

OLDHAM  
CHORAL  
SOCIETY

IN THE  
RNCM  
CONCERT  
HALL

Sunday  
28<sup>th</sup> April  
2019 at  
7 p.m.

oldham  
choral  
society

Est. 1884

Registered Charity 518255



Messa da

# Requiem

di



Giuseppe

# Verdi

SOPRANO: Linda Richardson  
MEZZO-SOPRANO: Kathleen Wilkinson  
TENOR: David Butt Philip  
BASS: Thomas D. Hopkinson

EAST LANCS SINFONIA  
CONDUCTOR: NIGEL P. WILKINSON

# Requiem

*Offertorio*

*Soloists*

*Sanctus*

*Choir*

*Agnus Dei*

*Soprano, Mezzo-soprano & Choir*

*Lux aeterna*

*Mezzo-soprano,  
Tenor & Bass*

*Libera me*

*Soprano & Choir*



# The Verdi

## *Introit and Kyrie*

*Introit*

*Choir*

*Kyrie*

*Choir & Soloists*

## *Dies irae*

*Dies irae*

*Choir*

*Tuba mirum*

*Choir*

*Liber scriptus*

*Mezzo-soprano & Choir*

*Quid sum miser*

*Soprano,*

*Mezzo-soprano & Tenor*

*Rex tremendae*

*Soloists & Choir*

*Recordare*

*Soprano & Mezzo-soprano*

*Ingemisco*

*Tenor*

*Confutatis*

*Bass & Choir*

*Lacrymosa*

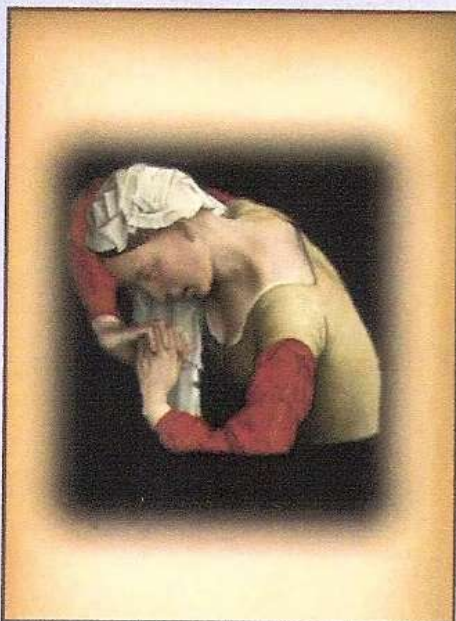
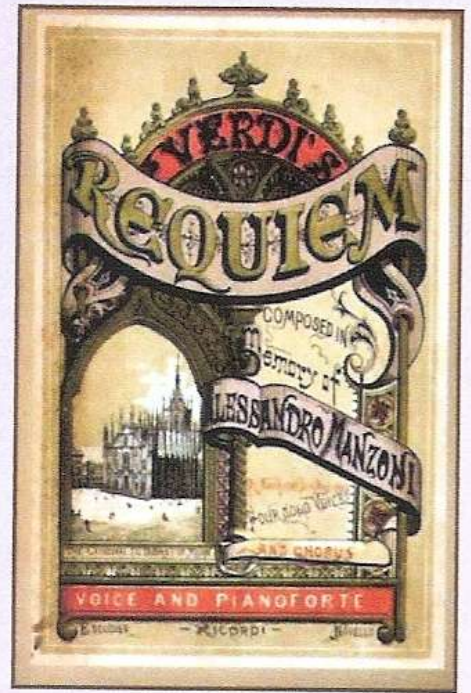
*Soloists & Choir*



*There will be an interval of 20 minutes*

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 per Rossini*. 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 is 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 originally 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 B $\flat$  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..

## Offertorio

The next section, sung by the four soloists only, is particularly 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 the **Sanctus and Benedictus** in an irrepressible expression of joy. Only at **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 mono-thematic. 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. 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 replies, before the soloists re-enter one final time to bring this short simple movement to a peaceful conclusion.



