

Cantorum Choir
Rossini
Petite Messe Solennelle

plus
popular opera choruses and arias

Directed from the piano by
Murray Hipkin

Carole Wilson - (mezzo-soprano)
Tony Kraus - (Harmonium)

Sat 30 June 2001
Holy Trinity Church
Cookham

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CANTORUM CHOIR

Cantorum Choir was founded by Jonathan Miall in 1981, specifically to provide an alternative to choral society traditions. The choir draws its membership from about thirty experienced and talented musicians and has a quality which far exceeds most amateur choirs. Commitments have included many large and small-scale concerts, services at the Cathedrals of Guildford and Winchester and St. George's Chapel Windsor, and Christmas Concerts at the Royal Albert Hall in conjunction with the London based Alexandra Choir.

The choir has been involved in several professional recordings including Christmas Carols with Westminster Cathedral Choir and chorus numbers in an album of the musical *Wuthering Heights* with Lesley Garrett, Bonnie Langford and Dave Willetts. There have also been TV appearances in *Inspector Morse*, *At Home with Wendy Craig* and the BBC 2 series *Out and About*. Cantorum performed abroad for the first time in 1998 with a highly successful concert tour in Paris. Its next concert tour will be to Bruges in April 2001. The choir has a varied repertoire and covers a wide range of musical styles including some original works. Three carols have been specially written for the choir and two anthems/part songs dedicated to it. The majority of Cantorum's performances are in aid of charitable causes and to date it has helped to raise over £30,000.

The choir is most fortunate in having three fine conductors in Jonathan Miall, its founder and president, Sally Stafford, and tonight's conductor Murray Hipkin.

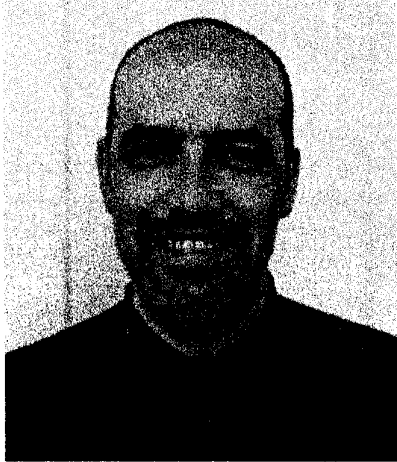
**For information about Cantorum Choir:
Forthcoming Concerts, Mailing List, Membership, Tickets etc:
Please contact Val Snaps on 01753 866479**





MURRAY HIPKIN (CONDUCTOR/PIANO)

Murray Hipkin was educated at York University, the Guildhall and the National Opera Studio before joining the Music Staff of English National Opera in 1983 for five seasons. Following a period of piano teaching and freelancing with Opera de Lyon, La Monnaie, Opera Factory, Scottish Opera and Opera Brava (as Musical Director), he returned to ENO in 1995 where he has been involved in numerous productions, notably *Nixon in China* and *Die Soldaten*. He has



appeared on stage leading the dance band in *The Silver Tassie* and as Schaunard's accompanist in Leoncavallo's *La boheme*. As assistant conductor, he has worked on *The Mikado*, *The Coronation of Poppea* and, most recently, *The Rape of Lucretia* at the 2001 Aldeburgh Festival. He works regularly for the Berkshire Young Musicians' Trust as conductor, adjudicator and accompanist, and recently conducted Bach's *Mass in B*

minor with the Cantorum Choir. He appeared with Bjork in *Pierrot unaire* at the 1996 Verbier Festival and recently worked with her in *Prayer of the Heart* by John Tavener. He has conducted *La boheme* for Surrey Opera and will conduct it for OperaBox this summer.

Murray Hipkin and Anthony Kraus are members of **English National Opera** and appear by permission.



**CANTORUM CHOIR
FORTHCOMING CONCERTS**



AUTUMN CONCERT

Saturday 13 October at All Saint's Church, Marlow
Programme to include Mozart Requiem

Conductor - Sally Stafford

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Sunday 16 December at Saint John the Baptist Church
Cookham Dean

Conductor - Sally Stafford

ANNOUNCEMENT

Telemed is pleased to announce it's AGM on Thursday 19 July at 7.45 p.m. All are welcome so please contact Sally Stafford on 01628 476448 if you would like to attend. Telemed has completed projects in four hospitals to date: Wycombe General, Stoke Mandeville, Wexham Park and Milton Keynes, and a further telemedicine link is about to be set up in the Royal Berkshire Hospital.





