



Hexham Orpheus Choir

and

The Priory Singers

with an invited orchestra

led by Noel Broome

A CONCERT FOR THE MILLENNIUM

with

Linda Gerrard (Soprano)

Kathleen Wilkinson (Mezzo-soprano)

Huw Rhys-Evans (Tenor)

Robert Seaton (Bass)

Glenn Davis (Conductor)

Hexham Abbey

May 13th 2000, at 7.30pm

Supported by Millennium Festivals Awards for All



The Hexham Orpheus Choir and The Priory Singers are supported by the National Federation of Music Societies with funds provided by Northern Arts.

TONIGHT'S SOLOISTS

LINDA GERRARD (Soprano)

Linda's career, following her prize-winning years of study at the Royal Northern College of Music, has spanned much of Europe and the USA. This season she will also make her Canadian debut, singing *Messiah* in Hamilton. In concert she has sung works as varied as Handel's *La Resurrezione* (with Marc Minkowski and *Les Musiciens du Louvre*, on European tour), Bach's *Easter Oratorio* (with Roy Goodman) and Martinů's *Comedy on the Bridge* in St John's, Smith Square. In the operatic field she has sung First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* (with Pavilion Opera), Gilda in *Rigoletto*, and made her international debut in Bremen as Bellante in *Almira*. Linda has sung once before with the Priory Singers (Bach's solo cantata *Jauchzet Gott* and Vivaldi's *Gloria*), and it is a pleasure to welcome her to Hexham.

KATHLEEN WILKINSON (Mezzo-soprano)

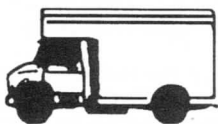
Again, a Royal Northern College prize-winning student in her native Lancashire, Kathleen went on to study in Florence (during which time she participated in a televised concert from Puccini's house). Further operatic experience has included the roles of Mercédès in *Carmen*, Anna in Jonathan Miller's staging of *Maria Stuarda* and (not neglecting operetta), Katisha in *The Mikado*. With Scottish Opera she created the role of Margaret Muir in David Horne's *Friend of the People*. Her concert work has included Elgar's *The Music Makers* and *Sea Pictures*, Verdi's *Requiem* and current engagements include Elijah in Southwell Minster with Willard White. We welcome her most warmly to Hexham.

HUW RHYS-EVANS (Tenor)

Also singing for the first time in Hexham, Huw has had a most varied operatic and concert career. He won the Blue Riband prize for the Singer of the Year at the Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales and studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Kenneth Bowen, then at the National Opera Studio. Huw is no stranger to Rossini, having sung Count Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville* (in South Africa) and Belfiore in *The Journey to Reims* (but sung at Versailles!) His Verdi experience includes Ismael in *Nabucco* (for Welsh National Opera), while Mozartian roles include Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* and Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*. In concert Huw has sang Evangelist in both of JS Bach's Passions, the B minor Mass (in Besançon) and *Messiah* (in the Royal Albert Hall). Like Linda, Huw recently sang Rossini's *Stabat Mater* in Westminster Abbey.

ROBERT SEATON (Bass)

Robert makes a welcome return to the Abbey after his acclaimed performance in Orff's *Carmina Burana* last year. He is well known in the North of England for his concert work. Major performances have included Beethoven's Ninth *Symphony*, Brahms' *German Requiem*, Rachmaninov's *The Bells* and Bloch's *Sacred Service*. His wide recital repertoire, including several performances with pianist Keith Swallow, embraces Lieder and French art song but with a special emphasis on British composers. He has sung successfully, in Welsh, at the Royal National Eisteddfod, and (more locally) has been a trusted friend and soloist for the Priory Singers since their foundation twenty years ago.



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Programme

THE CHOIR

<i>Never Weatherbeaten Sail</i>	(1915)	Parry
<i>What Voice of Gladness</i>	(1897)	

THE ORCHESTRA

<i>Overture: The Hebrides (Fingal's Cave)</i>	(1830)	Mendelssohn
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CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA

<i>Schicksalslied (Song of Destiny)</i>	(1871)	Brahms
Interval		

CHOIR, ORCHESTRA AND SOLOISTS

<i>Stabat Mater</i>	(1842, in its final form)	Rossini
(i) Stabat Mater dolorosa	(Soloists and choir)	
(ii) Cujus animam gementem	(Aria for Tenor)	
(iii) Quis est homo	(Duet for Soprano and Mezzo-soprano)	
(iv) Pro peccatis	(Aria for Bass)	
(v) Eia mater, fons amoris	(Bass solo and choir)	
(vi) Sancta mater, istud agas	(Soloists)	
(vii) Fac ut portem	(Cavatina for Mezzo-soprano)	
(viii) Inflammatus et accensus	(Soprano solo and choir)	
(ix) Quando corpus morietur	(Choir)	
(x) In sempiterna saecula, Amen	(Choir)	

(The dates refer to the first performance of the work)