## Lux Aeterna

Ethereal 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

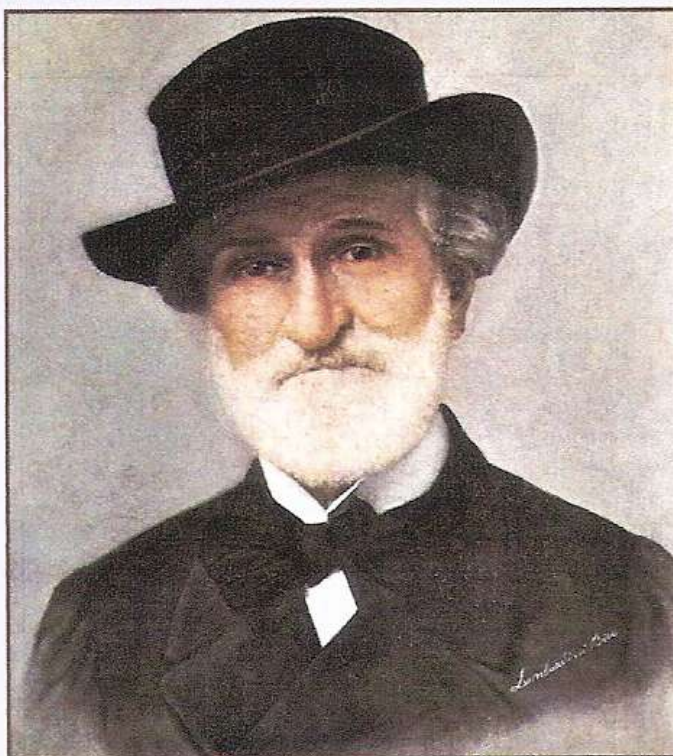
In an effectively theatrical transformation, Verdi establishes a serene, almost consoling atmosphere for the sublime trio *Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?*, with its unusual bassoon accompaniment. The long legato melody, initially spun out by the mezzo, is taken up first by the tenor and then by the soprano. Ultimately each of the soloists in turn sings the limpid 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. First 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 soprano's 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, is 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 supplicant, 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 opera. 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.



Giuseppe Verdi by Bice Lombardini

# Verdi's Requiem - The Music

## Introit and Kyrie

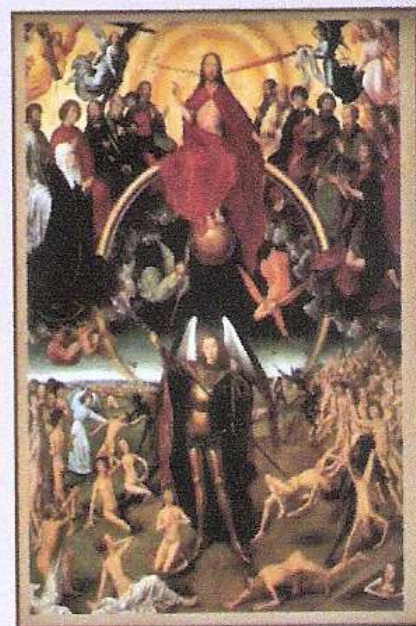
The hushed opening *Requiem aeternam* begins barely audibly with a descending cello figure and monotone "sotto voce" choral entries conveying a sense of awe, reverence and humility. The accompanying string figures introduce important thematic material and simultaneously convey a mixture of sadness and 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 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 four 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 the music 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 stillness. 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



