

HEXHAM ORPHEUS CHOIR

ROSSINI
PETITE MESSE SOLENNELLE



SATURDAY NOVEMBER 27TH 1999
7.30 PM

QUEEN ELIZABETH HIGH SCHOOL, HEXHAM

PROGRAMME - 50 PENCE





Hexham Orpheus Choir

Conductor: Glenn Davis

with

Marion Aitchison (Soprano)
Susan Davis (Mezzo-soprano)
Alan Watkinson (Tenor)
Robert Seaton (Bass)

Alison Chandler (Piano)
Camille Lazaro (Harmonium)

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

Petite Messe Solennelle

Rossini

Petite Messe Solennelle

1. Kyrie	(Choir)
2. Gloria	(Soloists and choir)
3. Gratias	(Trio for mezzo-soprano, tenor and bass)
4. Domine Deus	(Tenor solo)
5. Qui tollis	(Duet for soprano and mezzo-soprano)
6. Quoniam	(Bass solo)
7. Cum sancto spiritu	(Choir)

Interval

8. Credo	(Soloists and choir)
9. Crucifixus	(Soprano solo)
10. Et resurrexit	(Soloists and choir)
11. Religious Prelude	(Piano and harmonium)
12. Sanctus	(Soloists and choir)
13. O salutaris	(Soprano solo)
14. Agnus Dei	(Mezzo-soprano solo and choir)

The Hexham Orpheus Choir is affiliated to the National Federation of Music Societies with funds provided by Northern Arts.

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Born on February 29 in Pesaro, an Adriatic seaside resort, dying in Paris on November 13, 1868, Rossini's artistic life seems to fall into three phases. From the age of 18 to 39 he was the successful composer of opera, most notably 'The Barber of Seville' (1816). Following the performance of 'William Tell' (1829) Rossini retired from operatic composition. The middle period of his life (to 1856) was troubled by illness, insomnia and depression, (though he was still capable of scoring a triumph with the premiere of his Stabat Mater, finally finished in 1843). It was his return to Paris in 1855 that began a new phase. His apartment became the scene for a 10-year series of Saturday soirées for which he composed a string of short piano and vocal pieces, jokingly entitled "Sins of my old age." ('O salutaris' and the Religious Prelude in tonight's Mass first saw life in that form).

The Rossinis mixed in the social world of artists and composers (Liszt, Meyerbeer, Saint-Saens, Gounod and Verdi all attended the private evening concerts), together with the fashionable well-to-do of Paris. It was for one of their number, the Countess Pillet-Will (wife of a prominent banker) that Rossini composed his "Little Solemn Mass," first performed at the Pillet-Will's private chapel on March 14, 1864.

In an age of expanding orchestral forces and ever plus grandes messes, Rossini writes for 'petite' forces – piano and harmonium (popular in France) with twelve singers in the original performance. "Solennelle" may seem a typical Rossinian joke when listening to the tenor's extrovert Domine Deus, yet the grave Palestrina style counter-point of the 'Christe eleison', the "tragic eloquence" (Richard Osborne) of the 'Qui tollis' and the Agnus Dei all show that Rossini has much greater depths than the outward image (which he himself cultivated) of a bon viveur and wit. A composer "full of animal spirits, yet capable of the noblest gravity," in the words of Leigh Hunt, writing in 1850.

Don't miss the Millennium concert on
May 13th 2000, in Hexham Abbey, at 7.30 p.m.
This will be a joint performance of
Rossini's Stabat Mater and Brahms' Song of Destiny,
by the Hexham Orpheus Choir and the Priory Singers (Tynemouth)
and will be conducted by Glenn Davis.

Best wishes from Haydon & Allen Valleys Medical Practice

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