

OLDHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

Present

# An Italian Double Bill

Sunday - May 1st 2005

OLDHAM PARISH CHURCH

## *Rossini: Stabat Mater*



## *Puccini: Messa di Gloria*

**Sarah Rhodes (Soprano)    Antonia Sotgiu (Mezzo)**  
**Huw Rhys-Evans (Tenor)    Andrew Greenan (Bass)**  
The East Lancashire Sinfonia

**Conductor: Nigel Wilkinson**

*The Oldham Choral Concert Season is kindly supported by the Oldham Chronicle*

**Welcome** to this evening's concert, which I am sure you will all enjoy. The choir last performed these 2 entertaining works as recently as 1998, but there has been such a change in choir personnel in the past few years that many of our members are singing these works for the first time. Rehearsals have been extremely enjoyable, and we hope that our hard work and careful preparation will be evident in the standard of our performance this evening.

We welcome our 4 soloists this evening. Andrew Greenan and Huw Rhys-Evans both appeared in our memorable performance of "Elijah" in Chester Cathedral in 2003, and we are delighted that they accepted our invitation to join us this evening.

Sarah Rhodes makes her debut with us, and comes to us very highly recommended. We look forward to hearing her. A special word of welcome to Antonia Sotgiu, who has stepped in at relatively short notice for Kathleen Wilkinson, who is unable to be with us due to work commitments. We are grateful to Kathleen for her advice and help in securing the services of soloists who are the envy of every other choir in the area.

Welcome also to our friends in the orchestra who work so hard on the day of our concerts to provide us with quality accompaniment.

I hope that this will be another evening that resonates long in the memory, and that you will join us again next season, for what promises to be an exceptionally varied and exciting programme.

Fred Jones – Chairman.

### **"Crucifixion" benefits Hospice.**

Our recent performance of Stainer's "Crucifixion", under the direction of John Bethell M.B.E., was a great success artistically, but very pleasingly it also raised just short of £900 for Dr. Kershaw's Hospice. This is in addition to £360 raised by choir members themselves to cover the cost of staging this event. Thanks to all concerned, especially, John Bethell, Nigel Wilkinson, and Chris Idle, who gave their services free; and Makin's for the free loan of the organ.

It should also be noted that our Christmas Concert held at Makin's raised a further £600+ for this very deserving cause.

### **Life members**

At the above concert, which marked the retirement of Joyce Ogden as Secretary, her service was marked by the conferment of Life Membership. This brings the current list of Life Members to 6. These are Maude Bentley, Vera Craig, Hilda Rosebury, Nancy Murphy, Alan Mellor and Joyce.

### **Season 2005-6**

Rehearsals for next season recommence on Monday May 9<sup>th</sup> at the Community Centre on Union St. There will of course be an extended summer break in July, before rehearsals begin in earnest in mid-August.

New members are welcome especially tenors.

The season begins with a workshop performance of The Mozart Requiem in Chester Cathedral on September 17<sup>th</sup>.

You are invited to join us for this, but if you are a non-singer, why not have day out in Chester and round it off by attending the performance which is scheduled to finish not long after 9.00p.m. Our previous concert in this spectacular setting was truly memorable.

Full details of this can be found in the brochure available at the rear of the church.

Our autumn concert will be a performance of *Haydn's "Creation"* here in the Parish Church, sung in English with full orchestra, and this will be followed by our usual Christmas programme of events.

The main event of next season however, will be a performance of *"The Armed Man"* by Karl Jenkins. This work which was written in the millennium year, has been featured regularly on Classic FM, and is quickly establishing a permanent place in the choral repertoire. It is anticipated at this stage that the first half of the programme will be *Dona Nobis Pacem* by Ralph Vaughan-Williams, but this has not been finalised as yet. If you have any suggestions for future seasons please let us know.

### **Acknowledgements.**

Thanks to all who have helped in the preparation of this evening's concert.  
Special thanks go to Chris Idle, our accompanist, for his tireless work at rehearsals.  
The Church Wardens for their co-operation and assistance.  
Oldham Library for music hire.  
The church for providing refreshments.  
The Oldham Chronicle for sponsoring our season.

# Italian Double Bill

***Please ensure that all mobile phones are switched off.***

*The text and an English translation of both these works can be found in the centre of this programme, to help your appreciation of the concert*

## Programme

### **Overture: La Forza del Destino (Verdi)**

### **Messa di Gloria (Puccini)**

**Tenor: Huw Rhys-Evans Bass: Andrew Greenan**

1. Kyrie eleison
2. Gloria in excelsis deo
3. Credo
4. Sanctus
5. Agnus Dei

## INTERVAL

*Refreshments will be available at the rear of the church. These have kindly been provided by our hosts at the Parish Church. Please make a donation to cover their costs.*

*A bell will be rung after 15 minutes to indicate that the performance is about to restart*

### **Stabat Mater (Rossini)**

**Soprano: Sarah Rhodes  
Tenor: Huw Rhys-Evans**

**Mezzo: Antonia Sotgiu  
Bass: Andrew Greenan**

1. Stabat Mater (Choir & soloists)
2. Cujus animam (Tenor solo)
3. Quis est homo (Duet)
4. Pro peccatis (Bass solo)
5. Eia mater (Choir with Bass soloist)
6. Sancta Mater (Quartet)
7. Fac ut portem (Mezzo solo)
8. Inflammatus et ascensus (Soprano solo with choir)
9. Quando corpus (Choir)
10. Amen (Choir & soloists)

