

Lancaster Singers

Sunday 13th June 2010 at 7.30pm

St Peter's Church, Scorton

Director: Marco Fanti

Organist: Ian Pattinson

present a concert including

Kodály, *Missa Brevis*

Palestrina, *Missa Brevis*

In support of the Organ Restoration Project, St Peter's Church, Scorton



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Welcome to Lancaster Singers' concert tonight in the beautiful Church of St Peter's, Scorton. Under the leadership of our director, Marco Fanti and accompanied by organist Ian Pattinson, we will be performing music exclusively from the 16th and the 20th centuries. The first section of the concert will be devoted to an organ solo and choral music by Zoltán Kodály. After a (short) interval, we will continue in 20th century mode with two organ solos by Messiaen. The last section of the concert is devoted to music from the 16th century with the Tudor anthems of Weelkes and Tallis, and we will conclude with Palestrina's *Missa Brevis*.

Zoltán Kodály (1882 – 1967)

***Praeludium* (1931)** organ solo

[any notes from Ian?]

Zoltán Kodály (1882 – 1967)

***Missa Brevis* (1944)**

Introitus

Kyrie

Gloria

Credo

Sanctus

Benedictus

Agnus

Ite Missa Est



Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967) grew up in rural Hungary, where he became acquainted with the rich tradition of Hungarian folk music which was to play such an important part in his musical life. He had little formal music training as a boy, but still managed to play the piano, violin, viola and cello and to sing in the choir school. When he was at Budapest University, where he studied Hungarian and German, he also enrolled in the Hungarian Academy of Music to study composition. While there, he met Bela Bartók who became a lifelong friend and collaborator.

As a composer, Kodály was influenced by folksong, Bach, Palestrina, plainchant, Debussy and 17th century Hungarian dance music. His biographer, László Eöszé, said that Zoltán Kodály ‘... sums up, in his own idiom, the whole tradition of European sacred music, from Gregorian Chant through Palestrina and Bach to the great Romantics of the nineteenth century’. He was also influenced by the music of the church, saying that ‘... the words of the mass ... were for him of particular poetic significance and all-embracing’.

Kodály’s first success as a composer came with the premiere of *Psalmus Hungaricus* in 1923. He shared the anguish of his fellow Hungarians that Hungary had been divided into several parts after World War 1. *Psalmus Hungaricus* was written in protest and is a poignant expression of the outrage they felt.

Missa Brevis was composed between 1942 and 1944. The whole process took place during the occupation of Hungary by the Nazis and their subsequent expulsion by the Soviets. Kodály and his wife were living first in the basement of a convent in Budapest and then in a bomb shelter of the State Opera House. The first performance of the *Missa Brevis* in 1945 was in a cloakroom of the Opera House, converted into a concert hall for the occasion. The subtitle of the work is *Tempore Belli* (in time of war).

Missa Brevis is an eight-movement work, with the final four movements each referring to earlier material. It centres on D, but is occasionally tonally ambiguous. The melodies weave from one section to another. The *Introitus*, centred on D minor, introduces the main melody, which occurs again in the *Kyrie*. A duet between altos and basses opens the *Kyrie*, followed by three soprano soloists and responsorial choir parts, finally returning to the original *Kyrie* melody. The *Gloria* opens with a traditional plainchant. *Laudamus te* is announced boldly with a sort of fanfare. The alto solo, in contrast, is a

beautiful, calm yet plaintive appeal for mercy. This is followed by the joyful *Quoniam tu solus Sanctus* and a long descending choral line for the Amen. *Credo* is introduced by alto and bass voices in plainchant. After the quiet intonation of *Et incarnatus est*, the *Crucifixus* crashes in with big chords, suggesting turmoil. The dance rhythm in *Et resurrexit* echoes the feelings of optimism and joy in contrast to the solemn *Et sepultus est*. There is a return to the movement's first melody, which might be interpreted as an affirmation of faith. In *Sanctus*, there is a return to the main melody from *Credo* in *Pleni sunt caeli et terra*. The *Hosanna* is very jubilant. In *Benedictus*, introduced by the altos, there is a return to the *Hosanna* of *Sanctus*. In *Agnus Dei* there are three main musical threads: the 4-note motive of *Agnus Dei*, the melody from *Gloria* in *Qui tollis* and a return to the material from *Kyrie* in *Dona nobis pacem*. The ending, with the unusual repetition of *Dona nobis pacem*, must have been particularly poignant, considering the background at the time of the composition of the *Missa Brevis*. The work concludes with *Ite Missa est* played on the organ.

⌘ ⌘ ⌘ **Interval** ⌘ ⌘ ⌘

Refreshments will be served

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

***Les Bergers* (from *La Nativité du Seigneur*, 1935)** organ solo

[any notes from Ian?]

Olivier Messiaen

***Joie et clarté des corps glorieux* (from *Les Corps Glorieux*, 1939)** organ solo

[any notes from Ian?]

Thomas Weelkes (c. 1575-1623)

Gloria in excelsis



Thomas Weelkes was appointed organist at Winchester Cathedral. His first book of madrigals was published when he was a very young man. After graduating from Oxford University, he was appointed organist and *informator choristarum* (instructor of the choristers) at Chichester Cathedral. It seems that Weelkes' employment by the Church authorities was somewhat fraught with difficulties caused by his unusual behaviour: it was said that he came to church drunk and swore profanely during the services. He was reprimanded and forgiven on several occasions. All this did not seem to interfere with his musical creativity; he wrote more Anglican services than any other major composer of the time, mainly for Evensong. The Tudor anthem, *Gloria*, with a bilingual text, is written for six voices.

