

**OLDHAM
CHORAL
SOCIETY**

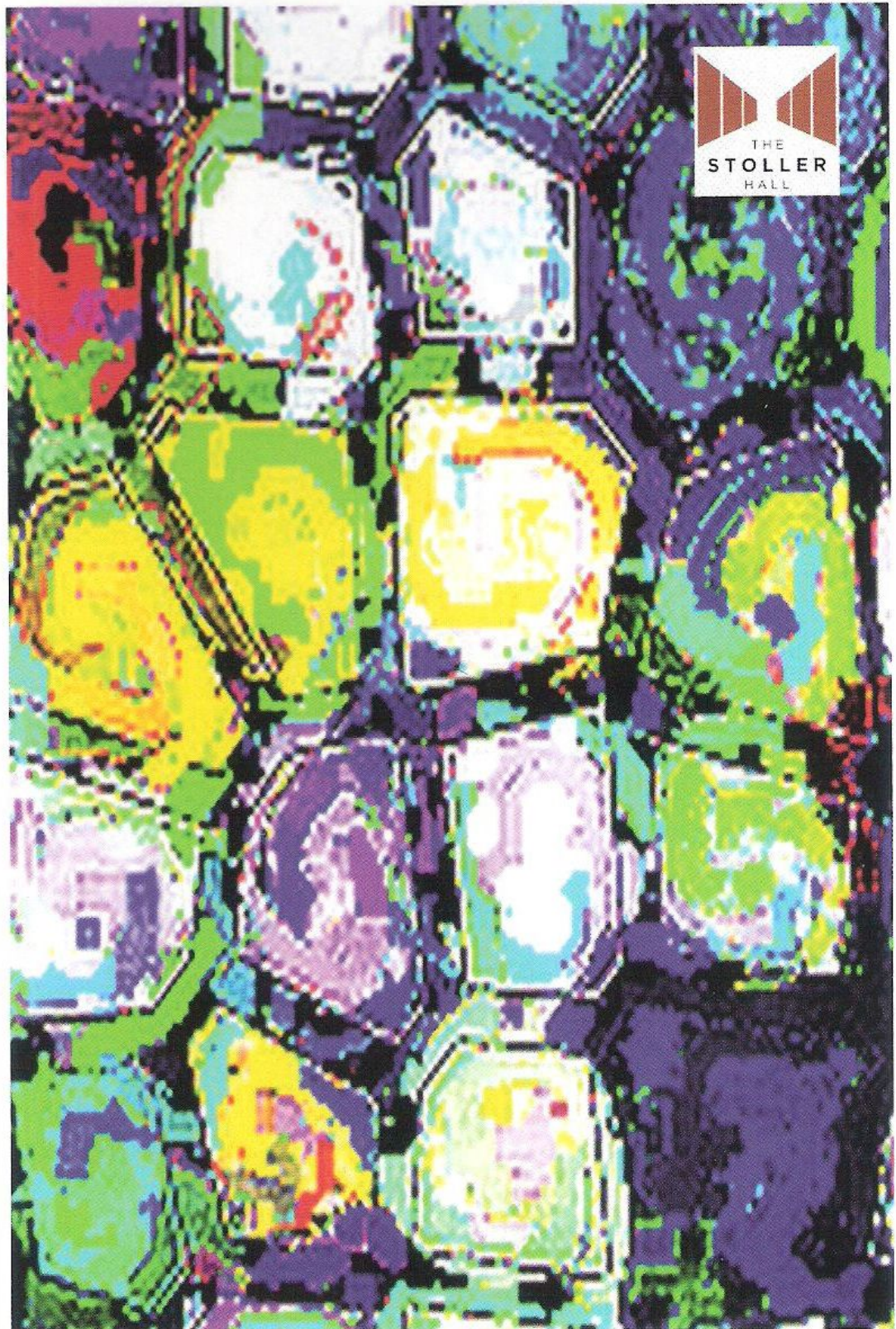
137th Season

**THE
STOLLER
HALL**

**Sunday
10th April
2022
7pm**



Italian Treasures



Programme

£2.00

A Message from The Society Chairman:

Welcome back to Oldham Choral Society's first concert in Manchester since November 2019 and the first in this magnificent Stoller Hall. Following the pandemic, the choir has been singing together for several months, having given two concerts since last November.