CAROLE WILSON (MEZZO-SOPRANO)

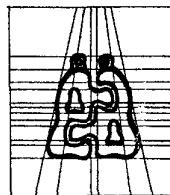


Carole Wilson began her training with soprano Judith Pierce while studying at the University of Kent in Canterbury. After graduating in English and French, she took further degrees in Drama and Music. In 1994 she won first prize at Aberteifi and at the international Eisteddfod at Llangolen. In 1997 she was admitted to the Fellowship of Tronoty

College London. She now studies with John Pryce-Jones. Carole began her professional career in 1995 with *Queen of Spades* and *Lulu* at Glyndebourne. Since then her roles have included Marcellina in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Adelaide in *Arabella*, Venus in *Tannhauser*, Amneris in *Aida*, Eboli in *Don Carlos*, Azucena in *Il Trovatore*, Ludmilla in *Bartered Bride* and Kabanicha in *Katya Kabanova*. Last season she performed Ulrica in *Un Ballo In Maschera* for Holland Park and Cuniza in *Oberto* for the Powys Music Festival. She sang the role of Herodias opposite the Salome of Dame Josephine Barstow in a series of Strauss gala concerts for Opera North. Her concerts have included *Elijah* in St David's Hall, Cardiff, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall and she recently performed *Il Pirata* at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. Last summer she made her debut with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in their Last Night of the Proms season at Osbourne House. This summer Carole performed *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Hampton Court Festival. Future engagements include a European radio broadcast of *Lakme* from the Concertgebowe, Amsterdam, *Verdi Requiem* with the Halifax Choral Society, Frau Wesener in *Soldaten* by Gurlitz for Opera de Nantes, Mrs Sedley in *Peter Grimes* for Trieste, and the Mayor's Wife in a new production of *Jenufa*, which will mark her Royal Opera debut.

ANTHONY KRAUS (PIANO/HARMONIUM)

Anthony Kraus trained at the Guildhall, where he won the Ricordi Prize for Conducting, and the National Opera Studio. Credits as repetiteur, coach and assistant conductor include concerts with the Jeunes Voix du Rhin, The Barber of Seville (Camberwell Pocket Opera), *Il trovatore* (Stowe Opera), *Carmen* (English Touring Opera), concerts for Opera Interludes in Russia, master classes with the Rossini Opera Festival Academia, Pesaro and piano accompaniment in the UK premiere of Barber's *Vanessa* at the Lyric, Hammersmith. He has played with the London Baroque Sinfonia and the Anton Bruckner Orchestra at the Barbican, St John's Smith Square and Wigmore Hall and has given solo organ recitals throughout London and the South West. He joined the Music Staff of English National Opera in January this year.



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The Cantorum Choir has a gift to inspire.

PROGRAMME

GIOACHINO ROSSINI PETITE MESSE SOLENNELLE

KYRIE

GLORIA

Gloria in excelsis

Laudamus te

<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Jo Parton</i>
<i>Alto</i>	<i>Eleanor Griffiths</i>
<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Malcolm Stork</i>
<i>Bass</i>	<i>Phil Parkinson</i>

Gratias

<i>Alto</i>	<i>Jo Parton</i>
<i>Tenor</i>	<i>John Paramore</i>
<i>Bass</i>	<i>Charles Luxford</i>

Domine Deus

<i>Tenor</i>	<i>John Paramore</i>
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Qui tollis

<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Valerie Snapes</i>
<i>Alto</i>	<i>Carole Wilson</i>

Quoniam

<i>Bass</i>	<i>Charles Luxford</i>
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Cum Sancto Spiritu

INTERVAL

CREDO

Credo in unum Deum

<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Susannah Riley</i>
<i>Alto</i>	<i>Viv Mitchell</i>
<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Malcolm Stork</i>
<i>Bass</i>	<i>Keri Dexter</i>

Crucifixus

<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Marianne Stork</i>
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Et resurrexit

<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Susannah Riley</i>
<i>Alto</i>	<i>Viv Mitchell</i>
<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Malcolm Stork</i>
<i>Bass</i>	<i>Keri Dexter</i>

Et vitam venturi

Prelude religieux

Ritournelle

SANCTUS

Sanctus

<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Valerie Snapes</i>
<i>Alto</i>	<i>Carole Wilson</i>
<i>Tenor</i>	<i>John Paramore</i>
<i>Bass</i>	<i>Charles Luxford</i>

O SALUTARIS

O salutaris

<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Genevieve Usher</i>
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AGNUS DEI

Agnus Dei

<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Carole Wilson</i>
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SHORT PAUSE

OPERA CHORUSES AND ARIAS

GIUSEPPE VERDI

Anvil Chorus (Vedi le fosche notturne) & Stride
la vampa
from *Il trovatore*

Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves (Va' pensiero)
from *Nabucco*

