



Oldham Choral Society

Choral Weekend

September 12th - 14th 2008

Rehearsals from 10.00 a.m. (Sat.)

Performance:

Saturday Sept. 13th

at 8.00p.m. in

CHESTER
CATHEDRAL

The Verdi Requiem

Performed by 100 members of Oldham Choral Society
augmented on the day by singers from other choirs.

With

Rita Cullis (Soprano)

Emanuela Barazia (Mezzo-soprano)

Peter Hoare (Tenor)

Phillip Joll (Bass - Baritone)

and

The East Lancs Sinfonia

Conductor: Nigel Wilkinson

Rehearsal pianist: Angela Lloyd-Mostyn

**Friday September 12th –
Sunday 14th
OLDHAM CHORAL
SOCIETY
WEEKEND WORKSHOP**

**Timetable
Saturday Sept. 13th 2008**

Workshop

Note: singers must provide their own copies
Ricordi or Novello edition

Please make sure that you have got the list of musical edits /
corrections and have marked them into your copy before the
rehearsal starts.

**9.15 / 9.30 Assemble – in the
Methodist Church on St. John St.**

*This is just off the main thoroughfare
[Eastgate] and about 5 mins. walk from the
Cathedral.*

All singers should be registered and seated
ready for a prompt start for:

10:00 - 11:25 Rehearsal

Short break

11:45 – 13:00 Session 2

Lunch break

14:00 – 15:15 Session 3

**16.40 Arrive / assemble in Cathedral for
seating.**

**Please be aware that Evensong will be taking place
in the Quire until around 17.00.**

**17.00 - 19.15 Seating / Rehearsal with
Orchestra in the Cathedral**

Performance

20.00 – 21.30



**Your
Workshop
Leader
NIGEL
WILKINSON
Music Director
and Principal
Conductor
Oldham Choral
Society 1998 /
2008**

Nigel has just completed his tenth season as Music Director and
Principal Conductor of the choir.

During this time the choir has grown considerably in size, developed its
repertoire, broadened its horizons, and established itself as one of the
most dynamic and flourishing choirs in the North West. Highlights have
included performances in Chester Cathedral, Buxton and the
Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, and recently the choir enjoyed a very
successful concert tour of Ireland.

Nigel was born in the mill town of Nelson in North East Lancashire, and
developed a love for music at an early age. Whilst still at school he held
the post of church organist and sang with the world renowned Nelson
Arion Male Voice Choir – where he developed his keen interest in
choral singing.

His musical training took him to Manchester where he studied singing
with Patrick McGuigan at the R.N.C.M., eventually graduating with
Honours, before entering the field of Music Education. He is currently
Head of Expressive and Performing Arts at the Thomas Whitham VIth
Form in Burnley, Prior to this he was Director of Music at St Hilda's
R.C. High School in Burnley, where he ran a flourishing dept. and a
choir that won the BBC "Song for Christmas" Competition.

In a career notable for its diversity, he has conducted stage works
ranging from "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers" and "Barnum" to
"Cavalleria Rusticana", virtually all the major oratorios, and – in his
former capacity as conductor of the East Lancs. Youth Orchestra - a
wide variety of orchestral music. Under his guidance, the orchestra
enjoyed successful European tours, including a performance in "La
Madeleine", and in 1996 he led them to the last 6 of the Sainsbury's
National Youth Orchestra Series.

As Musical Director of the Burnley and Dist. G & S Society, (1981 –
1997) he conducted not only all the major works of Gilbert and Sullivan,
but also works by Strauss, (J.), Offenbach and others, and was the
recipient of major awards when the group entered the prestigious
Waterford International Festival of Light Opera in 1988 and 1989. He
also had a successful spell as conductor of the acclaimed Nelson Civic
Ladies Choir, Outside music he has a keen interest in history, the arts
and travel. He is a keen follower of Lancashire C.C.C., and a long-
suffering Burnley F.C. supporter.



Our Accompanist - Angela Lloyd-Mostyn

Angela studied for a degree in music at the University of Leeds and the Saxon
Conservatorium, winning Ernest and Luther performance scholarships and two concerto
competitions. She graduated in 2004 with a first class honours degree. Subsequently, the
Worshipful Company of Musicians presented Angela with a prestigious Allcart Award. In
2005 she graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music, with a postgraduate diploma
in Advanced Performance, in Piano Accompaniment. She won the 2005 Granada Prize for
chamber music with her contemporary music trio NYX, and was also awarded the both the
Stella Bradshaw Award for Piano Accompaniment and the W. Holmes & Saville Prize for
Lieder.

Angela enjoys a busy and varied career as a freelance accompanist, soloist, opera
repetiteur and orchestral pianist. In addition to her regular posts working as an accompanist
for Leeds College of Music, Manchester High School for Girls and Oldham Choral Society,
Angela enjoys collaborative projects with composers and has premiered a number of
exciting new works.