The pieces in this evening's concert are by two Italian composers famed for their operatic works, both of which belie their 'solemn' description, being lively, tuneful and very Italian!

Sadly, a few of our members have passed on over the last two years; their memory will be in our hearts as we present this appropriate music. We are now rebuilding the choir to its former strength in numbers and would love to hear from you if you would like to come and sing with us. Our contact details are on the back of this programme.

Now sit back; take yourself many miles south from chilly Manchester to the warmth of Italy and bask in the Mediterranean air!

Patrons

Mrs S. Andrew; Mrs P. Ashworth; Mr & Mrs C. Barratt;

Mr P. Blanchard; Miss J. Bromley; Mr & Mrs G. Buckley;

Mrs I. Cadman; Mr M. A. Clegg; Mr & Mrs B. Cotton;

Mrs V. Dawson; Mrs J. Hamnett; Mrs N. Hartley;

Mrs B. Hartley; Mrs B. Hatfield; Mrs M. Hood;

Mr & Mrs F. S. Jones; Mrs A. Joyce; Mr K. Lewis;

Mr W. G. Marsden; Mr A Mellor; Mrs N. Murphy;

Mr & Mrs P Quan; Mrs B. Sharples; Miss J. Dunn;

Mrs C. Whitehead; Mrs B. Williams; Mr & Mrs E. Youd.

Programme

'Gloria' From *The Messa Di Gloria*'

by Giacomo Puccini

Part One of the '*Petite Messe Solennelle*'

By Gioachino Rossini

(*Kyrie; Gloria; Gratias; Domine Deus; Qui tollis;
Quoniam tu solus sanctus; Cum sancto spiritu.*)
INTERVAL (15 Minutes)

Part Two of the '*Petite Messe Solennelle*'

(*Credo; Crucifixus; Et resurrexit; Preludio religioso;
Sanctus;; O salutaris hostia; Agnus Dei*)

Artistes

Yvonne Howard - Soprano

Kathleen Wilkinson - Mezzo Soprano

Amar Muchhala - Tenor

Thomas D. Hopkinson - Bass

Duncan Robertson - Piano

John Smith - Harmonium

Nigel P. Wilkinson - Conductor.

Yvonne Howard - Soprano

Yvonne has been hailed by the International press as 'one of the finest singing actresses this country has produced.' This followed her performances in the film of John Adam's opera *The Death of Klinghoffer* and Beethoven's *Leonore / Fidelio* for Opera Holland Park.



Yvonne studied at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, with Joseph Ward and David Johnson, and since making her operatic debut as a chorister and then soloist, has enjoyed a particularly varied career, as her wide vocal range enables her to take on roles from both Mezzo Soprano and Soprano repertoire. These include the title roles in Beethoven's *'Fidelio'*, Bellini's *'Norma'*, and Roberto Devereux's *'Sara'*; Caesonia in Glanert's *'Caligula'* in London, Buenos Aires and Hamburg. Also Katisha in *'The Mikado'*, Mrs Grose in *'The Turn of the Screw'*, Mother in *'Hansel and Gretel'*, Auntie in Peter Grimes and Hippolyta in *'A Midsummer Night's Dream'*.

Most recent successes have included the title role of Norma for Opera Holland Park, Sieglinde with the Halle orchestra in *Die Walküre* (released on CD), and Fricka and 2nd Norn in *'Das Rheingold* in Opera North's highly acclaimed Ring Cycle.

Her work varies enormously, from the operas of Verdi, Britten and Wagner, to shows such as *Carousel*, by Rogers and Hammerstein and also recital, concert and Oratorio.

