



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 Almavira 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 *Cosi 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) <i>Stabat Mater dolorosa</i>	(Soloists and choir)	
(ii) <i>Cujus animam gementem</i>	(Aria for Tenor)	
(iii) <i>Quis est homo</i>	(Duet for Soprano and Mezzo-soprano)	
(iv) <i>Pro peccatis</i>	(Aria for Bass)	
(v) <i>Eia mater, fons amoris</i>	(Bass solo and choir)	
(vi) <i>Sancta mater, istud agas</i>	(Soloists)	
(vii) <i>Fac ut portem</i>	(Cavatina for Mezzo-soprano)	
(viii) <i>Inflammatus et accensus</i>	(Soprano solo and choir)	
(ix) <i>Quando corpus morietur</i>	(Choir)	
(x) <i>In sempiterna saecula, Amen</i>	(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
Elsbeth Christie
Lesley Crinson
Anne Firth
Val Goldthorpe
Audrey Guthrie
Kathryn Hope
Frances Hughes
Adèle Kinsella
Sabrina Lyall
Leila McDermott
Sylvia McDougle
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 McCouloch
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
Elsbeth 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

Trombones

Allan Bravay
Paul Cooper
John Flood

Timpani

Vivien Wilkinson