

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY

88th SEASON

ASSEMBLY HALL TUNBRIDGE WELLS

SUNDAY 8th DECEMBER 1991

3.00 p.m.

CORONATION MASS

MOZART

Olivia Blackburn	<i>Soprano</i>
Debra Stuart	<i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>
Richard Edgar-Wilson	<i>Tenor</i>
Henry Herford	<i>Baritone</i>

FANTASIA ON CHRISTMAS CAROLS

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Henry Herford	<i>Baritone</i>
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EINE KLEINE NACHTMUSIK

MOZART

CAROLS FOR CHOIR

AND AUDIENCE

RUTTER

CONDUCTOR

DEREK WATMOUGH

Orchestra led by **RITA JAMES**

Programme 50 p

EINE KLEINE NACHTMUSIK

Mozart (1756 - 1791)

CORONATION MASS Mozart

The Coronation Mass in C major, K.317, is one of the best known of Mozart's large-scale sacred works, and well-loved by Choral Societies because of its relatively manageable construction and overall joyful atmosphere. Mozart wrote the date on the score "11 23 marzo 1779". This gives his age as only 23 years.

We cannot be absolutely certain of the occasion for which it was written, but there is a strong tradition which connects it with a religious ceremony at the Church of St Maria Plain near Salzburg. Here an image of the miraculous Virgin was crowned, and in 1751 the Pope consecrated this crown. It was for one of these "Kronungs" that the Mass was probably composed. It bears all the marks of youthful ardour and of the confidence gained from Mozart's travels in Italy, France and Germany. Although the text of the Mass adheres to the normal pattern of Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei, there are departures from the unaccompanied choral contrapuntal music of the beautiful Masses of Palestrina, Byrd and Victoria. The introduction of an orchestral accompaniment and the development of solo singing altered the character of the earlier Masses so that they became opportunities for musical display, both learned and melodious, rather than being purely devotional. Furthermore, the subdivision of the text, developed first by Bach, gave more opportunity for variety of treatment, both melodically and harmonically, of these movements. We also find evidences of Mozart's dramatic and operatic ability which came to full fruition in later years. You may well detect melodic resemblances to some of his operas.

The Mass is scored for four solo voices, choir and full orchestra—a combination powerful enough to exploit the sonorities of a great Baroque church. There is throughout a masterful interweaving of all these resources.

The opening Kyrie has no orchestral introduction but is a bold declamatory tutti statement repeated three times over strings and basses.

The Gloria is the longest section and is followed by a very fine Coda where the Amen is sung. The quick tempo of the Credo changes to adagio in F minor for the sublime beauty of the Et Incarnatus Est, sung by the four soloists. The modulations and heavy brass scoring convey the anguish of the Crucifixus and the solemnity of the Et Resurrexit leading to Amen. The powerful and majestic Sanctus leads into the faster moving Osanna, marked allegro. In complete contrast we have the lovely light string introduction to the Benedictus sung "sotto voce" by all the soloists, alternating with repeated choral repetition of the Osanna. For many, the most precious gem of the whole work is the Agnus Dei, scored for soprano soloist, accompanied for a few bars with the oboes alone. It is the only part of the work to be in F major. In the Dona Nobis Pacem, Mozart returns to C major and repeats the theme from the opening Kyrie, but with a change of tempo from andante to allegro. This rapid finale became an accepted convention with the newer-style Masses, perhaps emphasising the operatic and dramatic elements.

One realises that compared with the Requiem Mass and the unfinished Mass in C minor, the Coronation Mass perhaps lacks the seal of greatness. Nevertheless, it is shot through with the joy, beauty, balance and clarity which characterises all Mozart's music. We offer it as suitable tribute in this commemorative year, and a happy addition to our Christmas programme.

Olivia Blackburn Soprano

Debra Stuart Mezzo-Soprano

Richard Edgar-Wilson Tenor

Henry Herford Baritone

INTERVAL 15 MINUTES

HARK THE HERALD

For Audience and Choir

FANTASIA ON CHRISTMAS CAROLS

(Vaughan Williams 1872 - 1958)

First performed at the Three Choirs Festival at Hereford in 1912, the Fantasia was inspired, as were the three subsequent Christmas works, by the idea of Christmas. It is more restrained than the later works and intentionally avoids the most familiar carols. As one would expect from this most English of our modern composers, he uses traditional carols, four in number, and gives a wider lease of life to beautiful tunes like "On Christmas Night", which he had collected in Sussex.