In 2018, she sang the role of Queen of the Fairies in *Iolanthe* for English National Opera and for Garsington Opera, *Mistress Quickly* in *Falstaff*.

Yvonne appears with the Opera North, the Royal Opera Covent Garden, and English National Opera here in the UK, and has also sung in the US, Japan, Brazil, Argentina and throughout Europe.

Since September 2015, Yvonne has been a Visiting Professor of Singing at the Royal Academy of Music.

Kathleen Wilkinson – Mezzo-Soprano



Born in Burnley, Lancashire, of Irish descent, Kathleen won a scholarship to the Royal Northern College of Music (Manchester), where she was the recipient of several major awards.

Over the years, she has been a regular guest artist at the Royal Opera Covent Garden. Other UK engagements have included performances with English National Opera.

European engagements have taken her to the Teatro Coliseu (Porto), Opera Flanders, (Antwerp and Ghent), Opéra de Lyon, Opéra de Rennes, Opéra de Nantes, Opéra de Caen, Opéra de Reims, Opéra de Limoges, Opéra de Rouen, Le Grand Théâtre Luxembourg, Lanzarote, Szczecin, the Puccini Festival at Torre del Lago and the Sopot International Wagner Festival. Kathleen's recordings include *Katya Kabanova* and *The Makropulos Case* for Chandos (Opera in English) and *Eugene Onegin* for Opus Arte DVD / Blu Ray.

TV broadcasts include *Eugene Onegin* (ROHCG) on Channel 4, *The Turn of the Screw* (Garsington) on BBC Arts, and *Il Trittico* and *Peter Grimes* (from Opera Lyon) on the "Mezzo" Channel.

Her performances of Filipyevna in *Onegin* and Giovanna in *Rigoletto* at the Royal Opera were relayed live to cinemas worldwide, and her Filipyevna at Garsington was streamed to "big screens" outdoors all over the country.

She has also sung in many "live" opera broadcasts for the BBC and Radio France, including *Maria Stuarda* with Joyce Di Donato, *Jenufa* with Anna Silja, *Elektra*, *Die Tote Stadt*, *Marnie* and the Scottish Opera "Ring Cycle". She has sung extensively in concert and oratorio throughout the UK., most notably *Beatrice and Benedict* at the Usher Hall, *The Dream of Gerontius* at the Royal Festival Hall, and as soloist at the "Last Night of the Halle Proms".

Recent work has included Mrs Grose *The Turn of the Screw* in the award winning production for Garsington that was broadcast on BBC Arts, and Mrs Grose for Opera Zamku at Szczecin and Stralsund.

Most recently she has reprised her Filipyevna *Eugene Onegin* at Garsington.

Amar Muchhala - Tenor

Amar Muchhala has sung at Staatsoper Hannover, Theatre Magdeburg where he essayed the tenor lead *Camille Desmoulins*, in Gottfried von Einem's opera *Dantons 'Tod'*, English National Opera, London under the baton of Martyn Brabbins; • Amar was seen as Macduff in English Touring Opera's 2019 new production of *'Macbeth'*, Verdi. He recently covered Juan Diego Florez in the role of *Werther*, Massenet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and worked closely with Edward Gardner during the production period.



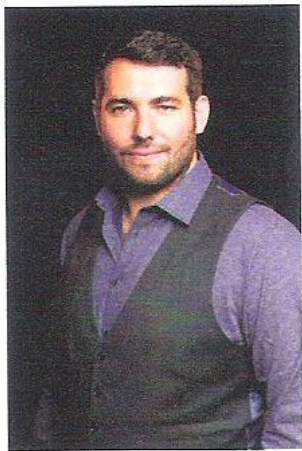
Amar made his Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, debut in 2013 singing *Chulak-The Firework-Maker's Daughter*, David Bruce, world premier and then starred as the lead *Alex* in the world premier of *Glare*, by Søren Nils Eichberg at ROH, 2014. He also covered the role of *Pasterz* in the 2015 ROH production of *Krol Roger*, Szymanowski, directed by Kasper Holten under the baton of Maestro Antonio Pappano.