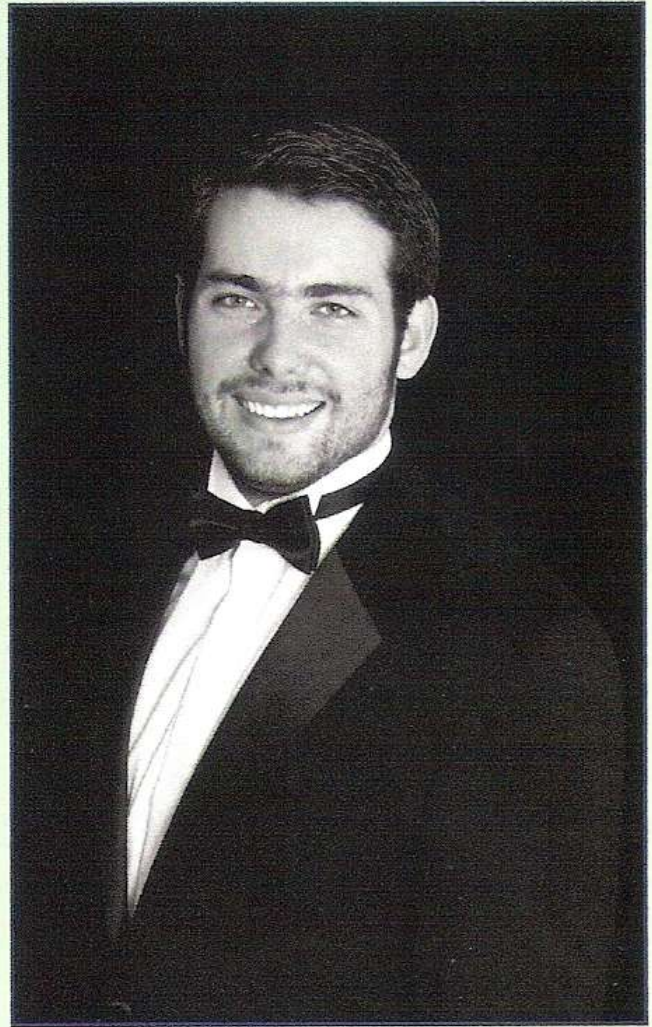
thud of a bass drum, create a suitably sinister accompaniment for the bass soloist's hesitant *Mors stupebit*, which reflects on the emptiness of death. It is as if he is staring into an abyss.

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 four-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. 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.

# Thomas D Hopkinson (bass)

Originally from Nottingham, Thomas studied at the Royal Northern College of Music on the MMus course and the Postgraduate Diploma, graduating in 2014. These studies were supported by The Laurin & Arthur Glaze Trust, The Sybil Tutton Award administered by the Musicians Benevolent Fund and Thomas was The Independent Opera Scholar for the 2013/14 academic year. In 2017 Thomas was also the recipient of The Wexford Festival Opera's Aria Friends Bursary.

Thomas has performed the roles of; Viktor Anya 17 (Awayday Music Productions); Nettuno & Tempo *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* (RNCM Opera), Hans Foltz *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (The Hallé), Dulcamara *L'elisir d'amore* (RNCM Opera), Wagner *Faust* (Clonter Opera), Count Ceprano (cover) *Rigoletto* (Longborough Festival Opera), Prince Gremin, Zaretsky & Commander *Eugene Onegin* (Opera on Location), Ferrando *Il Trovatore* (Opera Seria), Biterolf (cover) *Tannhäuser* (Longborough Festival Opera), The Learned Judge *Trial by Jury* (Opera on Location), Der Krankenwäter *Hin und Zurück* (Opera on Location), Sarastro *Die Zauberflöte* (Westminster Opera Company), Un Capo delle Guardie *Medea* (Wexford Festival Opera), Monterone *Rigoletto* (Wexford Festival Opera), Samuel (cover) *Un Ballo in Maschera* (Grange Park Opera), Dr Grenvil *La Traviata* (Westminster Opera Company) and Il Commendatore *Don Giovanni* (Opera on Location), Marchese d'Obigny *La Traviata* (Al Bustan Festival, Lebanon).



Thomas also recently performed with the chorus of Opera North singing in their productions of *Götterdämmerung* and *Billy Budd*. He has also sung chorus for Longborough Festival Opera, Wexford Festival Opera and Grange Park Opera.

Thomas also works on the concert platform and has performed Purcell's *My Beloved Spake*, Haydn's *Harmoniemesse*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, Handel's *Messiah*, Brahms' *Requiem*, Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Fauré's *Requiem*, Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, Haydn's *Theresienmesse*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solonnelle*, Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostri*, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, Mozart's *Mass in C Minor*, Jenkins' *The Armed Man*, Vaughan Williams' *Dona nobis pacem*, Mozart's *Coronation Mass* and multiple Opera Galas.

For future events please visit [www.tdhopkinson.co.uk](http://www.tdhopkinson.co.uk).



She sings regularly in concert, her repertoire including Beethoven *Symphony No.9*, Dvorak *Requiem* and *Stabat Mater*, Elgar *The Dream of Gerontius*, *The Musicmakers* and *Sea Pictures*, Mendelssohn *Elijah*, Mozart *Requiem*, Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle* and *Stabat Mater* and Verdi *Requiem*. She was also the featured soloist at The Last Night of the Hallé Proms.