O don fatale (Eboli's aria) from *Don Carlos*
Soprano *Carole Wilson*

GIACOMO PUCCINI

Humming Chorus from *Madama Butterfly*

PIETRO MASCAGNI (1863-1945)

Easter Hymn from *Cavalleria rusticana*

GIOACHINO ROSSINI (1792-1868)

PETITE MESSE SOLENNELLE

Both of Gioachino Rossini's parents were professional musicians, and he displayed a precocious and prolific musical talent from an early age. His first operatic success came in 1812, with *La pietra del paragone*. Premiered at La Scala, it was one of 7 comic operas which he wrote within the space of only 16 months. After moving to Milan in 1815 (and, later, to Paris) Rossini turned his attention to serious opera, regularly completing at least two a year. Eventually this phenomenal work-rate took its toll: after the highly successful *William Tell* (1829), ill health forced Rossini to abandon opera writing and return to Italy.

In 1855, Rossini moved back to Paris, where he and his (second) wife established themselves at the heart of high society. They held regular *samedi soirs* – Saturday evening *musicales* – for which Rossini composed a substantial quantity of chamber music (arias, piano pieces, etc.), which he referred to as his 'sins of old age'.

Slowly, Rossini's health improved, and he was able to work throughout the summer of 1863 on the score of the *Petit messe solennelle*. Structurally, it is conceived on a grand scale: as in the larger masses of Haydn and Mozart, the Gloria and Credo are split up into a series of shorter movements. But its scoring – four soloists and a small chorus (originally only 8 singers), accompanied by two pianos and a harmonium – owes more to the chamber-music intimacy of the *samedi soirs*. The texture is surprisingly effective, with the idiomatic piano writing helping to create a variety of moods – from the unease of the opening 'Kyrie', to the tranquillity of the 'Gratias', or the unceasing energy of the 'Cum Sancto spiritu'.

Rossini agonised uncharacteristically over the mass, and at the end of the manuscript wrote, "Is it really sacred music I have written, or damned bad music?" He asked forgiveness from God, since he had been "...born for opera buffa, as you well know! Little technique, a little heart, that is all". The composer himself may have had personal reservations, but both audience and critics hailed the work as a masterpiece following its première on 14 March 1864.



The lyricism and drama of the solo arias – particularly 'Domine Deus' and 'Quoniam' – certainly owe much to Rossini's operatic past. The choruses are, on the whole, more serious in character; most are firmly rooted in the 'learned' tradition of mass writing which stretched back through Mozart to Bach, and beyond. The austere 'Christe eleison' carries echoes of Renaissance counterpoint, whilst 'Et vitam venturi' and 'Cum sancto spiritu' are both strict, and rousing, fugues. Indeed, Meyerbeer thought that the latter was "the finest composition of its kind ever written". In the twilight of his life, Rossini's genius shone brightly for one last time.

GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813-1901)

ANVIL CHORUS & 'STRIDE LA VAMPA'

Verdi's *Il trovatore* (premiered in 1853) is set in fifteenth century Spain. These two movements are taken from the start of Act II, which opens in a gypsy camp. After a busy introduction, the gypsy tinkers greet the approaching dawn in hushed tones ('Vedi le fosche'). As they set to work, beating their forges (hence its nickname, 'The Anvil Chorus'), they sing lustily in praise of the pleasures of work, wine, and women. But nearby, gypsy Azucena is in a darker mood. In 'Stride la vampa', she painfully recalls how her mother was burnt as a witch – the main catalyst for the events of the opera.

GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813-1901)

CHORUS OF THE HEBREW SLAVES (NABUCCO)

Premiered at La Scala on 9 March 1842, *Nabucco* was an instant triumph, catapulting Verdi to fame. It tells the biblical story of the Jews exile in Babylon in 536 BC. Mourning the loss of their homeland, and under imminent threat of massacre, the Hebrew slaves sing a paraphrase of psalm 137 ('By the waters of Babylon, we sat down and wept'). Sometimes haunting, at other times rousing, this chorus received such a reception at the première that it had to be repeated. It became an established favourite, and at Verdi's funeral the crowd broke into a spontaneous rendition of it.

GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813-1901)

O DON FATALE FROM DON CARLOS

Don Carlos, which is considered by many to be the greatest achievement of Verdi's late love affair with grand opera was first performed on 11th March 1867 at the Paris Opéra. In Don Fatale, Eboli has betrayed her Queen and friend Elizabeth to the King because her advances to Carlos have been rejected. In retaliation, Elizabeth gives her the choice of being exiled or becoming a nun. After she leaves, Eboli curses the gift of beauty that she has been given, saying that it has been the cause of all her problems. She swears to save Carlos from the imprisonment that has resulted from her betrayal.