In Germany, Amar first made his debut with Kammeroper Schloss Rheinsberg in their production of Boieldieu's *Die Weisse Dame*, singing the lead role of *Georg*. "*Amar Muchhala, who has mastered 'Komm, O holde Dame' one of the most difficult Tenor arias, is the first Indian in the history of the Chamber opera, to stand on stage for the first time*" (Märkische Allgemeine, Germany).

Having recently sung at Glyndebourne Festival Opera 2021 and Birmingham Opera company. Amar will go on to sing the title role of *Werther*, Jules Massenet, as part of the 2021/22 season at Theater Regensburg, Germany. He will soon appear as the Shepherd/*Pasterz* in a new production of *Krol Roger* at Opera Za Zamku, Szczecin, Poland.

Resident in London, Amar was born in Bombay and read French literature at Franklin & Marshall College, USA, only to pursue music on world renowned opera course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London. Having naturally transitioned into the lyrico-Spinto repertoire, he remains focused on a variety of roles from the Italian and French repertory.

Thomas D. Hopkinson - Bass



Originally from Nottingham, Thomas is an Associate Young Artist at The National Opera Studio and is a Sybil Tutton award winner supported by Help Musicians. He was previously a Young Artist at The National Opera Studio and graduated from Royal Northern College of Music where he earned his MMus and Postgraduate Diploma. In 2017 Thomas was also the recipient of The Wexford Festival Opera's Aria Friends Bursary.

Upcoming events in the 2021/22 season include Zuniga (cover) in Carmen for Opera North, Verdi's Requiem, Rossini's Peti e Messe Solonnelle, Zeliack Lurline for The National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland and Thomas will be making his Royal Opera debut singing the 4th Baron in Wagner's Lohengrin.

Thomas has performed the roles of; Viktor Anya 17 (Awayday Music Productions); Nettuno & Tempo Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria, Dulcamara L'elisir d'amore (RNCM Opera), Hans Foltz Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (The Hallé), Wagner Faust (Clonter Opera), Count Ceprano (cover) Rigoletto, Biterolf (cover) Tannhäuser (Longborough Festival Opera), Prince Gremin, Zaretsky & Commander Eugene Onegin, The Learned Judge Trial by Jury, Il Commendatore Don Giovanni (Opera on Location), Ferrando Il Trovatore (Opera Seria), Don John Much Ado About Nothing, Pains At The Boar's Head (Northern Opera Group), Sarastro Die Zauberflöte, Dr Grenvil La Traviata (Westminster Opera Company), Samuel (cover) Un Ballo in Maschera (Grange Park Opera), Marchese d'Obigny La Traviata (Al Bustan Festival, Lebanon) Monterone Rigoletto, Batone L'inganno Felice & The Caliph Mahadi The Veiled Prophet (Wexford Festival Opera) The Mourner Fantasio, Second Prisoner Fidelio & Le Gouverneur (cover) Le Comte Ory (Garsington Opera).

Thomas also works on the concert platform and has performed Beethoven's ninth symphony, Handel's Messiah, Brahms' Requiem, Tippett's A Child of Our Time, Mozart's Requiem, Faure's Requiem, Vaughan Williams' Fantasia on Christmas Carols, Haydn's The Creation, Rossini's Petite Messe Solonnelle, Buxtehude's Membra Jesu Nostri, Samuel in Handel's Saul, Elgar's The Dream of Gerontius, Levite in Handel's Solomon, Mozart's Mass in C Minor, Dvorak's Stabat Mater, Vaughan Williams' Dona nobis pacem, Verdi's Requiem and multiple Opera Galas.

La Petite Messe Solennelle – Text

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.

LORD HAVE MERCY

Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord
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.

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 iudicare 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.