Oldham Choral Society

Music Director: Nigel Wilkinson

The Verdi Requiem

Chester Cathedral

Saturday September 13th 2008

PROGRAMME

Introit:

Requiem aeternam & Kyrie (chorus, soloists)

Sequence: Dies irae (Chorus)

Tuba mirum (Chorus)

Mors stupebit (Bass Solo)

Liber scriptus (Mezzo-soprano Solo)

Quid sum miser (Trio: soprano, mezzo & tenor)

Rex tremendae majestatis (Chorus & soloists)

Recordare (Duet: Soprano & mezzo-soprano)

Ingemisco (Tenor Solo)

Confutatis (Bass Solo & chorus)

Lachrymosa (Soloists & chorus)

Offertorio:

Domine Jesu Christe (Soloists)

Quam olim Abrahae

Hostias (Soloists)

Sanctus (Double chorus)

Agnus Dei (Soprano, mezzo-soprano & chorus)

Lux aeterna (Mezzo-soprano, tenor & bass)

Libera me (Soprano & chorus)

Soloists:

Rita Cullis (Soprano)

Emanuela Barazia (Mezzo)

Peter Hoare (Tenor)

Phillip Joll (Bass-baritone)

The East Lancs. Sinfonia

(Leader: Sally Robinson)

Please ensure that all mobile phones are either switched off or in SILENT mode.

Photography during the performance is not permitted as it can be a distraction to performers and audience alike.

The Requiem will be performed without interval.

There will be a pause between the Dies Irae and Offertorio sections. Please remain in your seats.

The performance is scheduled to finish at 9.25p.m.

OLDHAM CHORAL SOCIETY was formed in March 1884, and will therefore shortly celebrate its 125th Anniversary. It was originally a Male Voice choir, "The Werneth Gentlemen's Vocal Society", but they couldn't keep the ladies out for long, so it changed its name to the Oldham Music Society, and then more recently it assumed its current name. Over the years it has performed both locally and further afield, notably in France, Finland, New York and the Isle of Mann. It has always had a tradition of engaging some of the top soloists of the day. These have included: Isobel Baillie, Heddle Nash, Ann Ziegler and Webster Booth (in "Merrie England"), Kathleen Ferrier, Sir Peter Pears, Dame Janet Baker, Constance Shacklock and Joan Cross. The legendary Oldham born soprano - Dame Eva Turner was the choir patron up until her death in 1990.

In more recent years the choir has welcomed such distinguished singers as Jane Eaglen, Rosalind Plowright, Joan Rodgers, Sir John Tomlinson, Matthew Best, Andrew Shore, Helen Field and our current patron - Jeffrey Lawton.

Soloist Biographies

Rita Cullis – Soprano

Rita Cullis was born in Ellesmere Port and trained at the Royal Manchester Coll. of Music. She made her debut with Welsh National Opera, where she sang an extensive range of major roles including The Countess *Figaro*, Tatiana *Onegin*, and the Marschallin *Der Rosenkavalier*.



Subsequently she sang the Composer *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte*, Donna Anna *Don Giovanni*, Senta *The Flying Dutchman*, Alice Ford and Madame Lidoine *The Carmelites* for English National Opera; and Sieglinde, Helmwig and Freia *Der Ring das Nibelungen*, the Fox *The Cunning Little Vixen* and Ellen Orford *Peter Grimes*, at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

For Opera North she has sung Elisabeth *Tannhauser* and Alice *Falstaff*, and for Scottish Opera: Ellen Orford, Leonora *Oberto* and Julie *Jacobins* (Dvorak).

In Europe roles have included: the title roles in *Daphne* for Flanders Opera and *Ariadne auf Naxos* for Der Nederlandse Opera, Senta for Opera de Lille, Leonora *Oberto* for Opera Nice, and Ellen Orford in Palermo, at the Savonlinna Festival and at the Hamburg State Opera under Hickox.

Her career has also taken her to the USA, including performances in San Diego as Donna Anna, Female Chorus *Lucretia* and Senta, and a Gala Concert at the Metropolitan Opera New York.

Concert engagements have included the Verdi Requiem and Les Illuminations [Britten] with the Ulster Orchestra, The Epic of Gilgamesh [Martinu] with CBSO with Sir Simon Rattle, Strauss's 4 Last Songs with the Philharmonia, Mahler's 8th in Ely Cathedral and at the Royal Albert Hall, MacMillan's Gloria with the Royal Ballet, Dvorak's Stabat Mater for the Gulbenkian foundation in Lisbon and Porto, and the Gala Concert to mark the re-opening of the Royal Opera Covent Garden.

She has frequently been invited to sing Beethoven's 9th Symphony by many great conductors, including Menuhin, Navarro, Slatkin, Soustrot and Swensen.

Recent engagements have included Hecuba *King Priam* for ENO and the Nationale Reisopera, the Countess *Figaro* for the Hamburg State Opera, Regan *King Lear* for Der Nederlandse Opera and the Dresden Staatsoper, Senta in San Diego and Bielefeld, Creusa *Ion* [Param Vir] in Strasboug and Berlin, Lady Billows *Albert Herring* for Glyndebourne, and Ellen Orford for the Reisopera

Emanuela Barazia – Mezzo-soprano

Emanuela Barazia started singing ancient and baroque music with the Viotti Polyphonic Choir of Vercelli. Following courses at the "S.Cordero di Pamparato" Institute, and in Lacoste with the Deller Consort of London, she completed her studies at the Genoa Conservatory "N. Paganini".

She enjoyed great success in many competitions, including: the prestigious St.Cecilia Academy Choir Competition in Rome, the "M. Battistini" International Competition [1994], and in 1996 the "Citta' di Roma" International Competition making her debut as Rosina in *Barbiere di Siviglia*.

