3 O Quam Tristis et Afflicta
- 4 Quis Est Moerebat, Et Dolebat
- 5 Quis Est Homo Qui Non Fleret
- 6 Vidit Suum Dulcem Natum
- 7 Eja Mater, Fons Amoris
- 8 Fac Ut Ardeat Cor Meum
- 9 Sancta Mater, Istud Agas
- 10 Fac Ut Portem Christi Mortem
- 11 Inflammatus, Et Accensus
- 12 Quando Corpus Morietur. Amen

Interval

Zadok the Priest

G F Handel

Magnificat

F Schubert

Coronation Mass K317

W A Mozart

- 1 Kyrie
- 2 Gloria
- 3 Credo
- 4 Sanctus
- 5 Benedictus
- 6 Agnus Dei

Programme Notes

Insanae et Vanae Curae

J Haydn (1732 - 1809)

The origins of this short motet lie in an early oratorio of Haydn's (*Il ritorno di Tobia*) (*The Return of Tobias*) first performed in 1775. To add some zest to a 1784 revision Haydn added two choruses, the second of which soon became popularly known as 'The Storm Chorus' due, at least in part, to the impassioned and fiery instrumental opening. Capitalizing on the popularity of the music of the chorus, Haydn adapted it in 1797 by inserting a new Latin moralistic text, thus allowing it to be used liturgically. He also offered a German translation so that the motet could be used in the Protestant churches of Northern Europe, as well as the catholic South.

The musical emotion revolves round the contrast between dark and light, played out twice in the work. Haydn's text broadly reflects this. The opening translates as 'Vain and raging cares invade our minds, and madness fills the heart. What does it profit man to strive for earthly things if he neglects the heavens?'. The more lyrical and conciliatory response is 'All things are favourable to you, if God is with you'.

Stabat Mater

G Pergolesi (1710 - 1736)

The text of the Stabat Mater represents the kind of religious poetry that flourished in Central Italy in late Medieval times. It is based on the prophecy of Simeon that a sword was to pierce the heart of Christ's mother Mary (Luke 2:35). In its first eight stanzas the poetry expresses a deep compassion for the mother of Christ as she stands and watches her son suffering on the cross, and in the second stanza direct mention is made of the prophecy of Simeon. After the eighth stanza the poet prays to Mary to let him share her grief and to let him suffer with Jesus, and for her intercession. In the last stanza the poet prays directly to God for a place in Paradise. Pergolesi's setting was written in about 1735 – towards the end of a life cut tragically short by tuberculosis. It was commissioned as a replacement for the version by Alessandro Scarlatti, which had been in use at the church of Maria dei Sette Dolori in Naples for some time. It reflects a more personal form of religious devotion, and has a directness and power of emotional expression, that may have been confusing

to people accustomed to the more restrained music of Scarlatti. The music was, however, instantly successful throughout Italy, had been printed in London by 1749, and became the most frequently published single work of the 18th century.

The setting is originally for two solo female voices, but Desmond Ratcliffe's transcription of some movements for SATB chorus has made the work accessible to many new audiences in recent years.

Zadok the Priest

G F Handel (1685-1759)

When King George I died in June 1727, his successor was proclaimed as George II within a matter of days. The first mention of a coronation was not until a meeting of the Privy Council in August of that year, but William Croft, the then Organist and Composer for the Chapel Royal who was to have written the music for the occasion, died within a couple of days of the meeting. His replacement, Maurice Greene, may reasonably have expected to take on the task. The new King, however, knowing of the popularity of the London-based opera composer George Handel, at once insisted that this was the man he wanted to be entrusted with the important job.

As with so many of Handel's greatest works, the anthems were composed within weeks - albeit out of necessity, for the coronation was scheduled for early October. The order of service was discussed in September, but it is quite likely that Handel had already chosen his texts by then and didn't necessarily follow the instructions of the Privy Council. Originally, up to ten anthems or other musical offerings were in the plans, but these were either replaced by music already in existence from previous coronations, or the organist played, or the text was omitted altogether. There is even some question as to the order in which the four remaining Handel anthems were placed in the service. However, one anthem in particular - 'Zadok the Priest' - has always been the most popular. It has been sung at every subsequent coronation, and is almost obligatory at other royal celebrations too.

After an orchestral introduction Zadok the Priest has three further vocal sections – ending with Alleluias and Amen. The music is in the festive key of D major, which allows for the use of trumpets as well as wind, strings and timpani.