O SALUTARIS HOSTIA

O salutaris Hostia,
quae coelis pandis ostium:
bella premunt hostilia
da robor fer auxilium.

AGNUS DEI

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

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 they glory,
Hosanna in the highest
Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord,
Hosanna in the highest.

O SAVING VICTIM

O saving Victim, open wide
The gate of Heaven to man below;
Our foes press on from every side;
Thine aid supply; Thy strength bestow.

LAMB OF GOD

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

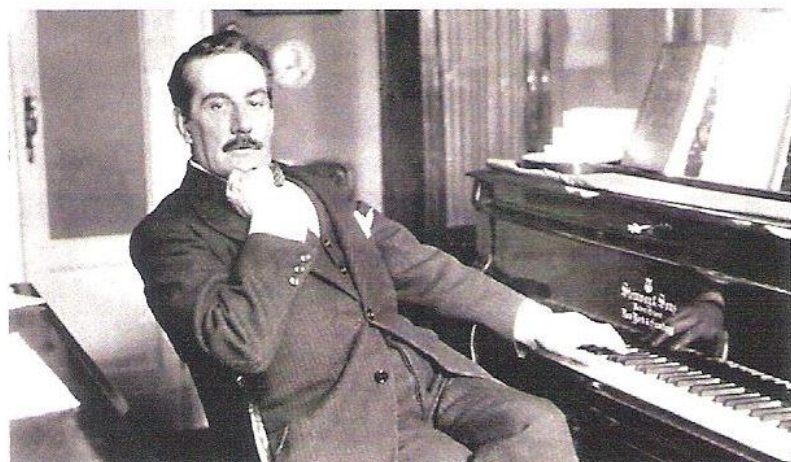
Andante maestoso (♩ = 108) Herausgegeben von Andreas Schenck

Harmonium *pppp*

Klavier *pppp* *stacc.*

5

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

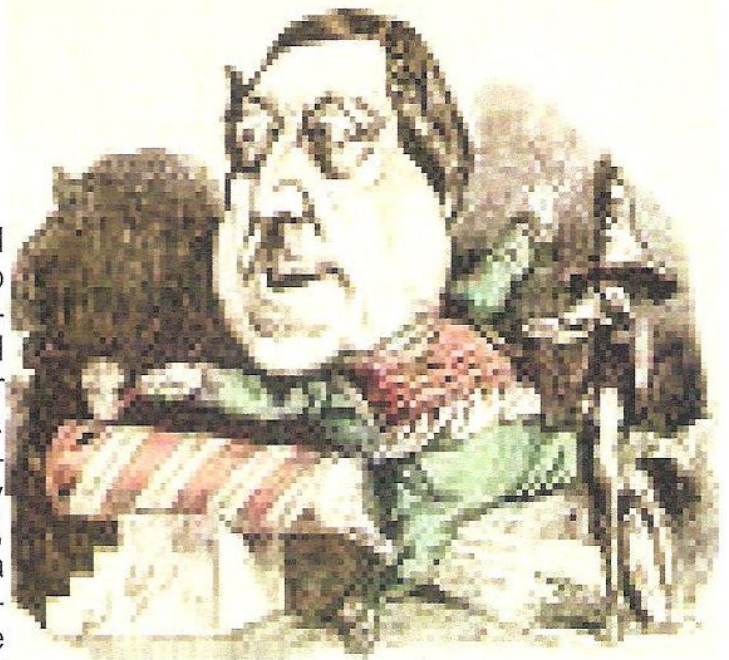
The mass is scored for 3 soloists, a mixed chorus and full orchestra and is divided into five movements.

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 "*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.