In 1997 she sang Rosina at Gran Teatro "La Fenice" [Venice], and returned in 1998 to sing Belisa in Paisiello's *Il re Teodoro*. In 1999, she sang Rosina at the D'Annunzio Vittoriale of Gardone and again in Bruxelles, Anversa and in Ascoli Piceno's "V. Basso" Theater.

Between 1997 and 1999 she sang Mozart's *Dorabella Così fan tutte* in Brescia, Bergamo, Pavia, Cremona, Piacenza and Como; Mozart's Cherubino *Le nozze di Figaro* at Fidenza, *Giunone Ercole Amante* [Cavalli] at Ravenna, *Marc Le martyre de Saint-Sebastien* {Debussy} in Palermo, and Fenena *Nabucco* in Ascoli Piceno and at the Munich's Deutsches Theatre.



Her Concert Repertoire is extensive, including Rossini's *Petite Messe solennelle* under Campanella, at Napoli's "Bellini" Theatre, and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* with Cecilia Gasdia, at the Rome's Gonfalone.

Between 2000 and 2005 she extended her repertoire to dramatic soprano. In 2000 she made her debut as Verdi's Leonora "Trovatore" for the "Citta' di Roma" Competition, and as Bellini's Norma, and the following year she made her debut as Puccini's "Tosca" and "M. Butterfly" in Spain at Barakaldo Theatre. She also sang Butterfly at Lisbon's Coliseum and in Mostoles, Albacete and Alicante in Spain, and Norma at the Barakaldo Theatre.

In 2003 she was selected by Gustav Khun to sing Brunnhilde in *Walküre* and *Götterdämmerung*. at the "Tiroler Festivalspiele", and sang the "Immolation's Scene" at the Festival Opening Concert in 2004.

Since 2005 she has concentrated on the mezzo repertoire, singing Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* at the Tiroler FestSpiele in 2005 and Kundry in *Parsifal* in 2006, (recorded in 2007 in DVD format on the "Col Legno" label). In 2007 she sang Kundry and Waltraute *Götterdämmerung*. In November she sang Fenena *Nabucco* in Italian Theatres and Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* in Great Britain, as well as Grimgerde *Walküre*, for Bangkok Opera.

Peter Hoare - Tenor

Peter was born in Bradford, West Yorkshire.

He studied at Huddersfield School of Music, the Royal Northern College of Music and University of London Goldsmiths College.

He began his professional singing career in 1995, and in the past decade has established himself as one of the leading tenors of his *fach* in Europe.



He has sung with all Britain's major opera companies and with prestigious companies throughout Europe.

For Welsh National Opera roles have included Bacchus *Ariadne Auf Naxos*, Tito *La Clemenza di Tito*, Captain *Wozzeck*, and Narraboth *Salome*, whilst he sang Arbace/Idomeneo *Idomeneo* for Glyndebourne Festival, and Alfred *Die Fledermaus* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera.

For the Royal Opera House Covent Garden he has sung Goro *Madam Butterfly*, Valzacchi *Der Rosenkavalier*, and Bardolfo *Falstaff*. European engagements have included Sellem *The Rake's Progress* at the Theatre Champs Elysées and for Opera de Lausanne, Arbace with the Berlin Philharmonic in Berlin, and at the Lucerne and Salzburg Festivals and Deportes *Die Soldaten*, for Rhur Festival.

Concerts engagements have included: Il Canto Sospeso *Nono* for Ensemble Moderne in Frankfurt, Faust *The Damnation of Faust*, Beethoven Symphony No 9 for R.T.E., Vaudémont *Iolanta* for W.N.O. at the B.B.C. Proms, Bardolfo with the L.S.O., the Verdi Requiem for Opera North, the Spring Symphony *Britten* and A Child of Our Time *Tippett* for the R.L.P.O. and Das Lied Von Der Erde *Mahler* with the Nash Ensemble, the Antwerp Philharmonic and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

He has recently sung Shapkin *From the House of the Dead* at the Vienna and Aix-en-Provence Festivals with Pierre Boulez, Herod *Salome*, Laca *Jenufa* and Mal in the world premier of *The Sacrifice* for W.N.O..

Future plans include Sellem at the Royal Opera House, and Das Lied Von Der Erde for Opera North.

Phillip Joll - Baritone

Welsh-born Phillip Joll studied at the RNCM and at London's National Opera Studio. On completing his studies, he joined English National Opera and was immediately launched on an international career that has now spanned over two decades. Wagnerian roles featured heavily in his early career when he was invited to sing such roles as Donner, Wotan and the Flying Dutchman, but he has in more recent

years expanded into the Italian repertoire incorporating such roles as Simon Boccanegra, Falstaff, Macbeth, Michele, Tonio and Rigoletto. Since his early career, Phillip Joll has enjoyed a close association with Welsh National Opera where he sang Wotan in the Company's first Ring Cycle under Sir Reginald Goodall (also taken to Covent Garden), Kurwenal (recorded for Decca), Amfortas (recorded for EMI), Kaspar, Barak, Wozzeck, Jokanaan, Orest, Rigoletto, Simon Boccanegra, Anckarström, Alfio and Tonio (recorded for television). For the Royal Opera he has sung roles in *Salome*, *Der Freischütz*, *Das Rheingold* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Other roles in the UK have included the Forester *Cunning Little Vixen* and the Doge *I Due Foscari* and King Fisher in Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage* (Scottish Opera).