In 2017 she sang Mrs Herring in the acclaimed John Copley production of *Albert Herring*, (conducted by Stuart Bedford), and Marnie's Mother in the world premiere of *Marnie* at ENO, and in 2018 Giovanna *Rigoletto* for the ROH, screened in over 1,000 cinemas worldwide.

Future work includes Mrs Grose *The Turn of the Screw* for Garsington, *The Dream of Gerontius* at the Royal Festival Hall, and the *Verdi Requiem* at the RNCM, and more Filipyevnas!

For further info, media and gallery visit: [www.kathleenwilkinsonopera.com](http://www.kathleenwilkinsonopera.com)

## David Butt Philip (tenor)



Originally from Wells, Somerset, David trained at the Royal Northern College of Music, the Royal Academy of Music and the National Opera Studio.

He was a member of the Glyndebourne Chorus, where he won the John Christie Prize in 2011. From 2012-2014 he was a member of the Jette Parker Young Artists' Programme at the Royal Opera House. Later that year he made his English National Opera debut as Rodolfo *La Bohème* to huge critical acclaim.

Recent operatic work includes the title role in Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg* for Deutsche Oper Berlin, Pinkerton *Madam Butterfly* and Tenor *War Requiem* for ENO, Folco *Isabeau* for Opera Holland Park, Laca *Jenufa* and Luigi *Il Tabarro* for Opera North, Grigory *Boris Godunov* and Narraboth *Salome* at the Royal Opera House, Erik *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Lille, Essex *Gloriana*

and Froh *Das Rheingold* at Teatro Real, Madrid, and the roles of Laertes and Hamlet in Brett Dean's *Hamlet* at Glyndebourne.

Notable concert appearances include the *Dream of Gerontius* (Hallé/Elder and Philharmonia/Brabbins), Bernstein's *Wonderful Town* (LSO/Rattle), *Das Rheingold* (Hallé/Elder and Boston Symphony/Nelsons), *Beethoven 9* (RSB/Jurowski and LPO/Ono), *Verdi Requiem* (RPO/Nan Steen & RLPO/Petrenko) and two performances of Prokofiev's rarely heard *Seven, they are seven* (BSO/Karabits/BBC Proms and Philharmonia/Ashkenazy).

David has recently given master classes for St Paul's Opera, Opera Prelude and the Reina Sofia School of Music in Madrid.

Plans for next season include role debuts as The Prince *Rusalka*, Florestan *Fidelio* and Lohengrin.

Brigitta *Die Tote Stadt*, Third Maid *Elektra*, Mother Goose *The Rake's Progress*, Filipyevna *Eugene Onegin* and *Giovanna Rigoletto*.

For Glyndebourne she has sung Mrs Herring *Albert Herring*, Mistress Quickly *Falstaff*, Geneviève *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Pastuchyna *Jenůfa* and Filipyevna *Eugene Onegin*.

Other work in the UK includes Cleaning Lady *The Makropulos Case*, The Herdswoman *Jenůfa*, Mamma Lucia *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Marnie's Mother in the world premiere of *Marnie* for English National Opera; Filipyevna (in 2 separate productions) and Mère Jeanne *Dialogues des Carmélites* for Grange Park Opera; and *Filipyevna* for Welsh National Opera and Opera Holland Park.

For Scottish Opera she created the roles of Margaret Muir *Friend of the People* and Mary Lamb *Monster!* and has sung Nurse / Old Woman *Inés de Castro*, First Norn *Götterdämmerung*, Erda *Das Rheingold* and Schwertleite *Die Walküre*, and for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra *Ursule Béatrice et Bénédicte*.



European engagements have included Nurse / Old Woman *Inés de Castro* at the Teatro Coliseu, Porto, Auntie *Peter Grimes*, Grandmother Buryja *Jenůfa*, La Ciesca *Gianni Schicchi*, Mistress of the Novices *Suor Angelica* and La Dama *Macbeth* for the Opéra de Lyon; Marcellina *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Mistress Quickly *Falstaff* at the Opéra de Rennes; Marcellina *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Flanders Opera; Mistress Quickly at the Angers / Nantes Opera; Mother Goose *The Rake's Progress* at the Théâtre de Caen, the Opéra de Limoges, the Opéra de Reims, the Opéra de Rouen Normandie and the Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg; Erda *Das Rheingold* at the Sopot International Wagner Festival, and concerts at the Puccini Festival at Torre del Lago.