*You are reminded that flash photography and unauthorised recording is not permitted.*

## Sarah Rhodes – Soprano

Sarah Rhodes was born in Kingston-upon-Hull and studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She has worked extensively with most of the major British opera companies including Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, English National Opera, Opera North, English Touring Opera and Opera Holland Park. Sarah's many varied roles include *Donna Anna* - Don Giovanni, *Gilda* - Rigoletto, *Violetta* - Traviata, *Lady Macbeth* - Macbeth, *Amelia* - Un Ballo in Maschera, *Santuzza* - Cavalleria Rusticana, *Leonore* - Il Trovatore, *Witch and Mother* - Hansel and Gretel, *Leonore* - Fidelio, *Lady Billows* - Albert Herring and the title roles *Salome* and *Tosca*. Most recently she sang the role of *Medea* in a new children's opera called The Minotaur at Scottish Opera and *Gerhilde* in their award winning Ring Cycle.

She has sung in many concerts, appearing at the Barbican, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Bridgewater Hall, St. David's Hall and the Royal Albert Hall. She recently toured Spain performing in Beethoven's Symphony No.9 with the Euskadi Symphony Orchestra, and then appeared in Prague with the Brno Symphony Orchestra at the Prague Autumn International Festival where she sang excerpts from Wagner and Strauss. Future work includes singing the role of *Queen Elizabeth* in Maria Stuarda for English Touring Opera.



## Huw Rhys-Evans – Tenor

Born in Tregaron, Huw Rhys-Evans won the Blue Riband Prize for the Singer of the Year at the Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales and, on three occasions, the Tenor Solo Award. Following studies with Kenneth Bowen at the Royal Academy of Music, he was awarded the Tenor Prize at the 1990 Great Grimsby International Competition for Singers and completed his studies at the National Opera Studio.

His many and varied oratorio engagements have included the Bach *Passions* at the Netherlands, the *B Minor Mass* in Besançon, the *St Matthew Passion* with the Northern Chamber Orchestra, *Joshua* at St John's, Smith Square, *Messiah* at the Royal Albert Hall, *Saul* with the Darmstadt Konzertchor, *The Creation* with the English Chamber Orchestra, the *Nelson Mass* at the Fenice Theatre, Venice, *Elijah* with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Rossini *Stabat Mater* at Westminster Abbey, Bach *St Matthew Passion* in Manchester and Southwark Cathedrals, the Lloyd Webber *Requiem* with the Scottish Opera Orchestra and *Carmina Burana* at both the Royal Albert Hall and the Royal Festival Hall.

Huw Rhys-Evans' operatic engagements have included Ernesto *Don Pasquale* and Ismaele *Nabucco* for WNO, Vivaldo *Die Hochzeit des Camacho* at the Flanders International Festival, Ferrando *Così fan tutte* with Madrid Comic Opera and Opera Huw d'Automne, Don Ottavio *Don Giovanni* for Perth Festival Opera, Belmonte *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* for Opera Project, Nadir *The Philosopher's Stone* with Collegium Musicum 90 (broadcast on BBC Radio 3), Tamino *Die Zauberflöte* with the North Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, Pang *Turandot* with Mid-Wales Opera, Brighella *Ariadne auf Naxos* for the Fondation Royaumont and for English Touring Opera and First Jew *Salome* at the Bastille Opera.

Huw is particularly celebrated as a singer of Rossini. His roles including Carlo/ Goffredo *Armida*, Almaviva *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Don Ramiro *La Cenerentola*, Idreno *Semiramide* and Belfiore *Il viaggio a Reims* sung for companies such as the Fondation Royaumont, the Spier Arts Trust, South Africa, Chelsea Opera Group and Opera North. He also sang the title roles of Rossini's *Count Ory* and *Torvaldo e Dorliska* at the Rossini in Wildbad Festival in Germany.

Huw Rhys-Evans has recorded *Tamino and Almaviva* for Opera Vox Cartoons and his varied CD credits include the title role in Rossini's *Le Comte Ory* on the Naxos label, *All Through the Night* (Welsh Songs for Harp), Judge *Le calife de Bagdad*, Gouvy *Stabat Mater*, Vivaldo Mendelssohn *Die Hochzeit des Camacho*, Ferrando *Così fan tutte*, Pedrillo *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Carmina Burana*, Handel *Judas Maccabaeus*, *Messiah* and Elgar *The Kingdom*.

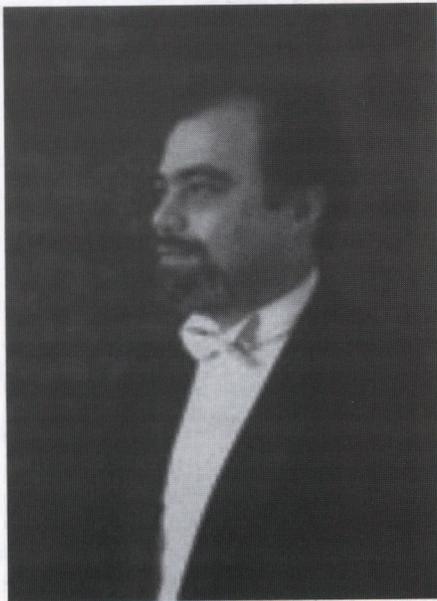
## Antonia Sotgiu – Mezzo-Soprano

Antonia was born in nearby Bolton but is of Italian / Irish descent. She studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, and the National Opera Studio, and won numerous awards including the prestigious Frederic Cox Prize, the Richard Lewis / Jean Shanks Award from Glyndebourne, and the As-Li Co Competition held in Milan.