He made his European debut in Frankfurt as Amfortas *Parsifal* and his American debut as Donner in a new production of *Das Rheingold* at the Metropolitan Opera, New York.

Highlights of recent seasons have included Jokanaan *Salome* with the Opera Bastille, Sharpless *Madama Butterfly* in Munich and San Francisco, Michele *Il Tabarro* for La Monnaie (Brussels) and ENO, the title roles in *Simon Boccanegra* and *Falstaff* for Stuttgart Opera, *Wozzeck* for La Monnaie and *Falstaff* in San Diego, his Italian debut in the title role of Manfred Gurlitt's *Wozzeck* in Turin, returning to that



house in the following seasons as Tonio *I Pagliacci* and Scarpia *Tosca*, the Verdi Requiem in Rio de Janeiro, the title-role *Simon Boccanegra* in Karlsruhe, and Jokanaan *Salome* for Opera North. Two other recent additions to his diverse repertoire are Balstrode in *Peter Grimes* at the Netherlands Opera and Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress* in Sao Paulo and, most recently, for the Nationale Reisopera in the Netherlands.

Phillip returned to the role of Wotan in an acclaimed new Ring Cycle for Seattle Opera in 2001, and in the past few seasons he has made several more house debuts including: Falstaff in Bologna and at Dresden's Semperoper, Jack Rance *La Fanciulla del West* at De Vlaamse Opera and Telramund *Lohengrin* at the Opera de Bordeaux. A return to Turin and a Palermo debut as Macbeth, followed by Alfio, Tonio and Sharpless at the Royal Albert Hall, Falstaff and Amfortas in Karlsruhe and Balstrode in both Barcelona and again in Amsterdam.

After his success under Jeffrey Tate at the Oper der Stadt, Cologne in previous seasons, he again performed Wotan *Das Rheingold* and Der Wanderer *Siegfried* there last season, as well as Wotan *Die Walküre* in Dortmund and Wotan *Das Rheingold* for Longborough Festival Opera.

Concerts include Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Daniele Gatti at the Royal Albert Hall in London and at Birmingham Symphony Hall, the Sea Symphony at the Fairfield Halls, Croydon, and Ortel *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at the Edinburgh Festival.

Engagements in the 2007/8 season include Thoas *Iphigenie en Tauride* for Seattle, performances of Scarpia *Tosca* at the Royal Albert Hall, Wotan *Die Walküre* for Bangkok Opera and Amonasro *Aida* for Welsh National Opera.

TEXT and TRANSLATION

REQUIEM AND KYRIE [Choir and soloists]

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine:
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Te decet hymnus, Deus in Sion: et tibi reddetur
votum in Jerusalem.

Exaudi orationem meam,
ad te omnis caro veniet.

Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison

DIES IRAE [Choir]

Dies irae dies illa solvet saeculum in favilla: teste David cum
sybilla.

Quantus tremor est futurus, quando iudex est venturus cuncta
stricte discussurus

TUBA MIRUM [Choir]

Tuba mirum spargens sonum per sepulchra regionum,
coget omnes ante thronum.

MORS STUPEBIT [Bass solo]

Mors stupebit et natura cum resurget
creatura iudicanti responsura.

LIBER SCRIPTUS [Mezzo solo]

Liber scriptus proferetur in quo totum continetur
unde mundus iudicetur.

Iudex ergo cum sedebit quidquid latet apparebit:
nil inultum remanebit.

QUID SUM MISER [Trio]

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus.
Cum vix justus sit securus?

REX TREMENDAE [Choir and soloists]

Rex tremendae majestatis qui salvandos salvas gratis.
Salva me fons pietatis.

RECORDARE [Soprano and Mezzo Duet]

Recordare Jesu pie. Quod sum causa tuae viae:
Ne me perdas illa die.

Quaerens me, sedisti lassus: redemisti crucem passus: tantus
labor non sit cassus.

Iuste iudex ultionis, donum fac remissionis
ante diem rationis.

INGEMISCO [Tenor solo]

Ingemisco tanquam reus, culpa rubet vultus meus supplicanti
parce Deus.

Qui Mariam absolvisti et latronem exaudisti,
mihi quoque spem dedisti.

Preces meae non sunt dignae:

sed tu bonus fac benigne ne perenni cremer igne.

Inter oves locum presta et ab hoedis me sequestra,
statuens in parte dextra.

REQUIEM AND KYRIE

Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Thou O God are worshipped in Holy Sion: unto thee the vow
shall be performed in Jerusalem.

Hear us Lord: Lord hear thy servants' prayer: Lord, unto thee
all flesh shall come.

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

DIES IRAE

This day, this day of wrath shall dissolve the world in ashes as
was prophesied by David and the Sibyl.

What a trembling there will be when the judge comes to weigh
everything thoroughly.

TUBA MIRUM

The trumpet, blasting its awful sound across the graves of all
lands, summons all before the throne.

MORS STUPEBIT

Death and nature shall stand amazed when all mankind rises
again to answer before the Judge.

LIBER SCRIPTUS

A book will be brought forward in which everything is written
whereby the world will be judged.

And so when the Judge takes his seat whatever is hidden shall
become manifest and nothing will remain unavenged.

QUID SUM MISER

What, then, shall I, a wretch, say?
Whom shall I ask to plead for me,
when even the righteous man is barely safe.

REX TREMENDAE

King of awful majesty, who freely saves those worthy of
salvation. Save me, Fount of Pity.