Recordings include *Káťa Kabanová* *The Makropulos Case* for Chandos CD and *Eugene Onegin* for Opus Arte DVD / Blu Ray.

Her performance of Filipyevna *Eugene Onegin* at the ROH in 2013 was shown on Channel 4 and at cinemas worldwide, and in 2016 her performance of the same role at Garsington was seen on big screens throughout the UK and streamed live on BBC ARTS.

She has appeared as soloist on a number of BBC radio broadcasts, and on several for Radio France, and video transmissions on the Mezzo Channel.

Conductors she has worked with include Thomas Adès, Sir Richard Armstrong, Steuart Bedford, Martyn Brabbins, Bertrand de Billy, Douglas Boyd, Sir Mark Elder, Richard Farnes, Edward Gardner, Richard Hickox, Leo Hussain, Alexander Joel, Vladimir Jurowski, Kirill Karabits, Jan Latham-Koenig, Lothar Koenigs, Sir Charles Mackerras, James MacMillan, Paul McCreech, Ingo Metzmacher, Kazushi Ono, Carlo Rizzi and Robin Ticciati.

## Linda Richardson (soprano)



Linda Richardson was born in Cheshire and studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, where she was a Peter Moores Foundation Scholar and winner of the Frederic Cox Award, and then at the National Opera Studio.

An English National Opera Company Principal between 1997 and 2005, her roles there included Virtue *The Coronation of Poppea*, Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte*, Lauretta *Gianni Schicchi*, Micaëla *Carmen*, Gretel *Hansel and Gretel*, Gilda *Rigoletto*, Zerlina *Don Giovanni*, Sophie *Der Rosenkavalier*, Mimi *La Bohème*, title roles *The Fairy Queen* and *Alcina*, Violetta *La Traviata*, Woglinde *Rhinegold*, Helena *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Donna Anna *Don Giovanni*. Elsewhere she has sung Karolka *Jenůfa*, Mimi, Nanetta *Falstaff*, Pamina *Die Zauberflöte* Countess *Marriage of Figaro*, Violetta *La Traviata* Gilda *Rigoletto* with Opera North, Lisetta *La Vera Constanza* at Garsington, Norina *Don Pasquale* for Clonter Opera, Fairy Queen in Barcelona, First Niece *Peter Grimes* at Netherlands Opera, Amina *La*

*Sonnambula* Mimi *La Bohème* and Alice *Falstaff* for Opera Holland Park. , *Kátya Kabanová* with ETO, Alice *Falstaff* and Cio-Cio San *Madama Butterfly* Longborough Festival Opera, Mrs Coyle Owen *Wingrave* Nuremburg International Music chamber Festival.

Linda performs extensively on the oratorio and concert platform, and is a frequent recitalist, recently singing at the V&A museum for their opera exhibition. She appeared as Annie in Jonathan Dove's TV opera *When She Died* on Channel 4. Recordings include *Hearts and Flowers*, a collection of Victorian Parlour Songs, and Oscar *Un Ballo in Maschera* for Chandos.

Most recent and current plans include Violetta Scottish Opera and for WNO Anna *Anna Bolena*, Violetta *Traviata*, Almaltea *Moses in Egitto*, Elvira *I Puritani* and more recently Cio-Cio San *Madama Butterfly*.

She will return to WNO to revive the role of Violetta *Traviata* this autumn followed by her debut title role in *Suor Angelica* and a return to Longborough Festival Opera to sing the title role in *Anna Bolena*.

## Kathleen Wilkinson (mezzo-soprano)

Born in Burnley, of Irish descent, Kathleen Wilkinson studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, where she won a Peter Moores Foundation Scholarship and was the first female winner of the Webster Booth Competition. She made her debut at the Royal Opera, London in 2005, as The She-Ancient *The Midsummer Marriage*, and has returned as Anna Kennedy *Maria Stuarda*,

# OLDHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

*with*

*The East Lancs Sinfonia*

*Leader: Sally Robinson*

*Conductor: Nigel P. Wilkinson*

## Messa di Requiem Giuseppe Verdi

*One of the most spectacular works in the choral repertoire*

*at the Royal Northern College of Music*



Giuseppe Verdi by Giovanni Boldini

### *Soloists*

*Soprano*

*Linda Richardson*

*Mezzo-soprano*

*Kathleen Wilkinson*

*Tenor*

*David Butt Philip*

*Bass*

*Thomas D Hopkinson*

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Please ensure that all mobile phones are set to silent mode or switched off

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



On behalf of the Society, I welcome you to this evening's concert. The Verdi Requiem is recognised as one of the best-loved choral works and the choir has thoroughly enjoyed rehearsing this splendid piece over the last few months. We are delighted that our Musical Director has managed to assemble a top class line-up of soloists along with the excellent East Lancashire Sinfonia to complement the choir this evening.

A Requiem can be a sombre work but Verdi brought a whole new approach to the subject without losing any of its message. I feel sure that our combined forces will bring this powerful work to life and that you will leave the hall feeling uplifted by its spiritual power.

Whilst we sing our large concerts in this prestigious city venue, we are keen to extend our profile in our own area. Following last year's successful Carol Concert with Ashton Band, we shall join forces with them again in Oldham Parish Church on Friday 20 December. In addition to this, members of the choir will be performing a lunchtime concert in Rochdale Parish Church on Saturday 22 June. This is a new venture for us and we hope you will come along to hear us sing a wide range of short choral works from all ages.

### **If you would like to sing with the choir**

please contact: Ray Smith on 07784 358 799

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# Messa di Requiem - Giuseppe Verdi

Giuseppe Verdi was born at la Roncole near Busseto in the Parma region of Italy on 10 October 1813. He was a self-taught composer and patriot. His famous chorus of Hebrew Slaves came to be regarded as symbolising the struggle of the Italians for independence from the ruling Austrians. 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, Nabucco and Macbeth. He died on 27 January 1901.

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".



Hans von Bülow

The esteemed conductor Hans von Bülow famously described it as "*An opera in ecclesiastical garb*", but on first hearing it, no less a person than Brahms declared, "*Bülow has made a fool of himself – this is a work of genius*". Just what Richard Wagner thought of it is more difficult to say, since 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. One could also accuse Handel of writing his sacred works in his operatic style. 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.

An acknowledged authority on Verdi, Charles Osbourne, described it as, "*A Mass not for the Dead – but for the Living*".

## Composition

The work was inspired by two of Italy's most influential artistic figures: the composer Gioachino 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 Gioachino 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, 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 the work, (its final "Libera me"), was to become the seed from which the 1874 Requiem was to grow.

Almost miraculously, the remaining twelve 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.



Gioachini Rossini by Crevedon



Alessandro Manzoni

That many 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 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 fifteen performances in Paris, four in Vienna and three at the Royal Albert Hall, where it was acclaimed despite the "Protestant" Victorian taste for sterner, more serious religious fare.

## INTROIT

*Requiem aeternam  
donna eis, Domine;  
et lux perpetua luceat eis.  
Te decet hymnus, Deus in Sion,  
et tibi redetur  
votum in Jerusalem.  
Exaudi orationem meam,  
ad te omnis caro veniet.*

Eternal rest give unto them, Oh Lord;  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
Thou, Oh 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.

## KYRIE

*Kyrie eleison.  
Christe eleison.*

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.

## DIES IRAE

*Dies irae, dies illa,  
solvat saeculum in favilla,  
teste David cum Sybilla.  
Quantus tremor est futurus  
quando iudex est venturus  
cuncta stricte discussurus!*

This day, this day of wrath  
shall dissolve the world in ashes  
as prophesied by David and the Sibyl.  
What a trembling there will be  
when the judge comes  
to weigh everything thoroughly.

## TUBA MIRUM

*Tuba mirum spargens sonum  
per sepulchra regionum  
coquet omnes ante thronum.  
Mors stupebit et natura  
cum resurget creatura  
iudicanti responsura.*

The trumpet blasting out  
across the graves of all lands,  
Summons all before the throne.  
Death and nature shall stand amazed  
when all mankind rises again  
to answer before the Judge.

## LIBER SCRIPTUS

*Liber scriptus proferetur  
in quo totum continetur,  
unde mundus iudicetur.  
Iudex ergo cum sedebit,  
quidquid latet apparebit,  
nil inultum remanebit.*

A book will be brought forward  
in which everything is written  
whereby the world will be judged.  
When the Judge takes his seat  
whatever is hidden shall be revealed:  
Nothing will remain unavenged.