As a company principal at Welsh National Opera, she has sung many roles, including the title role in *Carmen*, Mercedes (also in *Carmen*), 3<sup>rd</sup> Lady in *The Magic Flute*, Anina in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and Olga in *Eugen Onegin*.

Other operatic engagements have included Isabella in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare*, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Maid in *Elektra* for the BBC Proms.

On the concert platform Antonia has sung the Verdi Requiem at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, [London], with Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solenne* at the Aldeburgh Festival, *Das Paradies und die Peri* (Schumann) with the Royal Liverpool Phil. Orchestra, and opera galas with the RPO at St. David's Hall Cardiff.



## Andrew Greenan – Bass

Andrew Greenan read Modern Languages at Cambridge and studied with John Cameron at the Royal Northern College of Music.

He made his professional operatic debut in Schoenberg's *Die glückliche Hand* at La Scala, Milan, and then sang at Bayreuth for three consecutive summers. He then spent 5 years as a Company Principal at ENO, and has returned there on a regular basis.

He has also appeared at the Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne, Welsh National Opera, Hamburg, Turin, Seattle, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Tel Aviv, Barcelona, Nancy, Brussels, and Vienna, working with such eminent conductors as Solti, Haitink, Davis, Pappano, Hickox, Runnicles, Mackerras, Lazarev and Elder.

His many roles include Wotan, Hans Sachs, Bartok's Bluebeard, Rocco [Fidelio], Sarastro [Magic Flute], Gremin [Onegin], Claggart [Billy Budd], Bottom, Swallow [Peter Grimes], the Commendatore [Don Giovanni], Zaccariah [Nabucco] and Landgraf [Tannhauser].

Recordings include *The Nightingale*, *the Flood* and *Oedipus Rex* in the Robert Craft "Stravinsky" series, and the award winning recording of *The Trojans* made with the LSO under Sir Colin Davis.

In the Summer of 2003 he appeared in a new production of *Parsifal* to mark the opening of the new opera house at Seattle, and more recently he has appeared in *The Tales of Hoffman* at the Royal Opera, as King Marke in *Tristan* at Nancy, and as Babourov in the highly acclaimed premier of Shostakovich's *Cheryomushki* in Lyon. Future plans include *Tannhauser* and *Maria Stuarda* in San Diego, *Die Meistersinger* in Geneva, and return visits to Nancy as the Doctor in *Wozzek*, and Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier*. Later this month he makes his Paris debut as Graf Waldner in *Arabella* at the Chatelet.

Andrew has an extensive concert repertoire appearing with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Phil., and the English Chamber Orchestra – amongst others. He is particularly noted for his performances of the Verdi Requiem and "Elijah" – a role he sang for us in our memorable performance at Chester Cathedral in 2003.

## MESSA DI GLORIA - THE TEXT

Puccini uses the standard Latin text with no deviation or omissions.

### KYRIE

Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison

### GLORIA

Gloria in excelsis Deo,  
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis  
Laudamus te. Benedicimus te. Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.  
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.  
Domine Deus, Rex coelestis. Deus Pater omnipotens.  
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe,  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.  
Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis,  
Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram.  
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,  
miserere nobis.  
Domine Jesu. Quoniam tu solus Sanctus.  
Tu solus Dominus. Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.  
Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris.  
Amen.

### CREDO

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem,  
factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium.  
Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum, et ex  
Patre natum ante omnia saecula.  
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero genitum,  
non factum, consubstantialem Patri,  
per quem omnia facta sunt.  
Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem descendit de  
coelis. Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto, ex Maria Virgine; et homo  
factus est.  
Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato,  
passus et sepultus est.  
Et resurrexit tertia die secundum Scripturas,  
et ascendit in coelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris,  
et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos,  
cujus regni, non erit finis.  
Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem,  
qui ex Patre filioque procedit, qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur, et  
conglorificatur, qui locutus est per prophetas.  
Et unam sanctam Catholicam et Apostolicam Ecclesiam, Confiteor  
unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et expecto  
resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

### SANCTUS

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth.  
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua  
Hosanna in excelsis  
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini  
Hosanna in excelsis.

### AGNUS DEI

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi:  
miserere nobis.  
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:  
dona nobis pacem. Amen.

### LORD HAVE MERCY

Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Christ have mercy.