ROSSINI: LA PETITE MESSE SOLENNELLE



Rossini, (1792 - 1868), is remembered primarily for his immense contribution to the operatic repertoire, but he also produced two important pieces of sacred music that are notable, amongst other things, for their overtly operatic style. This incorporation of the music of the opera house into the sacred repertoire may appear to have been a bold innovation, but in terms of dramatic content it was a well-established practice. Most composers who were familiar with the theatre as well as the church used elements of

the operatic style in order to give their sacred compositions greater impact. A prime example is Handel, but the tradition goes back to Monteverdi, the first great opera composer, who even borrowed his own overture to *The Coronation of Poppea* for the opening movement of his 1610 Vespers.

Like so many of the great composers, Rossini was born into a musical family. His father was the town trumpeter in Pesaro and his mother an opera singer. Both parents worked in various theatres in the region, and from an early age Gioachino went with them. As a talented boy soprano he was soon in great demand, and by the time he had reached his teens he could play the viola and the horn and was rapidly acquiring a reputation as a first-rate harpsichord-player and pianist. He went on to study at the Bologna Academy of Music, composing his first professional commission in 1810, which led to a string of further commissions. With the enormous success of his first full-length opera, *Tancredi* (1812), and the even greater triumph of *The Italian girl in Algiers* (1813), he became celebrated throughout Italy and from then on his rise to fame was meteoric. He was still only 23 when he was engaged as Musical Director of the two opera houses in Naples, for each of which he was required to compose a new opera annually, the ever-popular *Barber of Seville* being one of the happiest results. Rossini was always greatly attracted to a life of leisure, and as he was of a somewhat indolent nature he would frequently put off until the last possible moment the completion of his latest commission. He would then work at an incredible speed; several of his operas were written in under three weeks, an astonishing feat by any standards.

In 1823 he left his native Italy and settled in Paris as Director of the Théâtre Italien. A string of new compositions followed, culminating in his acknowledged masterpiece, *William Tell*, completed in 1829 when he was still only 37. At this point Rossini's life changed dramatically. For no apparent reason he gave up composing, and apart from the *Stabat Mater* (1842) and the *Petite Messe Solennelle* (1863), he wrote nothing of significance during the last forty years of his life.

It may be that he had run out of energy and inspiration - *William Tell* had been his thirty-sixth opera in nineteen years - or perhaps simply that he was by now so immensely wealthy that he had no particular incentive to go on working. No doubt the premature death, in 1848, of his overworked Italian successor, Gaetano Donizetti, only confirmed Rossini's decision to 'abdicate' his crown.

He had a luxurious villa specially built for him at Passy, on the outskirts of Paris, where he was able to live the life of idleness and self-indulgence that, as a renowned gourmet

and bon vivant, he had always found so appealing. A visit to his villa was obligatory for every musician of importance visiting the capital, and here Rossini would hold court, entertaining everyone with his sparkling wit and good food, and revelling in the adulation of the constant stream of admirers and eminent visitors. Despite his withdrawal from the operatic world, he continued to be held in such enormous esteem that when he died 6,000 mourners, four military bands, a chorus of 400 singers and several of the finest opera soloists of the day attended his funeral.

"Dear God, there it is, finished, this poor little Mass".

"Is it really sacred music (*musique sacrée*) that I have made or is it merely abominable music (*sacrée musique*)? I was born for opera buffa, as you well know! A little skill, a little heart, that is all. So be blessed and admit me to Paradise." G Rossini – Passy 1863".

The Petite Messe Solennelle is the most substantial of the works written during Rossini's Indian summer of composition. Rossini noted on the title page: "Twelve singers of three sexes, men, women and castrati will suffice for its execution: that is, eight for the choir, four soloists, in all twelve cherubim". Castrati had, however, not recently been heard on a French stage; only the choir of Pope Pius IX still featured castrati. Rossini also insisted that female voices should be used, [not boys], but whilst this was fine for a private performance ladies were still forbidden to sing in church at this time.