Magnificat

F Schubert (1797 – 1828)

The Magnificat sung tonight is Schubert's only setting. It came fast on the heels of four early Mass settings, and a handful of other Catholic text settings – with the manuscript dated 25th September 1815. It is likely, therefore, to have been written for the choir at Lichtental, a small town close to Vienna, where he sung and trained the musicians as a teenager, and taught at the school his father ran. It may be that it was penned for a special occasion, given that the usual instrumentation of strings and organ is augmented by oboes, bassoon, trumpets and drums.

The setting is in three sections – fast, slow, fast. The opening has a noble yet vivacious feel, perhaps reflecting the effusive nature of the words sung by Mary after being given the message that she had been chosen to be the earthly mother of the Son of God.

The middle section, in triple time has a reduced orchestration (strings only, other than solo oboe interjections) and is sung by four soloists. Here, the word-painting opportunities of the proud being 'put down' and the humble 'exalted' are adhered to as in many previous settings, and the vocal writing for Soprano in particular is quite florid.

The Gloria brings back the full orchestral forces and, although still in triple time, a reprise of the opening's homophonic and upbeat style. After a series of staggered vocal entries and some echoes sung by the soloists of the middle section, the setting finishes with the same three unison Cs that were heard at the start – '...As it was in the beginning...'

Coronation Mass K317

W A Mozart (1756 - 1791)

Mozart's Coronation Mass in C major dates from 1779, and is one of the most popular of his 16 surviving settings (formally listed as No 15), though at barely more than 25' duration, certainly not his longest work in this genre. Unusually for music of this period, there is a clear record of early performance history, allowing academics to piece together an exact composition chronology.

The work was actually completed on 23rd March 1779. Following a year or so in Paris and elsewhere in Northern Europe, Mozart had returned to Salzburg, where his father had secured him a post as organist and composer in the cathedral. It is almost certain that the first performance was given there liturgically on Easter Sunday (4th April) that year. The next documented performance was at the coronation of Francis II as Holy Roman Emperor in 1792. Much like Handel's *Zadok the Priest*, its immediate popularity led to it quickly becoming the work of choice for many royal and imperial coronations in subsequent decades, such that by the first edition of the Kochel catalogue of Mozart's complete music in 1865 the nickname 'Coronation' was already firmly established.

The instrumental scoring is for strings, oboes, trumpets and timpani, with occasional use of three trombones doubling the ATB vocal lines – a normal inclusion for works of this type in large churches and cathedrals in Austro-Germany, but not being used in tonight's performance. There are also no parts for violas, and whilst separate parts were written later for horns these have conventionally been viewed as optional and are therefore, also, not being used this evening.

The Mass is in the usual six movements. In the Kyrie, two majestic full choral settings come either side of more fluid solo material, led by the soprano. The Gloria is also in three parts, again with the third section (from 'Quoniam tu solus') reprising the musical material of the choral opening, in contrast to the more lightly scored central music (from 'Domine Deus') where solo vocal phrases alternate with full chorus. The Credo is the most substantial single movement, both in length and, for the most part, in thickness of texture. As in the previous movements, and in keeping with conventional 18th century Viennese Mass settings, the Credo is in three parts, with a slower section for

solo quartet at ‘Et incarnatus est’ also featuring florid material for violins, and a reprise of the opening material for chorus at ‘Et resurrexit’. Unusually, however, Mozart gives the soloists further new material at ‘Et in spiritum’, music which is then developed by the chorus in the setting of the remaining text. The Sanctus and Benedictus movements are set broadly conventionally, with chorus leading the former and soloists the latter, and each with a faster concluding choral ‘Osanna in excelsis’. The Benedictus does throw up a few surprises, however, both in terms of the light operetta-like instrumental opening and, structurally, in the repeat of both solo and choral material. The Agnus Dei is set as a sublime aria for Soprano solo, and it is the solo quartet that introduces the final material ‘Dona nobis pacem’, initially accompanied just by strings and oboe, but reinforced by full orchestra as the chorus picks up both the music and the tempo to drive the Mass to its conclusion.