### GLORY TO GOD

Glory be to God on high,  
and on earth peace, goodwill towards men.  
We praise Thee. We worship Thee. We glorify Thee:  
We give Thee thanks for thy great glory:  
Lord God, King of Heaven, God the Father Almighty  
Lord the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
Thou who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.  
Thou who takest away the sins of the world: receive our prayer.  
Thou, seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy upon us,  
Lord Jesus. Thou alone art Holy, Thou alone art the Lord,  
Thou alone art the most high, Jesus Christ.  
With the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

### THE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, and of all things seen and unseen,  
and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten  
of his Father before all worlds.  
God of God, Light of Light, True God of True God,  
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father,  
by whom all things were made.  
Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and  
was made incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was  
made man.  
He was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and  
ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father. He will  
come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom  
will have no end.  
I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds  
from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is  
worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the Prophets.  
I believe in one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.  
I acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and I look for  
the Resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

### HOLY, HOLY

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts  
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the  
highest.

### LAMB OF GOD

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy  
upon us.  
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy  
peace. Amen

### **Stabat Mater: English texts**

There are numerous translations, some of which attempt to recreate the atmosphere of the original, and match exactly the natural rhythm of the words. The above translation aims to be as near as possible to a literal translation, though some phrases can be interpreted in different ways. It is impossible to find a "singable" translation that accurately reflects the exact meaning of each phrase.

#### **1. Choir with soloists.**

**Stabat Mater dolorosa iuxta crucem lacrimosa dum  
pendebat Filius**

The sorrowful Mother stood full of tears by the Cross while her Son was hanging there.

#### **2. Tenor Solo**

**Cuius animam gementem contristatam et dolentem  
per transivit gladius**

**O quam tristis et afflicta fuit illa benedicta**

**Mater Unigeniti**

**Quae moerebat et dolebat et tremebat cum videbat nati  
poenas incliti**

Her soul, sighing, anguished and grieving, was pierced by a sword

O how sad and afflicted was that blessed Mother of her Only-begotten Son

She who grieved and suffered, while she observed Her Son's pain.

#### **3. Soprano / Mezzo Duet**

**Quis est homo qui non fleret Matri Christi si videret in tanto  
supplicio?**

**Quis non posset contristari Matrem Christi contemplari  
dolentem cum filio?**

Where is the man who would not weep to see the Mother of Christ in such suffering?

Who would not share her sorrow, seeing the loving Mother grieving with her Son?

#### **4. Bass Solo**

**Pro peccatis suae gentis vidit Iesum in tormentis et flagellis  
subditum**

**Vidit suum dulcem natum moriendo desolatum dum emisit  
spiritum**

For the sins of Mankind she saw Jesus undergo torment and the lashing.

She saw her dear Son dying, forsaken, as He yielded up His spirit

#### **5. Choir with Bass Solo**

**Eia Mater, fons amoris, me sentire vim doloris fac ut tecum  
lugeam**

**Fac ut ardeat cor meum in amando Christum Deum ut sibi  
complaceam**

Mother, fount of love, make me to feel the strength of your grief,  
so that I may mourn with you  
Make my heart burn with love for Christ, my God, that I may be  
pleasing to Him

#### **6. Quartet**

**Sancta Mater, istud agas, crucifixi fige plagas cordi meo  
valide**

**Tui nati vulnerati tam dignati pro me pati poenas mecum  
divide**

**Fac me vere tecum flere crucifixo condolere donec ego  
vixero**

**Iuxta crucem tecum stare te libenter sociare in planctu  
desidero**

**Virgo virginum praeclara mihi iam non sis amara fac me  
tecum plangere**

Holy Mother, grant this I pray, imprint the wounds of the  
Crucified deep into my heart.

Share with me the agony of your wounded Son who deigned to  
suffer so much for me

Grant me indeed to weep with you, to suffer with the Crucified,  
until I depart this life

To stand with you beside the Cross and share your grief is my  
desire

Virgin of virgins, do not turn away from me, let me weep with  
you

#### **7. Mezzo Solo**

**Fac ut portem Christi mortem passionis eius sortem et  
plagas recolere**

**Fac me plagis vulnerari cruce hac inebriari ob amorem filii**

Grant that I may bear the death of Christ, be a sharer of his  
Passion, contemplate His wounds

Let me suffer his wounds; make me inebriated by His Cross,  
and the flowing blood of the Son.

#### **8. Soprano Solo with Choir.**

**Inflammatum et accensus, per te, Virgo, sim defensum in die  
iudicii**

**Fac me cruce custodiri morte Christi praemuniri confoveri  
gratia**

Burning in the flames, O Virgin, may I be defended by you, on  
the day of judgement

Grant that I may be protected by the Cross, fortified by the  
death of Christ, strengthened by grace

**9. Quando corpus morietur fac ut animae donetur paradisi  
gloria.**

When my body dies, may my soul be granted the glory of  
paradise.

#### **10. Amen, in sempiternam.**

Amen, forever and ever.

## Messa di Gloria (Giacomo Puccini)

Giacomo Antonio Domenico Michele Secondo Maria Puccini was born in Lucca in Tuscany on 22 December 1858. In this picturesque walled city in Tuscany the Puccini family had held a pre-eminent musical position ever since his great-great grandfather became organist there in the middle of the 18th century, and although his father died when he was only 5 years old, it was anticipated that as soon as he was old enough the young Giacomo would continue the family tradition. At the age 10 he became a choir boy at St. Martino and by the time he was 14 he was playing the organ at services from time to time, not only there, but at other churches in the vicinity. He was in demand as a pianist too, and boosted his income playing in the local taverns, (and in a nearby brothel). This helped supplement his mother's inadequate pension, but he kept part of his earnings to keep himself in cigarette money, a vice that he was to develop as a child, and which was ultimately to lead to an early death from cancer. He also wrote his earliest compositions around this time, most of which were organ improvisations. However, after seeing a performance of Aida in the nearby city of Pisa in 1875, Puccini fell under the spell of opera. He himself wrote "The Almighty touched me with his little finger and said, "Write for the theatre - mind, only for the theatre!"