Unusually it is scored for two pianos and harmonium, but given its context as a salon piece, such instrumentation is not unusual. The first performance of the piece was given in 1863 at the town house of the dedicatee, the Countess Louise Pillet Will. Among those present were the composers Giacomo Meyerbeer, Daniel Auber and Ambroise Thomas, and all those who attended agreed that, for all Rossini's protestations, the Mass represented a magnificent feat of creative self-renewal for the seventy-one-year-old composer. Shortly before his death in 1868 he orchestrated the work, anticipating that if he didn't do so someone else would, but he declared a preference for his original version. The orchestral version was in fact not performed in public until a year after his death, when it was presented at his Theatre Italiene.

On first hearing the *Petite Messe Solennelle*, the listener is reminded of a remark attributed to Napoleon III that "the piece is neither little, solemn nor especially liturgical in spirit". In common with the *Stabat Mater* of twenty years earlier it unashamedly operatic in style. The music ranges from hushed intensity to boisterous high spirits, and abounds in the memorable tunes and rhythmic vitality for which Rossini is justly famous. As he himself said, '*Delight must be the basis and aim of this art*', and that is what he has achieved – a work not of profound religious insight, but one that is a delightful, life-enhancing musical experience.

Kyrie Eleison

The opening section, set in ternary form, as might be expected is for choir only, and features dramatic dynamic contrasts, which establish its operatic mood at the outset. The A minor opening of the Kyrie Eleison contrasts sustained choral writing with a jaunty piano accompaniment. This soon gives way to a brighter mood as the music moves into the major key.

For the **Christe Eleison**, Rossini adopted a deliberately archaic style, echoing the unaccompanied polyphonic church music of Palestrina some 300 years earlier. As the second Kyrie unfolds, the opening section is repeated and developed

Gloria

The Gloria begins with a short fanfare-like introduction for chorus and soloists. This is followed by four extended solo movements that are clearly operatic in style.

Gratias animas tibi is set as a memorably expressive trio for mezzo, tenor and bass. **Domine deus** is a magnificent solo for tenor, whose confident march style reminds of the famous *Cujus animam* tenor solo of the *Stabat Mater*.

Qui tollis is set as a duet for the two ladies with a harp-like semi-quaver accompaniment for the piano. It is exquisitely crafted and demonstrates to perfection Rossini's instinctive understanding of the female voice.

Quoniam is an extended bass solo, whose piano introduction is somewhat reminiscent of Schubert, but the vocal line could quite easily have been stolen from one of Rossini's operas.

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Cum sancto spiritu in gloria Dei Patris, Amen. After a reprise of the opening fanfare-like figure, this is a real tour de force of musical craftsmanship: an extended fugue, reflecting the thorough classical training in harmony and counterpoint that Rossini received all those years ago at the Bologna Academy.

In the **Credo** Rossini ingeniously uses the word 'credo' as a unifying motif to which he repeatedly returns. It is interrupted by the **Crucifixus** which is set as a Soprano solo – her first solo opportunity in the Mass.

This section of the mass concludes with another brilliant fugue for the chorus, at the words **Et vitam venturi saeculi, Amen.**

Domine deus is a magnificent solo for tenor, whose confident march style reminds of the famous *Cujus animam* tenor solo of the *Stabat Mater*.

Qui tollis is set as a duet for the two ladies with a harp-like semi-quaver accompaniment for the piano. It is exquisitely crafted and demonstrates to perfection Rossini's instinctive understanding of the female voice.

Quoniam is an extended bass solo, whose piano introduction is somewhat reminiscent of Schubert, but the vocal line could quite easily have been stolen from one of Rossini's operas.

Cum sancto spiritu in gloria Dei Patris, Amen. After a reprise of the opening fanfare-like figure, this is a real tour de force of musical craftsmanship: an extended fugue, reflecting the thorough classical training in harmony and counterpoint that Rossini received all those years ago at the Bologna Academy.

In the **Credo** Rossini ingeniously uses the word 'credo' as a unifying motif to which he repeatedly returns. It is interrupted by the **Crucifixus** which is set as a Soprano solo – her first solo opportunity in the Mass.