The Work begins with a short introductory cello solo which is developed, and can perhaps be translated as "In the beginning was the Word". This leads into

the baritone solo, with choral humming accompaniment, "This is the Truth sent from above", and the subsequent linked sections—"Come all you worthy gentlemen" (chorus and orchestra), "On Christmas night" (solo baritone and wordless chorus) and, finally, a combination and interweaving of all the strains with prominent chimes to accompany. Then the vassailers' voices vanish into the distance, across the snow-covered fields and into the night. Thus in a tuneful and singable structure Vaughan Williams takes us through the story of man's fall to his redemption by the birth of a Saviour, a cause for great rejoicing. J.S.

Henry Herford

Baritone

GOD REST YE

For Audience and choir

ANGELS TIDINGS

STAR CAROL

I SAW THREE SHIPS

Rutter (b 1945)

THE FIRST NOWELL

For Audience and Choir

PIANO DUET

D. Watmough & W. Ellman

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

For Audience and Choir

THE SOLOISTS

OLIVIA BLACKBURN : Soprano

Olivia Blackburn was born and educated in London. She studied singing at Trinity College of Music. She won the Peter Pears Singing Competition, the Lawrence Singing Bursary, and an award from the Ian Fleming Trust to continue her studies. She attended the Britten-Pears School and took part in their Bach, French melodies and Lieder masterclasses, working with Hans Hotter, Heather Harper, Nancy Evans, John Shirley-Quirk, Suzanne Danco and Hugues Cuenod. In 1987 she participated in The Songmakers' Almanac masterclasses and was selected for the final concert.

Miss Blackburn appears regularly on the South Bank where she has performed Haydn's "Die Schopfung", Vivaldi's "Magnificat", and Handel's "Jeptha". In Europe, she has performed with the ECCO such works as Bach's "B Minor Mass", Haydn's "Paukenmesse", and Mozart's "Requiem". In 1988 she gave four performances of the "Messiah" in different German opera houses and recorded Bach's "B minor Mass".

She made her Operatic debut singing the leading role in Vaughan Williams' "The Poisoned Kiss". Her other operatic roles have included Anne Page in Nikolai's "The Merry Wives of Windsor", the Countess in "The Marriage of Figaro" and Arne's "The Guardian Outwitted". In the Wexford Festival she sang the Female Chorus in Britten's "The Rape of Lucretia", and the title role in Holst's "Savitri". For Kohl Opera her roles include Najade in Strauss' "Ariadne auf Naxos", Siebel in Gounod's "Faust", Helena in Britten's "A Midsummer Night's Dream", Pamina in "Die Zauberflote", and Sandrina in "La finta giardiniera".

In the field of song, Olivia Blackburn has given recitals in Paris, Dublin, London and Cambridge. She recently appeared in a recital of Schumann songs at St. John's Smith Square, as part of their Twentieth Anniversary Series. Future concerts include performances of Mozart's C minor Mass in France and Lisbon.

DEBRA STUART : Mezzo-soprano

Debra Stuart was born in Dundee and studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama with Elizabeth Izatt. A Scholarship enabled Debra to continue her studies on the Opera Course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Jessica Cash. She is currently working at the Opera studio with Richard Van Allen. She has participated in masterclasses with Sarah Walker, Sir Peter Pears and

at Aldeburgh with Ilean Cotruas.

While at the Scottish Academy, Debra won the Lieder Prize, the Florence Veitch Ibler Prize for Oratorio singing, and a Bursary for the Margaret Dick Award. She was a finalist in the John Noble Bursary from 1986-88, and in 1988 was the winner of the Mary Garden International Prize. In 1990 she was a finalist in the Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Competition.

Debra Stuart began her operatic work with the chorus of Scottish Opera and was awarded the John Scott Award by them. While with Scottish Opera, she undertook several understudies and small roles. Most recently she has been working with Opera North on their production of "The Jewel Box". Her next role will be Meg Page in Pimlico Opera's "Falstaff".

Other operatic roles include Dido in Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas", Anio in "La Clemenza di Tito" and Dorabella in "Cosi fan tutte".

Her concert and oratorio repertoire is large and ranges from Bach, Handel, and Mozart to Britten and Tippett.

Future engagements include further performances of Dorabella and Anio, recitals for the NFMS in the UK, oratorio performances of Mozart's Requiem, Handel's Messiah, Durufle's Requiem and Vivaldi's Gloria. She will be appearing with the Songmakers's Almanac and Graham Johnson in recital and giving a performance of Nuit d'Ete which will be broadcast by the BBC. Debra Stuart is supported by the Countess of Munster Musical Trust.