In 1877, aged 19, he entered a competition with a patriotic poem, only to have his manuscripts returned by the judges who found them illegible! Undeterred, however, the following year he composed a Motet and Credo in Honour of San Paolino for the annual Feast of the city's Patron Saint. 2 years later he incorporated its two movements into a Mass for 4 voices and Orchestra, which was submitted as his graduation thesis from the Pacini Institute in Lucca. Its first performance in his home town on 12 July 1880, was received with rapturous critical acclaim, but probably due to Puccini's preoccupation with opera this marvellous work was not heard again for more than 70 years.

In 1952, a Catholic priest and musicologist, Father Dante del Fiorentino, rediscovered the music while researching for a new biography on the composer in Lucca. He encountered Puccini's musical secretary who showed him the manuscript of the Mass. Excited by his discovery, Father Dante edited the work for publication in the United States under the title *Messa di Gloria*. The work was first performed in the United States July 12, 1952, at a Grant Park Concert in Chicago, and later that year in Naples, some 72 years after its first performance.

Puccini went on to write such masterpieces as *La Bohème*, *Madam Butterfly* and *Tosca* and died in Brussels on 29 November 1924 before he could complete his final opera *Turandot*. Puccini's success made him very rich. He liked to cut a grand romantic figure and was a notorious ladies' man. He built a reputation as a dedicated game hunter, smoker and a collector of cars and motor boats - in fact, he barely survived one of the first car crashes in Italy. He also owned a wireless and a phonograph and corresponded with Edison. He was a hearty eater and an enthusiastic cook.

### The Music

The mass is scored for 3 soloists, a mixed chorus and full orchestra and is divided into five movements.

Although an early work with some awkward changes of key, tempo and metre, it is by no means the academic exercise of a mere student.

It is a remarkably fine composition, displaying Puccini's great gift of expressive lyricism and mastery of orchestral detail. In many respects it looks back to Verdi, and the earlier Italian operatic style, but it also looks forward to the Puccini of the theatre, and indeed the composer was to plunder it when composing his second and third operas.

The lyrical opening chorus, "*Kyrie eleison*" is in the traditional polyphonic style, and was later recycled as the Church scene in his second opera "*Edgar*".

The "*Gloria*", which forms the major part of the work, starts with a jolly march-like tune, which is repeated in different keys, and with different combinations voices. After a subdued "*et in terra pax*" there is a glorious outburst of sound at "*Laudamus te*", then the tenor has a solo to the words "*Gratias animas tibi*" in true operatic style.

After a repeat of the march a memorable tune is introduced for the "*Qui tollis*" section. It is developed in various ways, most notably as a canon, and is followed by the rich chorale setting at "*Quoniam*".

The movement ends with a complex fugue, "*Cum Sancto Spiritu*", into which is woven the initial "*Gloria*" theme. A notable achievement for the young composer.

The creed has a dramatic unison opening followed by an expressive tenor aria supported by chorus at the words "*Et incarnatus est*". The bass now makes his first entry with the lachrymose solo "*Crucifixus*", and after a very short fugal section to celebrate Christ's resurrection the movement moves speedily to its conclusion, without the mighty fugue that one often hears at this point.

The two remaining movements are brief, but liturgically very effective. The "*Sanctus*" runs straight into the *Benedictus* - a lyrical solo for baritone - [sung in most performances by the bass to save expense since they never sing at the same time].

The beautiful, pastoral "*Agnus Dei*" was probably taken from an earlier composition, and he was to use it again as the Madrigal in "*Manon Lescaut*".

## Stabat Mater (Gioachino Rossini)

Rossini was born in Pesaro in 1792, the son of a horn-player and a mother who made a career for herself in opera. As a boy Rossini had direct experience of operatic performances on stage where he sang in at least one opera in Bologna, where the family lived. He occupied an unrivalled position in the Italian musical world of his time, winning considerable acclaim early in his career and having his operas first performed in Italy from his first relative success in 1810 until 1823.

Although, like Puccini, he is remembered more for his operatic output there is also a considerable number of non-operatic, indeed non-vocal, works which show the same maturity and progression in style as in his operas. This was despite advice from Beethoven who suggested that he "never attempt to compose anything else but opera - any attempt to succeed in another style would be to do violence to your nature." Unlike the Puccini Mass, which was written before his operas, the "Stabat Mater" was written long after Rossini had turned his back on the theatre. So successful was he that in 1824 aged only 32, with a string of operatic successes behind him he left Italy for Paris. In 1829, following the tremendous success of "William Tell" at the Paris Opera, he retired from serious composition, and lived in comfort for almost 40 years as a successful gourmet.

The text of the "Stabat Mater" is a thirteenth century poem attributed to a Franciscan monk, Jacopone di Todi, telling of the sorrows of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as she stands at the foot of the Cross.