Tonight’s Soloists

Sophie Williams - Soprano

Sophie Williams is a 23-year-old soprano from Devon. Sophie first entered the music world as a pianist and cellist. It wasn’t until later when she joined a choir at the age of 18 that she realised singing was something she had to pursue. Sophie has just graduated from The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Throughout her time of study, she has performed in several operas including Dido and Aeneas, where she played the role of Dido. She has just finished working on Shostakovitch’s Cherymoushki with WNO Youth Opera. Sophie is also a passionate choral singer, she was a member of the BBC National Chorus of Wales and for the last two years has sung with The Sixteen’s foundation choir, Genesis Sixteen, working with Harry Christophers and Eamonn Dougan.

Molly Beere – Mezzo Soprano

Molly Beere is a mezzo-soprano from Surrey, and has recently graduated with first class honours from her undergraduate degree at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. During her time there, Molly's highlights included portraying the roles of Sorceress (Dido and Aeneas), Aeneas (Dido and Aeneas), Hansel (Hansel and Gretel), Nobody Nose (The Y Knot), Mrs Lynch (Coram Boy), and Annio (scene from La clemenza di Tito).

As well as giving performances and singing with the choir of St Martin in Roath, Molly is now using her spare time to develop her composition skills, and is currently working on a song cycle to be performed in 2023.

Molly is excited and honoured to be performing with the Chepstow Choral Society this evening.

Samir Savant - Tenor

Samir began his musical training with the Manchester Boys' Choir, and was then awarded a choral scholarship to St. John's College, Cambridge under George Guest. He is in demand across the UK as a tenor soloist, and his oratorio repertoire includes works by Monteverdi, Handel, Bach, Mozart, Rachmaninov and Britten. Stage performances include Gherardo (Gianni Schicchi), Ralph Rackstraw (HMS Pinafore), The Defendant (Trial by Jury), Nanki Poo (The Mikado) and Frederic (Pirates of Penzance). He combines singing with a career in Arts Management, and is Chief Executive of St George's, Bristol, having worked previously at Shakespeare's Globe, English National Opera and the Royal College of Music.

Andy Marshall - Bass

Andy is currently senior Lay Clerk at Bristol Cathedral where he has been a member of the choir since 1995. He began his singing career as a chorister at Lincoln Cathedral before gaining a music scholarship to Rossall School in Lancashire.

Since moving to Bristol, Andy has sung with many local choirs including the choirs of Gloucester and Wells cathedrals, and The Fitzhardinge Consort. In addition to his chorus work Andy has also performed as a soloist on many occasions, including in Bach's St Matthew and St John Passions, B Minor Mass and Wachet Auf, Haydn's Nelson Mass and Mozart's Requiem.

When not singing, Andy fills his time with a day job in financial services and spending time with a very needy 1 year old whippet puppy, Edie.

Tonight's CCS Orchestra

VIOLIN

Elliot Kempton
(leader)
Aden Yip

Lynne McCabe

Eduarda I. S, Prata

Gareth Davies

Catherine Stewart

Helen Page

TIMPANI

Ben Thompson

VIOLA

Tim Harrison

Maria Parfitt

CELLO

Veryan Clark

Lorna Davis

DOUBLE BASS

Robin Davies

CONTINUO

Richard Kubiak

OBOE

Angela Williams

Christopher Burt

BASSOON

Alanna
Pennar-MacFarlane
Janet Lloyd

TRUMPET

Martin Rogers

Thomas Deakin

ORCHESTRA MANAGEMENT Graham Bull and Marjorie Duerden

CCS welcomes new members!

Choral singing lifts the spirits and gives a sense of collective pleasure, and everyone in CCS is a member because they love singing. We welcome new singers in all voice sections, and currently we would love to see some additional tenors and basses. We rehearse term times on Wednesday evenings, 7.30-9.30pm in the Chepstow School Arts Hall.

We do not have a formal audition policy and prospective members should contact :

Marjorie Duerden (tel.01291 623310)

chepstowchoral@gmail.com

No-one is excluded on grounds of lack of previous choral experience, ability to play instruments, etc, - just come and enjoy singing!

And why not follow us on Facebook & Twitter ? @ChepstowChoral

Patrons, Supporters and Friends

CCS promotes & encourages music within the community through its concerts. We particularly foster and support young & aspiring musicians but our ticket sales rarely cover the costs of our concerts. Patrons (minimum subscription £30) receive a complimentary ticket for each concert, an invitation to our Patrons' evenings & their names are printed in each concert programme. This patronage helps us to arrange concerts confident that we can cover at least some of our costs. If you would like to join us please contact :

Kathryn Hughes, Patrons & Membership Secretary

kathryn.m.hughes@gmail.com or call 07872 528152

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