RICHARD EDGAR-WILSON : Tenor

Richard Edgar-Wilson was born in Suffolk. He held a choral exhibition at Christ's College, Cambridge and a Foundation Scholarship at the Royal College of Music where he studied with Edward Brooks. His considerable consort experience resulted in collaborations and recordings with groups such as the Tallis Scholars, the Consort of Musicke, Combattimento, and The Scholars. His recent televised performances include the world premier of Judith Weir's Missa del Cid for the BBC.

In Oratorio he performs regularly throughout Britain, and in Norway, Germany, and Spain. His extensive concert performances include works ranging from Monteverdi to Kodaly and Britten.

Recent opera appearances include Haydn's Philemon and Baucis, with the Matrix Ensemble at the Barbican,

the Madwoman in Britten's Curlew River for Prince Consort Opera and Thespis / Mercure in Rameau's Platee at L'Opera de Paris with Minkowski and Les Musiciens du Louvre. Future engagements include performances of Bach's St Matthew Passion, Mozart's Requiem and Britten's St Nicolas.

HENRY HERFORD : Baritone

Henry Herford, winner of the Benson and Hedges Gold Award and the International American Music Competition, was born in Edinburgh. He graduated in English at Cambridge and went on to study at the Royal Northern College of Music, where he was awarded the Curtis Gold Medal for Singing. Since then he has established a notable career in opera, working with Covent Garden, Glyndebourne, Scottish Opera, Handel Opera, the Chelsea Opera Group, the English Bach Festival and others, in leading roles by composers who range from Monteverdi and Rameau to Janacek, Britten and Stephen Oliver. He has sung Ulysses in Monteverdi's Return of Ulysses, appeared in the Electrification of the Soviet Union and sang Roderick in Debussy's rarely heard The Fall of the House of Usher.

As a concert artist, he has performed and broadcast in Britain, Europe and the USA with leading orchestras and ensembles, including the RPO under Yehudi Menuhin; the CBSO under Simon Rattle; the Nash and Koenig Ensembles and sang Walton's Gloria at the Last Night of the Proms.

Since winning the New York competition, Henry Herford has forged strong links with Los Angeles, Washington and New Orleans. In 1986 he sang at Carnegie Hall with the New York Choral Society and performed "Belshazzar's Feast" with the Pittsburg Symphony and Sir Alexander Gibson. Henry Herford is a noted recitalist on both sides of the Atlantic, and for New World Record has recorded a recital of American music. His many recordings include Vaughan Williams' "Five Mystical Songs" together with "Five Tudor Portraits"; and Handel's "Dixit Dominus" with Stephen Cleobury and Kings College Choir both of which have just been released by Hyperion and Decca respectively.

Among his many recent engagements were recitals and concert appearances with The Songmakers' Almanac at the Wigmore Hall and Bath Festival; on the South Bank he gave a Schubert recital in their Summerscope Festival and a Schoenberg recital in the "Reluctant Revolutionary" series as well as a French song recital as part of their French Revolution celebration; at the Barbican he gave a recital of American music; he also performed works by Charles Ives in Koln and Berlin and gave several concerts with the Nash Ensemble (with whom he has a long association). He has also made four appearances in Jerusalem with Richard Hickox and the Jerusalem Symphony and the Nash Ensemble.

Future engagements include recitals at Aldeburgh, Leeds Festival and London, performances with the BBC Welsh Symphony, Rattle and the CBSO, a tour of France with Frans Bruggen and many other choral works in the UK and Europe. Performances of Britten's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (Demetrius) with Hickox at Sadlers Wells to be recorded for Virgin Records, and 2 CD's of the songs of Charles Ives with Graham Johnson for Unicorn-Kanchana Records.

THE ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY

Honorary Life President : John H Johnson
Chairman : Helen McNab
Musical Director and Principal Conductor : Derek Watmough
Honorary Life Member : Anthony Smith-Masters

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We are most grateful for the support of Patrons and Vice Patrons, and new ones are always welcome. Please ring or write to the General Secretary, Mr L.A. Lee, 233 Greggs Wood Road, Tunbridge Wells (Tunbridge Wells 521937)

The choir rehearses on Monday evenings from September to April. New members are always welcome. There is a simple and private audition. Please contact the Membership Secretary Miss M. Standen 38 Sandhurst Avenue, Pembury, Kent TN2 4JZ, Tel Pembury 2048- we shall be pleased to have you join us.

Our Next Concert

Sunday 10 th May 1992

Messrs Solenelle de St Cecile *Gounod*

The Music Makers *Elgar*



The Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society
acknowledges, with thanks, financial assistance
from the South East Arts Association

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