There have been inspired musical settings of the text by Pergolesi, Haydn and Dvorak, all of whom were devout Catholics. Rossini's motivation for setting the Stabat Mater poem did not arise from any religious conviction, but in response to a commission from a Spanish Priest, Fernandez Varela, who desired to possess an original Rossini manuscript.

Having composed half of the movements, Rossini succumbed to an attack of lumbago. Ever the opportunist, he delegated its completion to a Bolognese composer, Giovanni Tadolini, before presenting it to its unsuspecting patron as all his own work. It was given one performance in this version in 1833 in Madrid, but Rossini stipulated that it should never be published.

Following Varela's death 4 years later, the manuscript fell into the hands of a Parisian publisher who approached Rossini with a view to publishing it. Rossini forbade this, of course, but took the opportunity of completing the work in his own hand, before offering it to another publisher. This new all-Rossini score was given its first performance in 1842 in Paris, and repeated soon after to a rapturous audience in Italy under the direction of his friend Donizetti.

It proved an immediate success especially in France and Italy, but the reception was less effusive in the northern non-Latin countries where it was considered too operatic and too sensuous for the religious subject - a stigma even now it has not entirely overcome. Certainly, in the light of the great German classics, the humorously jaunty setting of, for example, the *Cujus animam*, depicting Mary's anguish at the sight of her Son's crucifixion, seems insensitive. Rossini's reaction to all such criticisms was that he was only a musical simpleton, and that he also doubted the power of music to generate specific emotional feeling; it was only important that the music should be of good quality.

### The Music

Of its 10 sections, the very first is probably the most impressive. Magnificently operatic in concept, its gloomy but dramatic prelude leads into an intensely moving chorus, alternately sombre and thrilling, which is interspersed first, by a quartet of soloists, and then by a tenor solo in the operatic manner. Throughout this work, Rossini's music is melodic and theatrical, but by and large he avoids irreverent sentimentality or superficiality.

The celebrated tenor aria "*Cujus animam*", with its high Db follows, and then we hear the two female soloists, in the delicious duet "*Quis est homo*", with its tragic under-rhythm but gloriously phrased melody in thirds. Both contain glorious music, seemingly completely disassociated from the text in hand.

Two movements for bass soloist follow, the second of which, "*Eia Mater*" is unaccompanied and features the chorus, who respond to his passionate prayer has a suitably brooding atmosphere. This movement and the "*Quando corpus*" are unique in Rossini's output, and reveal that he was as capable as anyone else of re-creating the a capella style of pre-Classical music.

The "*Sancta Mater*", which follows, however, is unashamedly in the operatic style and provided much ammunition for those pious and puritanical Victorians who took offense at its musical style.

2 set pieces for the female soloists follow: a dramatic and vocally taxing solo for Mezzo-soprano - "*Fac ut portem*", and "*Inflammatum est*", the soprano's powerful, impassioned plea for salvation from the terrors of death, in which the chorus sing threateningly of the impending Day of Judgement. This is Rossini's "Dies Irae".

The grave but ultimately optimistic "*Quando corpus*", which was much admired in later years by Wagner, is followed by a dazzling choral double fugue - "*Amen*" - which brings this magnificent work to a glorious conclusion. At the age of 37, Rossini decided to retire from opera composition and in 1837 left Paris to return to his native Italy but suffered prolonged and painful illness there. After the death of his wife Isabella in 1845 he married Olympe Pélissier, with whom he had lived for 15 years and who had tended him through his ill-health. He produced hardly any musical output at all during this period but in 1855 he went back to Paris where his health and humour returned together with his urge to compose, one of the results being his graceful *Petite Messe Solennelle*. He died, universally honoured, in 1868, and is buried in Florence.