GIACOMO PUCCINI (1858-1924)

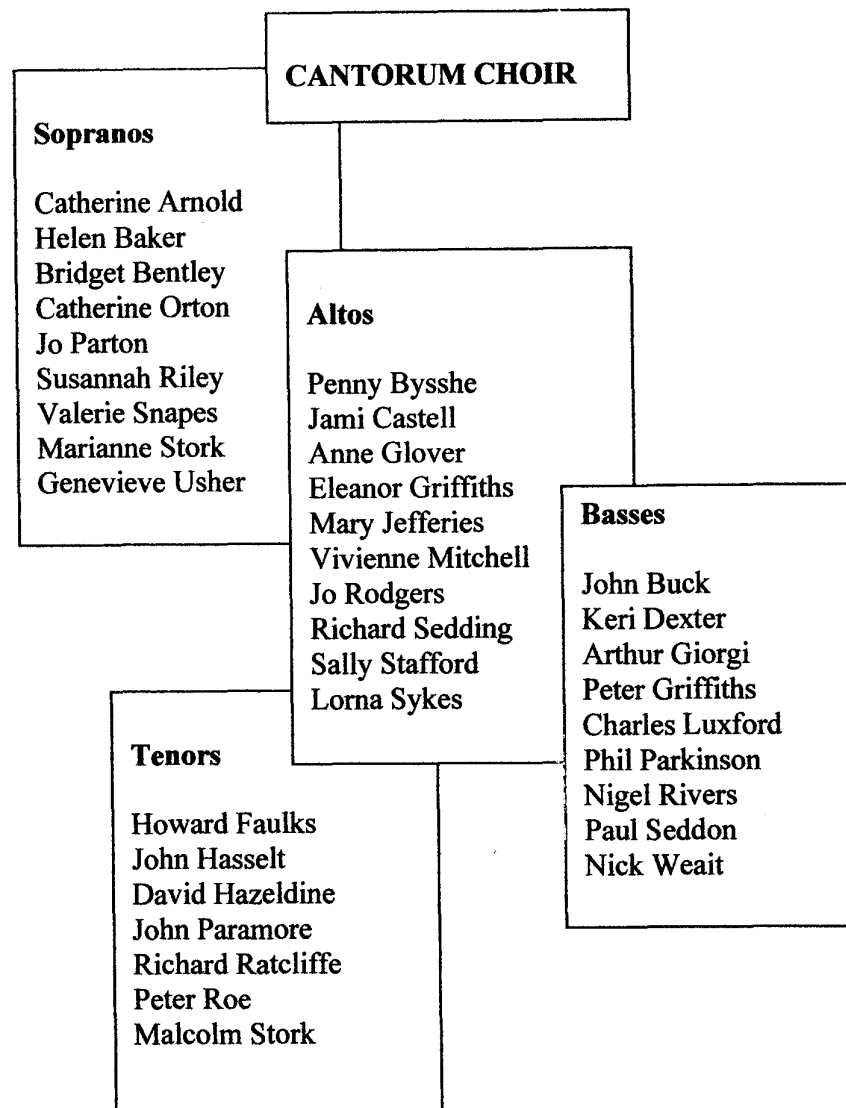
THE HUMMING CHORUS FROM MADAMA BUTTERFLY

First performed in 1904, *Madama Butterfly* was Puccini's favourite opera. Set in Nagasaki, it tells of the doomed love affair between an American naval officer, Pinkerton, and a Japanese geisha, Butterfly. When Pinkerton returns to Nagasaki, after three years duty abroad, his American wife accompanies him. When Butterfly hears of this, she refuses to believe it. The Humming Chorus is sung as she and her son sleep peacefully, with the moonlight streaming into their room. When she wakes the next day, she realises the truth, and – broken-hearted – she kills herself.

PIETRO MASCAGNI (1863-1945)

EASTER HYMN FROM CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA

Cavalleria rusticana was the winning entry in a competition run by an Italian music publisher in 1889, and was Mascagni's only operatic success. Often described as a folk opera, it is set in contemporary Sicily. It tells a story of love and betrayal, whose events unfold during Easter day. The 'Easter Hymn' summons the villagers to church early on Easter morning. The ethereal offstage choir represents the singers in the church; the energetic onstage choir the townsfolk gathering in the square outside. The chorus as a whole depicts the religious devotion, and feast-day ceremonial which was traditionally an important part of Catholic Mediterranean culture.





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And finally.....
Our thanks to the Rev Michael Smith,
of Holy Trinity, for the use of the
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