This section of the mass concludes with another brilliant fugue for the chorus, at the words **Et vitam venturi saeculi, Amen.**

ere follows an extended piano /harmonium duet, the **Preludio Religioso**, which he composed some time earlier and included in his collection of music which he entitled "The Sins of my old age". It is not normally a part of the Mass, but perhaps Rossini included it to provide a solo opportunity for the harmonium.

The **Sanctus** is a short unaccompanied choral piece, which effectively contrasts the gentle *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* sections with the more joyful *Pleni sunt coeli*.

O salutaris hostia Like the Prelude, this was also originally one of the "Sins of my old age", which he decided to insert into his Mass. This text is not normally a part of the liturgy, but is often used as a hymn during the Mass or Benediction. Rossini used it as an opportunity to explore the unusual harmonies he was using in his piano pieces at the time. **Agnus Dei** Rossini chose to set this for mezzo-soprano (his favourite voice), and choir. It is moving and dramatic, and brings this quasi-operatic work to an appropriately luminescent and fitting climax.

OLDHAM CHORAL SOCIETY MEMBERS - 137th (2021-2022) SEASON

SOPRANO

Lorna Ashton***; Christine Birks***; Anne Bray; Jill Bromley***; Linda Butcher; Alison Coates; Mary Cockcroft; Lynn Cotton**; Mary Crossley; Valerie Dawson; Claire Ellis; Jill Hamnett; Mal Hardiker; Fiona Heston**; Kirsty Haugh;; Patricia Heaton; Margaret Hood*****; Sybil Lamb; Margaret Martin; June O'Grady; Louise Platts; Marjorie Richards***; Julia Robinson; Janet Roche; Elaine Shaw***; Caitlin Sinclair; Susan Smith; Sheila Tolley; Margaret Ulyatt, Christine Whitehead; Brenda Wildish.

ALTO

Janet Albiston**; Sylvia Andrew***; Pat Ashworth; Gillian Barker; Jo-Anne Dobbs; Chris Foley; Edna Gill; Patricia Golden; Christine Grime***; Maureen Harrison; Marjorie Hirst; Ann Joyce**; Caroline Knights; Janet Lindley; Iva Mottley; Nancy Murphy*****; Susan Padwell; Margaret Rawlins; Helen Rigby; Brenda Roberts; Eileen Scott; Lydia Seddon; Brenda Sharples; Judith Stott; Carol Ann Vaudrey**; Louise Whittaker; Elizabeth Wiener.

TENOR

Richard Blair; Derek Clutterbuck; Barry Cotton**; Lawrence Croft; John Dearden; Giles Dennis; John Doyle; Damien Gilmartin; Alan Jackson; Gerard Marsden; Rodney Porter; Alan Reeves; John Richards; Mike Rooke; Alan Scott; Philip Shaw***; Phillipa Whittaker; Keith Wiener**.

BASS

Christopher Barratt; Vincent Birtles; Philip Blanchard; Frank Boocock; Michael Clegg; Mike Edmunson; Peter Garrity; Bill Hardiker; Malcolm Hardy; Alan Haworth,, Peter Kerton; Tim Lynch; Terry Quinn**; David Shipp; Andrew Summers.

** - 20 years membership; *** 30 years membership; ***** 50 years membership.

..... Further Plans for 2022

June 2022:

Summer Concert

November 2022: at the RNCM

With the Manchester Beethoven Orchestra

Mussorgski - 'Pictures at an Exhibition

Haydn - 'Creation'

December 2022: in Oldham

Family Christmas Concert

More information:

www.oldhamchoral.org.uk

 **Oldham-Choral-Society**

If you enjoy singing and have wondered about joining a choir, why not come along and try? All are welcome!

Oldham Choral Society holds regular rehearsals:

Time and venue: Mondays 7.20-9.35 (with 15 minute interval) at Chadderton Town Hall, Garforth Street, OL9 6PY

For further details visit www.oldhamchoral.org.uk ; find us on Facebook or contact Gerard Marsden on 01706 558342

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