RECORDARE

Remember merciful Jesus, that I am the cause of your journey,
(to earth). Do not cast me out on that day.

Seeking me, you sat down wearily. You redeemed me by
enduring the Cross. Let not your suffering be in vain.

Just Judge of vengeance, bestow on me the gift of forgiveness
before the day of reckoning.

INGEMISCO

I groan like the sinner I am, and my face blushes with guilt.
Spare me, I supplicate O God.

You who absolved Mary (Magdalen), and heard the thief have
given me hope as well.

My prayers are unworthy but you who are so good,
have pity on me and do not let me burn forever in the fire.

Give me a place amongst the sheep and separate me from the
goats. Let me stand at your right hand.

CONFUTATIS MALEDICTIS [Bass solo]

Confutatis maledictis flammis acribus addictis.
 Voca me cum benedictis.
 Oro supplex et acclinis, cor contritum quasi cinis:
 Gere curam mei finis.

LACHRYMOSA [Soloists and Choir]

Lachrymosa dies illa qua resurget ex favilla
 Judicandus homo reus. Huic ergo parce Deus.
 Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem.

OFFERTORIUM**DOMINE JESU CHRISTE [Quartet]**

Domine Jesu Christe. Rex gloriae,
 libera animas defunctorum de poenis inferni,
 et de profundo lacu:
 Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae
 libera animas defunctorum de ore leonis,
 ne absorbeat tartarus:
 O Domine Jesu Christe. Rex gloriae,
 ne cadant in obscurum.
 Hostias et preces tibi Domine laudis offerimus:
 tu suscipe pro animabus illis,
 quarum hodie memoriam facimus.
 Fac eas, Domine, de morte transire ad vitam.
 Quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semini eius.

SANCTUS [Choir]

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

AGNUS DEI [Soprano / Mezzo and Choir]

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi:
 dona eis requiem.
 Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
 dona eis sempiternam requiem.

LUX AETERNAE [Trio]

Lux eternam luceat eis Domine:
 Cum sanctis tuis in aeternam, quia pius es.
 Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine:
 et lux perpetua luceat eis.

LIBERA DOMINE [Soprano and choir]

Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna,
 in die illa tremenda,
 quando coeli movendi sunt et terra.
 Dum venerit judicare saeculum per ignem.
 Tremens factus sum ego, et timeo,
 dum discussio venerit atque ventura ira.
 Dies illa, dies irae, calamitatis et miseriae,
 dies magna et amara valde.
 Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine
 et lux perpetua luceat eis.

CONFUTATIS MALEDICTIS

When the damned are cast out and consigned to the searing
 flames call me to be with the blessed.
 I beg you, suppliant and kneeling, my heart contrite as ashes,
 Help me in my last hour.

LACHRYMOSA

On that day of weeping when the guilty man rises from the
 ashes to be judged, O God have mercy on him.
 Merciful Lord Jesus grant them rest. Amen.

DOMINE JESU CHRISTE

Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory,
 free the souls of thy faithful departed from eternal torment
 and from the fathomless waters:
 Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory
 free the souls of thy faithful departed from out of the lion's jaw,
 lest they drown in the depths of hell.
 Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory,
 save them from utter darkness
 Hear our prayer and let our cry come unto thee:
 God our Father, we pray this day for all the souls departed:
 O remember them. Lord we pray.
 Grant them, Lord, deliverance from death unto life, as of old
 thou has promised to Abraham and his seed.

SANCTUS

Holy, Holy, Holy,
 Lord God of hosts.
 Heaven and earth are full of your glory,
 Hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest.

AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant
 them eternal rest.
 Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant that
 eternal rest be with them evermore.

LUX AETERNAE

Light perpetual shine upon them, Lord,
 with all thy Saints in endless glory, for thy tender mercy's sake.
 Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord,
 And let perpetual light shine upon them.

LIBERA DOMINE

Deliver me, o Lord from everlasting death
 on that dreadful day,
 when the heavens and the earth shall be moved.
 When thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.
 I quake with fear and I tremble,
 awaiting the day of account and the wrath to come.
 That day, the day of anger, of calamity, of misery,
 that great day and most bitter.
 Eternal rest grant them, o lord,
 and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Giuseppe Verdi - Requiem

Verdi's *Messa di Requiem*, is now firmly established and recognised as one of the greatest choral works of the 19th century, if not all time, but at the time of its composition some critics questioned whether such an overtly operatic and theatrical setting was appropriate for a "Mass for the Dead"

The esteemed conductor Hans von Bulow famously described it as "*An opera in ecclesiastical garb*", but on first hearing it, no less a person than Brahms declared: "*Bulow has made a fool of himself – this is a work of genius*". What Richard Wagner thought is more difficult to say, his only comment on hearing it was: "*it is better to say nothing!*"

The ancient, Latin, text, used for centuries in the Roman Catholic Funeral Service contains many passages that lend themselves to a dramatic setting, and if Verdi is guilty of setting it in the popular operatic style of the day, then so were both Haydn and Mozart. It is difficult, in fact, to imagine how Verdi the dramatic genius and master of theatrical effect could have set this text in any other way. Most importantly, the music itself is of such extraordinary emotional breadth and grandeur that it never fails to achieve an overwhelming impact - irrespective of other considerations.