## Oldham Choral Society Repertoire

<i>Bach</i>	<i>Christmas Oratorio (BWV 248)</i>	1976,1999
	<i>St. John Passion (BWV245)</i>	1989
	<i>St. Matthew Passion (BWV244)</i>	1967,1993
	Chichester Psalms	2002
Bernstein	Carmen (Concert version)	1937,1950,1958,1971,1987
Bizet	Bethlehem	1981
Boughton	German Requiem, Opus 45	1974,1982,1994,2004
Brahms	St. Nicholas, Opus 42	1965
Britten	The Song of Hiawatha, Opus 30/1,2&4	1947,1964,1978,1985,1992
Coleridge-Taylor	The Canterbury Pilgrims	1983
Dyson	<i>The Apostles, Opus 49</i>	1981,1985
<i>Elgar</i>	<i>The Dream of Gerontius, Opus 38</i>	1976,1995,2003
	<i>From the Bavarian Highlands Opus 27</i>	1905,1954
	<i>The Kingdom, Opus 51</i>	1977,1985,1988
	<i>The Light of Life, (Lux Christi) Opus 29</i>	1980
	<i>The Music Makers, Opus 69</i>	1955,1967,1994,1999
Ellis	Carols for an Island Christmas	1995
	A Distant Horizon	1998 (OCS Commission)
<i>Faure</i>	<i>Requiem, Opus 48</i>	1960,1978,1990,1994,1999,2000
	<i>Cantique de Jean Racine</i>	2000
German	Merrie England (Concert Version)	1939,1940,1941,1949,1971,1977,1986
Gershwin	Porgy & Bess (Concert Version)	1912,1947,1958,1971,1988
Gounod	Faust (Concert Version)	1992
	Saint Cecilia Mass	2000
<i>Handel</i>	<i>Israel in Egypt</i>	1991
	<i>Judas Maccabeus</i>	1909,1975,1989
	<i>Messiah</i>	Since 1909
Harty	The Mystic Trumpeter	1954
Haydn	Creation	1906,1941,1962,1973,1979,1984,1997
Horowitz	Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo	1972
Lloyd-Webber	Joseph and his Amazing Dreamcoat	1972
Lehar	The Merry Widow (Concert Version)	1981
Liszt	Psalm XIII	1979
Mascagni	Cavalleria Rusticana (Concert Version)	1966
Maunder	Olivet to Calvary	1997
<i>Mendelssohn</i>	<i>Lobgesang (Hymn of Praise), Opus 52</i>	1913,1948,1957,1978,1983
	<i>Elijah</i>	1904,1945,1946,1959,1973,1978,1981,1987,1989,1992,1995,1997,2002,1986,1989,1998
	<i>St. Paul, Opus 36</i>	1983,1991,2001
Mozart	Requiem KV626	1991
	Vesperae Solennes de Confessore	1945,1952,1964
Offenbach	Tales of Hoffmann (Concert Version)	1999 (X2)
Orff	Carmina Burana	1936
Parry	Blest Pair of Sirens	1999
Poulenc	Gloria	1995,1998,1999
Puccini	Messa di Gloria	1982
<i>Purcell</i>	<i>Ode – "Hail Bright Cecilia"</i>	1982
	<i>Te Deum in D (St. Cecilia's Day 1694)</i>	1962
	<i>Jubilate Deo in D (1694)</i>	1963
	<i>Dido and Aeneas (Concert Version)</i>	1979,1982,1987,1996
Rossini	Petite Messe Solennelle	1999
	Stabat Mater	1995
<i>Rutter</i>	<i>Magnificat</i>	2001
	<i>Requiem</i>	1963
Saint-Saens	Samson and Delilah (Concert Version)	1912
Smart	The Bride of Dunkerron	1951,1956,1967,1974
Smetana	The Bartered Bride (Concert Version)	1972,1977,1980,1984,1990,2005
Stainer	The Crucifixion	1911
<i>Sullivan</i>	<i>The Golden Legend</i>	1988
	<i>Light of the World</i>	1987
Gilbert & Sullivan	The Gondoliers (Concert Version)	1990
	HMS Pinafore (Concert Version)	1980
	The Mikado (Concert Version)	1973
	Ruddigore	1973,1979
	Yeomen of the Guard (Concert Version)	1987
<i>Vaughan Williams</i>	<i>Hugh the Drover (Concert Version)</i>	1933
	<i>Symphony No.1 "Sea Symphony"</i>	1983
Verdi	Aida (Concert Version)	1990,2000 (x2),2001,2004
	Requiem	1984
Vinter	The Trumpets	1974,1980,1982,1995,1998
Vivaldi	Gloria in D	1938
Wallace	Maritana (Concert Version)	1977
Williamson	The World at the Manger	2000 (OCS Millennium Commission)
Young	And Beautiful Be The Dawn	2002
	The Glory of the Baroque	2001
	The Life and Music of Ivor Novello	1975
	The Life and Music of Lerner & Loewe	1982
Miscellaneous Concerts include:	An Evening with Hinge & Bracket	1980
	An Evening of Gilbert & Sullivan	1986
	The Music of Rodgers & Hammerstein	1982
	Christmas & Miscellaneous Concerts	Since1984
	Opera Galas	

**Oldham Choral Society** is one of longest established music societies in Britain, having an unbroken tradition of singing dating back to 1884 when they were formed as the Werneth Gentlemen's Vocal Society. It later changed its name to the Oldham Music Society before adopting its present title.

Nowadays it draws its members from a very wide area, not just the borough itself, and members regularly sing at the La Tour Festival in France and at the Mannaman Festival. The choir has also visited Finland, and in 1999 some members performed "Elijah" and "The Dream of Gerontius" in New York.

For many years the legendary Oldham born soprano Dame Eva Turner was our patron. We are delighted that the International Wagner tenor Jeffrey Lawton now holds that position.

Over the years the choir has a proud tradition of engaging Britain's top soloists.

### These have included:

Isobel Baillie	Heddle Nash
Webster Booth	Ann Ziegler
Gwen Catley	Norman Walker
Constance Shacklock	Dennis Noble
Sir Peter Pears	Joan Cross
Kathleen Ferrier	
Dame Janet Baker	

Richard Lewis	John Cameron
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### More recently:

Joan Rogers	Rosalind Plowright
Jane Eaglen	John Tomlinson
Helen Field	Jeffrey Lawton
Rita Cullis	Keith Latham
Matthew Best	Andrew Shore
Melanie Marshall	

If you are interested in singing with a friendly forward thinking choir and are free on a Monday evening why not speak to one of our members tonight, or contact our Chairman – Fred Jones on 0161. Rehearsals are held at the Community Centre on Union Street [Entrance on Greaves St.].

You may also be interested in our social activities e.g. trips, workshops, quiznights etc.