## QUID SUM MISER

*Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?  
quem patronum rogaturus  
cum vix justus sit securus?*

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

*Rex tremendae majestatis,  
qui salvandos salvas gratis,  
salva me, fons pietatis!*

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

## RECORDARE

*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.  
Juste judex ultionis,  
donum fac remissionis  
ante diem rationis.*

Remember merciful Jesus  
that I am the cause of your being.  
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

*Ingemisco tamquam reus,  
culpa rubet vultus meus.  
Supplici 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 praesta;  
et ab hoedis me sequestra,  
statuens in parte dextra.*

I groan like the sinner I am,  
and my face blushes with guilt.  
Spare me, I supplicate, Oh God.  
You who absolved Mary 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.  
Place me amongst the sheep  
and separate me from the goats.  
Let me stand at your right hand.

## CONFUTATIS

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

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

## LACRYMOSA

*Lacrymosa dies illa  
qua resurget ex favilla,  
judicandus homo reus,  
Huic ergo parce Deus.  
Pie Jesu Domine,  
dona eis requiem. Amen*

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

## OFFERTORIO

*Domine Jesu Christe,  
Rex gloriae,  
libera animas omnium fidelium  
defunctorum de poenis inferni,  
et de profundo lacu.  
Libera eas de ore leonis,  
ne absorbeat eas tartarus,  
ne cadant in obscurum:  
sed signifer sanctus Michael  
repraesentet eas  
in lucem sanctam,  
quam olim Abrahae promisisti  
et semini ejus.  
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 ejus.  
Libera animas omnium fidelium  
defunctorum de poenis inferni  
et de profundo lacu,  
de morte transire  
ad vitam.*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
King of Glory,  
free the souls of thy faithful departed  
from eternal torment,  
and from the fathomless waters.  
Free them from out of the lion's jaw  
Lest they drown in the depths of hell.  
Save them from utter darkness,  
but may the holy standard-bearer Michael  
lead them on  
to the holy light of heaven,  
which you once promised to Abraham  
and all his descendents.  
Hear our prayer  
and let our cry come unto thee:  
God our Father,  
we pray this day  
for all the departed souls,  
grant them, Lord,  
deliverance from death unto life,  
as was promised  
to Abraham and his seed.  
Deliver the souls of all the faithful dead  
from hell and its torments,  
and from the deep pit,  
that they may pass from death  
into everlasting life.

## 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!*

Holy, holy, holy,  
Lord God of Hosts,  
heaven and earth are filled  
with your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest!  
Blessed is he that comes  
in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest!

## AGNUS DEI

*Agnus Dei,  
qui tollis peccata mundi,  
dona eis requiem.  
Agnus Dei,  
Qui tollis peccata mundi,  
Dona eis requiem sempiternam.*

Lamb of God,  
who takes away the sins of the world,  
grant them rest.  
Lamb of God  
who takes away the sins of the world,  
grant them everlasting rest.

## LUX AETERNA

*Lux aeterna luceat eis,  
Domine,  
cum sanctis tuis in aeternam,  
quia pius es.  
Requiem aeternam dona eis,  
Domine,  
et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

Let perpetual light shine upon them,  
Lord,  
with all thy saints in eternity,  
for thy tender mercy's sake.  
Eternal rest give unto them  
oh Lord;  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.

## LIBERA ME

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

Deliver me, Oh Lord,  
From everlasting death  
on that dreadful day;  
when the heavens and 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,  
oh Lord;  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.