Another point worth noting is that Verdi, was strongly anti-clerical, and his religious views were agnostic. He regarded himself as a humanist. He could not have been expected therefore to compose something profoundly devotional and devoutly unquestioning, free from doubts and tensions. Referring to the question: "*Which is Verdi's supreme masterpiece?*" Julian Budden, the eminent Verdi authority, who died last year, rephrases the question as: "*Which work shows his genius at its most concentrated?*" He replies unequivocally:

"... the answer must surely be the *Requiem*. Into it he poured all the purely musical resources that he had developed in the course of twenty six operas, and which he could here exploit to the full..." Another acknowledged authority on Verdi, Charles Osbourne, describes it as: "*A Mass not for the Dead – but for the Living*"

Its Composition.

The work was inspired by two of Italy's most influential artistic figures: the composer, Gioacchino Rossini and author / poet, Alessandro Manzoni. A third but very significant dimension of this work is the extent to which Verdi saw it as representing everything that was good in Italian music, with its spontaneous melody and bel canto tradition. He feared that this heritage was being eroded by, on the one hand, neglect, and on the other, the rising tide of modernism and reform that emanated from northern Europe.

The "Requiem per Rossini".

For Verdi, a patriot, the very embodiment of Italian musical excellence was Gioacchino Rossini. His death in November 1868 deeply affected Verdi, who suggested a commemorative performance to take place in San Petronius Cathedral, Bologna on the first anniversary of Rossini's death. It was to take the form of a brand new setting of the Requiem Mass to which thirteen of Italy's most famous composers would each contribute a movement. Quite remarkably for such an ambitious project, the work was in fact finished, but it never achieved the performance promised it, partly due to logistical reasons, but also due to the ultimate failure of the Bolognese authorities to deliver the financial support that they had initially pledged. The work was believed to be lost, but Verdi's own contribution to it the work, its final "*Libera me*", was to become the seed from which the 1874 Requiem was to grow.

Almost miraculously the remaining 12 movements were re-discovered in the 1980s, and the "*Messa per Rossini*" was finally premiered, and recorded in Stuttgart, in 1988 - 120 years after its conception.



"The Manzoni Requiem"

Between 1869 and 1871, Verdi returned to other work, notably *Aida*, but there is considerable evidence that he was looking for a suitable excuse to set the text of the Requiem in its entirety. Such an opportunity presented itself as a result of a freak accident on 22 May 1873. Alessandro Manzoni, the poet and revolutionary, tripped over the steps as he left church, and died instantly! In an Italy struggling for unity and independence, Manzoni held iconic status as the people's poet. His loss was deeply mourned by the nation - and Verdi was no exception. With customary fervour, he embarked on the Requiem's completion with renewed vigour.

That much of the ideas had been fermenting in his mind since 1868 is evident from his response to Alberto Mazzucato, composer and conservatory professor, who looked at the score of the of the completed "*Rossini Libera me*" in 1871 and was moved to describe it as "*the most beautiful, the greatest and the most colossally poetic piece that anyone could imagine.*" Verdi replied: "*Your words almost kindled in me the desire... to write an entire Mass, all the more since with a little greater expansion I would find that the 'Requiem' and the 'Dies irae' movements would be already finished, for they are reprised in the 'Libera,' already composed.*"

The work received its first performance on 22 May 1874 in the Church of San Marco in Milan. The response was tumultuous. It was soon repeated across the square at La Scala - the scene of so many of Verdi's previous triumphs, and it soon conquered Europe. In its first year there were 15 performances in Paris, 4 in Vienna and 3 at the Royal Albert Hall, where it was acclaimed despite the "Protestant" Victorians taste for sterner, more serious religious fare.

The Music - Requiem aeternam

The hushed opening *Requiem aeternam* begins barely audibly with a descending cello figure and monotone "sotto voce" choral entries conveying a sense of awe, reverence and humility. The accompanying string figures introduce important thematic material and simultaneously convey a mixture of sadness and longing. This material is heard again at the climax of the "*Libera me*", and as such was originally conceived as part of the "*Rossini*" Requiem. The mood is interrupted by the confident hymn of praise *Te decet hymnus* which Verdi sets in the imitative a cappella counterpoint style of earlier generations of Italian composers. The *Requiem aeternam* section is then repeated, but this time it leads us into the *Kyrie* by the very simple device of a massive crescendo.

The *Kyrie eleison* itself is introduced with a true operatic flourish by the 4 soloists. Each in turn pleads vehemently for mercy as the reverential mood of the opening is replaced by music of great vigour and drama. The choir join them as the music reaches the first great climax of the piece before it subsides and the movement ends with all voices joined as one in prayer.

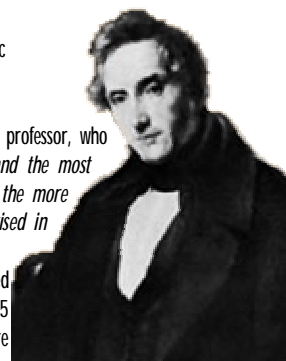
Dies Irae

The *Dies Irae* explodes onto the scene with dramatic orchestral hammer-blows, frenetic chromatic choral outbursts, and rushing semi-quaver strings, depicting the Day of Judgement. This gives way to the ominous hushed warning of impending judgement with *Quantus tremor est futurus* sung in a whisper in unison by the whole choir. Then silence. A soft solo trumpet fanfare, echoed by a distant trumpet, announces the *Tuba Mirum*. One by one the remaining trumpets then the full brass section and timpani enter, graphically depicting the call to "final judgment". As an earth-shattering climax is reached the choir, strings and woodwind enter to produce one of the most thrilling sounds imaginable. It is as though the whole universe is shaking. A sudden silence followed by the perfunctory accompaniment of lower strings and the dull thud of a bass drum create a suitably sinister accompaniment for the bass soloist's hesitant *Mors stupebit*, which reflects on the emptiness of death. It is as if he is staring into an abyss.