For further details about the choir's history and its future plans –

Visit our website:

**[www.oldhamchoral.freeuk.com](http://www.oldhamchoral.freeuk.com)**

# OLDHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

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Chairman: Fred Jones

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Promotions/Publicity: Ray Smith

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Librarian: Dilys Dunkin

Membership Sec.: Brenda Buckley

Accompanist: Chris Idle

Asst. Accompanist: Alan Mellor

Conductor Emeritus: John Bethell M.B.E.

## SOPRANOS

L. Allardyce-Smith	B. Collingwood	M. Hallett	A. Kerr	E. Scott
L. Ashton	L. Cotton	C. Hamilton	D. Morgan	D. Shaw
W. Bellamy-Wood	M. Crossley	G. Heginbotham	J. Pearton	E. Shaw
C. Birks	E. Dale	F. Hesten	M. Price	J. Turnbull
H. Banham	G. Davies	M. Hood	M. Richards	G. Webb
A. Bray	V. Dawson	L. Howarth	M. Roberts	B. Williams
J. Bromley	C. Foster	A. Idle	J. Robinson	A. Williamson
B. Buckley	M. Hallam	M. Jones		

## ALTOS

J. Albiston	C. Grime	T. Jones	B. Prenderleith	S. Tolley
S. Andrew	H. Halliwell	I. Mottley	H. Rigby	C. Vaudrey
I. Cadman	B. Hatfield	N. Murphy	J. Rostron	J. Youd
C. Coombs	S. Howard	L. Newmark	C. Smart	
R. Corser	J. Jarvis	A. Pickard	S. Smith	
M. Culkin	E. Johnson	J. Pickering	B. Stamp	
P. Golden	A. Joyce	K. Pilkington	C. Sullivan	

## BASS

A. Bacon	M. Hardy	J. Price	D. Allen	P. Johnson
D. Baird	N. Hill	P. Quan	D. Clutterbuck	A. Mellor
R. Bamlett	C. Idle	T. Quinn	B. Cotton	K. Potts
P. Blanchard	F. Jones	A. Rose	L. Croft	R. Smith
T. Bowker	J. Jones	N. Taylor	D. Dunkin	H. Taylor
D. Davies	K. Lewis	P. Shaw	E. Fallows	K. Wiener
L. Dossett	W. Murphy	R. Thulborn	P. Howarth	
M. Edmondson	A. Newbery	J. Williams		
G. Evans	E. Norman	A. Wilson		

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List correct at time of going to press. New patrons always welcome.

If you would like to show your support for the choir by becoming a patron please contact:

Sylvia Andrew on 0161 626 4032. There is no minimum contribution required.

Financial support from our patrons ensures that we are able to engage top-class soloists.

# **Future Concerts**

**Saturday September 17<sup>th</sup> 8.00p.m.**

**Chester Cathedral**

**The Mozart Requiem**

**Tickets £9.00 on the day £7.50 in advance**

**Please contact our Ticket secretary for reservations**

**Sunday November 27<sup>th</sup> 7.00p.m.**

**Oldham Parish Church**

**Haydn – “The Creation”**

**Booking arrangements tbc**

**Friday December 7.30p.m.**

**Oldham Parish Church**

**Our Popular Christmas Concert**

**Sunday April 30<sup>th</sup> 2006 7.00p.m.**

**Oldham Parish Church**

**Karl Jenkins: The Armed Man**

**and other items**

# As good as it gets

OLDHAM Choral Society presented three works by Italian composers on Sunday in a performance described by some after the concert as the best they have ever heard the Society present.

This was all the more creditable as on the Thursday evening, two of the four soloists had to pull out through ill health. By Friday evening the society had secured a mezzo soprano, Karina Lucas, a former student of Jeffrey Lawton at the Royal Northern College of Music.

The search for a bass soloist carried on until Saturday afternoon when Alan Fairs was contacted in Brighton after he had attended a wedding. He agreed to travel up to Oldham to sing, with Sarah Rhodes and Huw Rhys Evans. The four soloists gave performances which would have graced any concert hall.

The concert opened with Verdi's overture "La Forza del Destino" played with wonderful clarity and timing by the East Lancashire Sinfonia under the direction of Nigel Wilkinson, the Choral Society's musical director.

Those of us who have heard Huw Rhys Evans in a previous concert with the choir waited with anticipation for his performance of the tenor solo in the *Messa di Gloria* which was the next item on the programme and were not disappointed. Alan

**Oldham Choral Society - Rossini: "Stabat Mater", Puccini: "Messa di Gloria".**

Fairs, too, was excellent in the Credo, singing without showing any signs of the strain that the long journey must have put on him. The second half of the concert consisted of "Stabat Mater" by Rossini. The excellent male soloists are joined in this work by the soprano and mezzo soprano and then there followed a performance of outstanding lyricism and emotion.

## Harmonious

When we heard the quartet with choir we knew that we were about to hear something special as the seemingly effortless blending of soloists, choir and orchestra filled the church.

The tenor soloist sang the "Cuius animam gementem" with feeling and emotion. The soprano and mezzo soprano produced a harmonious sound. Take note of the name Karina Lucas as this young mezzo soprano has great promise. Soprano Sarah Rhodes whose tune was pure, also delighted on this outstanding evening.

EY