Per l'anniversario della morte  
di

ALESSANDRO MENZONI

XXII Maggio MDCCCLXXIV



MESSA DA REQUIEM

di

GIUSEPPE VERDI

Quattro parti principali

Soprano - Mezzo Soprano - Tenore - Basso

Orchestra

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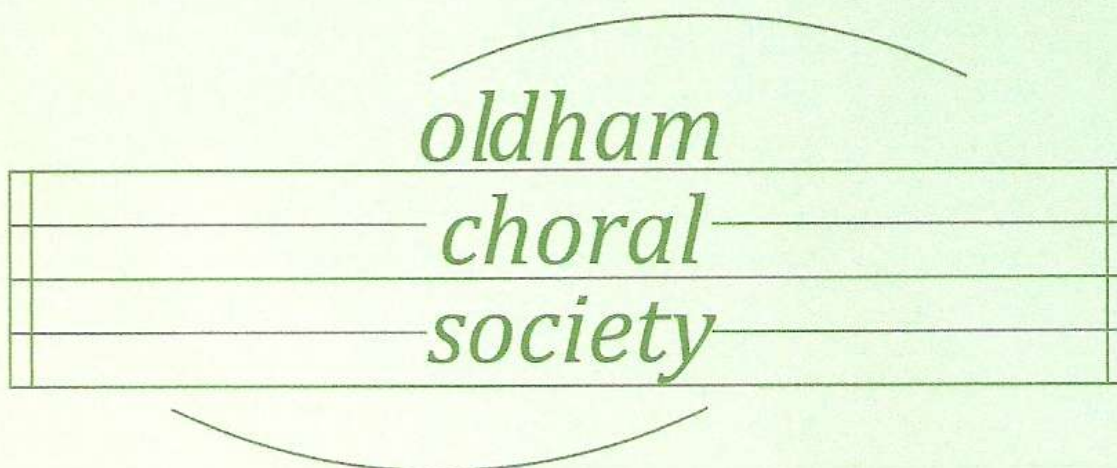
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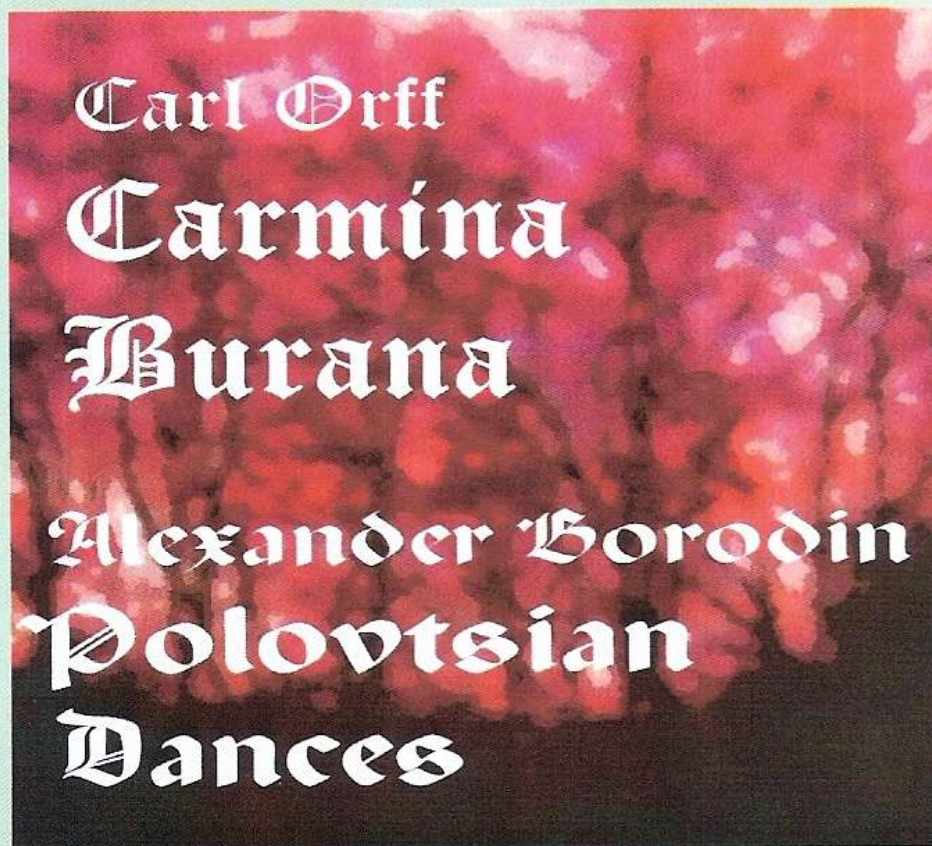
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**Saturday 22 June 2019  
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Members of  
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**Sunday 17 November 2019 at 7.00pm**



at  
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with soloists:

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A seasonal feast of festive  
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The Armed Man by Sir Karl Jenkins