Next it is the turn of the Mezzo-soprano soloist, in the first big set piece aria of the work – *Liber Scriptus*. This section was originally set as a 4 part imitative chorus, but Verdi changed his mind after the first performances, perhaps at the request of Maria Waldman who was engaged to sing the mezzo role in subsequent performances in Paris and London.

Giuseppe Verdi was born at la Roncole near Busseto in the Parma region of Italy in 1813. He was a self-taught composer, humanist and patriot. His famous chorus of Hebrew Slaves came to be regarded as symbolising the Italians struggle for independence from the ruling Austrians, and nationalists adopted the slogan "Viva Verdi" – "Long Live Vittorio Emmanuel Re D'Italia!"

He composed almost exclusively for the opera house, and of his almost 30 operas, a large proportion are regularly performed today. These include, *Aida*, *la Traviata*, *Il Trovatore*, *Rigoletto*, *Otello*, *Falstaff*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *La Forza del destino* and *Macbeth*. He died on January 27th 1901.



As the mezzo dramatically relates how a book will be read recording our failings, reminders of the Last Day and the Final Trumpet are never far away in the orchestral accompaniment, and the choir's repeated murmurings of **Dies irae, dies illa** eventually erupt into a restatement of the original fearsome theme.

In an effectively theatrical transformation Verdi establishes a serene, almost consoling atmosphere for the sublime trio **Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?**, with its unusual bassoon accompaniment. The long legato melody initially spun out by the mezzo is taken up first by the tenor and then by the soprano. Ultimately each of the soloists in turn sings the limp melody unaccompanied and desolate, fading away to almost nothing, but as the soprano ends, the choral basses doubled by the full battery of brass burst in with a typically Verdian phrase with the words **Rex tremendae majestatis**, the tenors respond *ppp* as if in awe of the majesty of God. The soloists now lead a prayer for mercy, **Salva me, fons pietatis**, and supported by the choir this ensemble is given the full operatic treatment.



There then follows a sequence of distinguished solo items each of them perfectly illustrating and capturing the mood of the text. Firstly we hear a gently swaying duet for the two ladies: **Recordare**. As so often in this work it is the mezzo who sets out the long legato opening melody. The soprano repeats this and then there follows a blissful passage in which both voices intertwine reinforced by lush orchestration of strings woodwind and horns. The duet concludes with a quasi-operatic cadenza, before ending as calmly as it began. A dotted rhythm in the upper woodwind serves to remind us of the sopranos insistent **Salva me** of the previous movement.

The anguished opening of the tenor solo **Ingemisco** soon gives way to a more assured melodic style at the words **Qui Mariam absolvisti**, and then we hear delightfully pastoral interplay between soloist and oboe at **Inter oves locum praesta**. The oboe presumably symbolic of the shepherd's pipe as the "sheep are separated from the goats".

The bass soloist has had few opportunities to impose himself up to this point, but this makes his sudden appearance all the more dramatic and effective. In the role of a priest he adopts first a judgmental posture in the forceful angular music of **Confutatis maledictis**, and then identifies himself with the suppliant in a softer more pleading fashion - **oro supplex et acclinis**.

His final note is interrupted by a further sudden outburst of the **Dies irae** theme which breaks down and transforms into the introduction to the **Lacrymosa**. This, the final section of the **Dies irae** is a simple but sombre melody in the minor mode, but treated with progressively greater complexity as soloists choir and orchestra add to the texture. This section is an adaptation of a prayer that Verdi originally composed for the end of the IVth Act of the Paris version of Don Carlos, to mark King Philip's grief at the death of Posa. With its solemn orchestration and plangent melody it is perhaps one of the great operatic laments, but Verdi omitted it from his final version

of the score. He was never a composer to totally discard earlier material however, and he realized that it would fit perfectly the texts and mood of the Requiem at this point. Recently some stage directors / conductors have restored this section to the opera, to divided critical opinion.

Offertorio - Domine Jesu Christe

The next section, sung by the four soloists only, is redolent of Verdi's French style, a suave but broad, highly inflected and nuanced style that he had been absorbing and making his own in the 1860s. The movement has a clear five-part arch structure, ABCBA. Its outer sections are concerned with elaborating and decorating the gently rocking melody first heard in the cellos as an underpinning for the opening lines of text **Domine Jesus Christe**. The more vigorous second and fourth sections, (**Quam olim Abrahae**), are more dramatic in their imitative counterpoint, and provide an effective contrast to the opening. [Verdi's use of a fugato style for this section follows a firmly established tradition at this point in the Mass]. At the centre of the arch structure is the still, nearly motionless and spiritually reflective **Hostias** section, introduced by the tenor with a noble melody that recalls portions of his earlier **Ingemisco** solo.