As we move into a new millennium, in an age when many, both inside and outside of the musical world, feel a sense of uncertainty after the death of so many traditions in the twentieth century, it is instructive to look at the nineteenth century Romantic era which embraces all of tonight's music. Despite the stereotyped association of the century with "progress" it is remarkable how many of tonight's composers also looked back. Parry, Rossini, Mendelssohn and Brahms were all devoted to the music of JS Bach. Brahms, in particular, studied the music of a whole series of past masters from Beethoven back to the Renaissance, while Rossini's other god was Mozart. The *Stabat Mater* itself was a mediaeval poem devoted to Mary's grief at the crucifixion. Rossini greatly admired the famous Baroque setting by Pergolesi, and he, like Brahms in the *Schicksalslied*, tries to evoke the sound-world of the Renaissance by setting two sections of the text for unaccompanied voices (v and ix). The fugue which ends the concert (x) is again a salute to past traditions. Parry's opening text is by the Elizabethan/Jacobean artist Thomas Campion, while *Fingal's Cave* looks even further back to the (pseudo) Celtic legend of the bard Ossian.

Nevertheless each piece is of its age too. The Rossini is full of the melodrama of contemporary grand French opera (Rossini had moved to Paris in the 1820s, with *William Tell* as the most famous product of this period). That 'music theatre' was considered normal for Italian church music is confirmed by Rossini's eventual funeral. The music for his Requiem Mass was provided by hit tunes from his operas, suitably (?) adapted to the text! Likewise the "philosophy" behind Mendelssohn's overture – the romantic evocation of nature (the sea, in this case, obviously) and behind the Brahms; his use of a text from Hölderlin expressing the uncertainty that at least some thinking adults may have felt about man's place on earth in the nineteenth century, seems firmly of its era. It is this blend of the past with the present that makes tonight's varied programme so successful musically and, we hope, enjoyable.

THE CHOIR

SOPRANOS

Claire Anderson
 Sarah Barker
 Anne Bartle
 Evelyn Blenkinsop
 Dorothy Booker
 Ruth Brownlee
 Barbara Child
 Elspeth Christie
 Lesley Crinson
 Anne Firth
 Val Goldthorpe
 Audrey Guthrie
 Kathryn Hope
 Frances Hughes
 Adèle Kinsella
 Sabrina Lyall
 Leila McDermott
 Sylvia McDougale
 Helen McKenna
 Margaret McNaught
 Catherine McNaught
 Anne Otter
 Elaine Rigg
 Gwyneth Robinson
 Nuala Rose
 Eleanor Tipple
 Brenda Waton
 Margaret Wheeler
 Carrie Winger

ALTOS

Margaret Bainbridge
 Margaret Barker
 Pam Beattie
 Marie Bridges
 Joy Campbell
 Pat Crompton
 Sheila Dance
 Margaret Danskin
 Mary Davis
 Susan Davis
 Jean Fisher
 June Gibbon
 Thelma Gilhespy
 Jean Hartwell
 Eileen Hedley
 Norma Holmes
 Val Hooker
 Anne Humphreys
 Sylvia MacKay
 Shelagh May
 Alison Mood
 Dorothy Peters
 Judith Renwick
 Eleanor Rigby
 Pat Rose
 Vicky Scurfield
 Betty Stevens
 Catherine Stott
 Elizabeth Young

TENORS

John Ahlstedt
 John Barker
 David Barraclough
 Ken Bartle
 Ronald Bridgett
 Malcolm Chainey
 Andrew Clarence
 Val Cowan
 Colin Dales
 Tom Frost
 Mike Walker

BASSES

Don Beattie
 Julian Boyfield
 Richard Dixon
 Robert Firth
 Nick Gibson
 Tim Grew
 Peter Kelly
 Owen McArdle
 Tom McCoulogh
 Keith Mallinson
 Tony May
 Simon Partridge
 Keith Sargeant
 Ernest Scott
 Peter Stott
 Richard Taylor
 Jim Teasdale
 Larry Winger

Rehearsal pianists: Margaret Huntington & Andrew Soulsby

THE ORCHESTRA

Violins

Noel Broome
 (Leader)
 Pauline Aitchison
 Emma Davis
 Pauline Fowler
 Clare Gates
 Elspeth Scott
 Judith Thompson
 Ruth Turner
 Kathryn Wakefield
 Nicola Weaver
 Helen West
 Karen Wigham

Violas

Anne Greaves
 Jonathan Rutter
 Ian Whaley

Cellos

Deborah Chandler
 Nigel Chandler
 Peter Richardson
 Julie Watson

Basses

Alan Johnson
 Eleanor Kenyon

Flutes

Brian Stewart
 Christine Ring

Oboes

David Tomson
 Robin Crinson

Clarinets

Jennifer Murray
 Ann Francomb

Bassoons

Harriet Gilfillan
 Philip Noble

Horns

Tony Fairley
 David Milner
 Helen Walker

Trumpets

Alan Docherty
 Gary Lancaster

Trombones

Allan Bravey
 Paul Cooper
 John Flood

Timpani

Vivien Wilkinson