Sanctus

A blazing fanfare of trumpets and voices announces the dazzling, dance-like counterpoint of the Sanctus. It is a double fugue for double chorus, described elsewhere as "a Dance of the Children of Light". It sets the entire text of Sanctus and **Benedictus** in an irrepressible expression of joy. Only at the final **Pleni sunt coeli** does the dashing counterpoint briefly give way to a glowing, ethereal melody, exchanged antiphonally between the two choirs, and accompanied by the "moto perpetuo" of the orchestra, but it quickly resumes its energetic course, ending in an exciting blaze of sound at the final **Hosanna in excelsis**.

Agnus Dei

This movement is monothematic. Its lovely melody is first sung unaccompanied in the major by soprano and mezzo, an octave apart, with arresting effect. It is then repeated by the choir in a similarly texture. The soloists then restate the melody in the minor key, but the choir restore the major tonality, singing in rich chords. The soloists intone the melody for a third time, this time accompanied to magical effect by a trio of flutes. Once more the choir reply before the soloists re-enter one final time to bring this short but "perfect" movement to a peaceful conclusion.

Lux Aeterna

String tremolos set the mood for this perfect example of Verdi's art. It has been claimed that the mezzo- soprano is Verdi's heroine in this monumental work, and it is the mezzo again who leads this ensemble, singing a long breathed opening phrase over the subtly shifting harmonies of the shimmering sub-divided violins.

With the entry of the bass, who again suggests a priestly presence, at Requiem aeternam, the music assumes a funereal character - with its slow pace, minor key, dotted rhythm and ominous dark orchestration. When this section is repeated it draws a more optimistic response, *et lux perpetua luceat eis*, from the mezzo and tenor soloists, leading into an extended unaccompanied section of decidedly operatic character. The movement ends with the bass intoning the requiem as if in deep meditative prayer, with the other two soloists echoing his words and bringing the movement to a close on a note of almost sublime stillness and repose.

Libera me

The final section - **Libera me**, is a reworking of the 1869 original planned for the *Messa Rossini*. The changes are minor, but all of them can be regarded as for the best. This movement serves as both a dramatic conclusion to, and an effective summary of the entire work. It features the soprano soloist, who up until this point has been used sparingly by the composer. The opening is a dramatic monotone supplication from the soloist, and this followed by hushed awestruck chants intoned by the choir in four part harmony. The soprano then launches into the chromatic and searingly intense presentation of **Tremens factus sum** with its dark orchestral colours and dramatic dynamic contrasts.

The threatening *Dies irae* theme returns one final time, but soon subsides to be replaced by arguably the most beautiful and inspired music Verdi ever wrote, an unaccompanied choral version of the comforting **Requiem aeternam** theme that we heard in the strings at the opening of the work. The music is expanded and symbolically transposed up a semi-tone from its earlier appearance, with the soprano poised delicately over the choir, (like an Angel), and ending on a high Bb to be sung as quietly as possible.

After a silent pause the soprano pleads even more desperately to be released from the terrors of death, but is almost immediately interrupted by the choir altos who launch the final energetic fugue - **Libera me Domine**. Its opening notes are essentially those of the Sanctus played upside down and given a differing continuation. With each subsequent imitative entry the fugue becomes ever more frenzied until it reaches a glorious climax at the word *Domine*.

From here it is almost as though the fugue is a spent force, and the music winds down to the moving final pages, - a declamatory prayer for the soprano, "**Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna, in die illa tremenda**", sung on a low "C" accompanied by the chorus, whose parts are marked *morendo* (dying away).

The work has not ended in a mood of glory, serenity or peace, but indecisively / questioning, reflecting Verdi's personal attitude to religion, life and death.

NW [Oct 07]



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GILL ELLARD
NICI FLETCHER
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LISA HOWARTH
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PRESTON CECILIAN
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TESSA BIRD
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CHRIS COWELL
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QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL OLDHAM
GRAND FAMILY CHRISTMAS CONCERT
With DOBCROSS SILVER BAND
Tickets £7.50

A joyous celebration of Christmas for all the family with Carols for All.

Sunday March 15th 3.00p.m.
in Oldham Parish Church
Celebration "Songs of Praise"
A Service of Thanksgiving for 125 years of music making.
Retiring collection for Charities.

Sunday April 5th (Palm Sunday) at 7.00p.m.
In the Albion Church – Ashton
The St. Matthew Passion by J.S. Bach
With The East Lancs Sinfonia
Soloists tbc
Tickets: £8.00 (£7.00 in advance)

Saturday June 20th 7.30p.m.
Venue: tbc
"An Evening of Gilbert & Sullivan"
Abridged concert versions of 2 G & S favourites:
THE MIKADO and THE GONDOLIERS

Sunday November 15th at 7.30p.m.
Elgar: The Dream of Gerontius
Venue: tbc

Oldham Choral Society rehearses in Oldham at the Baptist Church every Monday evening - except for Christmas, Easter, and a short period in July / August. Membership currently stands at around 130. Whilst this is a very healthy situation indeed, there is an imbalance between the parts, and the choir is keen to welcome additional tenors, (in particular), and basses. Maintaining the strength and standards of the choir enables us to plan the performance of major works / events such as this one, and to engage top flight soloists and a full orchestra.

Oldham Choral Society does not receive any financial support whatsoever from the Local Authority or other sources, so relies on the contributions of its members, ticket sales and patrons to finance its ambitious programmes. For further details of choir membership, patrons, sponsorship and events visit our website: www.oldhamchoral.org.uk or contact: Fred Jones on 0161 205 4638