Thomas Tallis (c. 1505 – 1585)

O nata lux (motet for five voices)



Thomas Tallis faced great liturgical tumult in his musical career, which spanned the Latin liturgy of pre-Reformation, the Reformation, counter-Reformation and the reformed Protestant liturgy of Elizabethan times. He had to switch from the Latin rite to the vernacular more than once. Finally, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, he composed both in Latin and in English. His

O nata lux de lumine probably dates from this period. The text of this motet comes from an anonymous hymn from the tenth century. Tallis took only two of the seven verses from the original hymn, which had served Office of Lauds during the morning of the Feast of the Transfiguration. The 'light of lights' referred to in the motet is a reference to the Gospel account of the transfiguration, when Jesus appeared to the disciples in a vision of shimmering light. Tallis creates a harmonically vibrant devotion with some dissonance, shocking at the time, which may possibly suggest the difficulties inherent in the prayer.

*O nata lux de lumine,
Jesu redemptor saeculi,
Dignare clemens supplicum
Laudes precesque sumere.*

O Light born of Light,
Jesus, redeemer of the world,
with loving-kindness deign to receive
suppliant praise and prayer.

*Qui carne quondam contegi
Dignatus es pro perditis,
Nos membra confer effici
Tui beati corporis.*

Thou who once deigned to be clothed
in flesh
for the sake of the lost,
grant us to be members
of thy blessed body.

Palestrina (1525 – 1594)

Missa Brevis



Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina took his name from the town in which he was born. He spent most of his life in Rome, first as a chorister and later in 1551 as *maestro di cappella* of the papal choir at St Peter's Basilica. His first published book of Masses made such a favourable impression on Pope Julian III that he appointed Palestrina musical director of the Julian Chapel. In this period, there was a lot of controversy swirling around about sacred music. The Council of Trent proclaimed that the polyphony, popular at the time, was in danger of obfuscating the meaning of the words and advocated a less

'frivolous' approach to music of the liturgy, making it more accessible to the general population. In Palestrina's immense output (he wrote 105 masses, not to mention motets and other works) there was one mass, *Missa Papae Marcelli* (Pope Marcellus Mass), which was warmly welcomed by the Church authorities. This mass was one of the first examples of a new, more structured and direct style, making the text clearly audible, despite the fact that Palestrina had written it for six voices, weaving the various strands into a clear texture.

The same concern for clarity in sacred music was expressed in the papal edict *Motu Proprio* of 1903, when the then Pope, Pius X, again advocated simplicity and stressed the virtues of the Gregorian chant and of the classical polyphony of the age of Palestrina: 'Sacred music should ... possess, in the highest degree, the qualities proper to the liturgy, and precisely *sanctity* and *goodness of form*, from which its other character of *universality* spontaneously springs'. The plea was for universal, rather than national, appeal. Interestingly enough, when Kodály wrote the *Missa Brevis*, he demonstrated an acceptance of the *Motu Proprio*. Another composer similarly influenced was Olivier Messaien (1908-1992), whose compositions for organ appear earlier in the concert.

Palestrina's *Missa Brevis* is sometimes compared to his more famous *Missa Papae Marcelli*. The five movements of the *Missa Brevis* are linked by a common mode, the F mode with B flat and by repeated motives and musical gestures. The *Kyrie*, introduced by the altos, has a sevenfold opening imitation with the outer parts sometimes singing in tenths. The *Gloria* opens chordally with voices often paired together on the same words. There is a dramatic slowing down at '*Jesu Christe*', in bars 25 and 62, as an expression of respect. The *Credo* features a striking chordal homophony at its heart: *Et incarnatus est*. In the *Sanctus*, Palestrina quotes the same chant melody as the *Missa Papae Marcelli*. The mass is completed with two *Agnus Dei*, the first introduced by the altos and the second by the sopranos.

In a letter written to the Duke of Mantua, Palestrina assesses the latter's composition of a motet and tactfully makes suggestions for improvement. This tells us something about Palestrina's aesthetic creed: that contrapuntal technique alone does not produce really good music; sound must satisfy the ear and words must speak with clarity and affective force in music. The *Missa Brevis* can be seen as the magnificent realisation of his own principles.

Scorton St Peter`s Organ

The organ is of considerable historical significance and was awarded Grade II listed status by the British Institute of Organ Studies in June 2008 under its Historic Organs Certificate Scheme. The organ dates from the time of completion of the church itself in 1879. The builder was John Nicholson of Worcester, whose father first established the organ building business in Rochdale. John Nicholson left Lancashire in 1840 to set up business in Worcester, and the next time he returned to Lancashire to work was in 1861 when he was responsible for building the organ in Manchester Cathedral.

There is no formal published work on John Nicholson but his notebooks and handwritten lists were published in the late 1880s and Scorton St. Peter appears as having been built in 1879. There is little evidence of any other work by this builder in the area. The organ is therefore regarded as being historically important. The casework of the organ is of conservative design, typical of Nicholson, but the superstructure itself was designed by the well known Lancaster architects, Paley and Austin, who also designed the church.



Marco Fanti

Marco Fanti became Musical Director of the Lancaster Singers in September 2009. Born and educated in Bologna he holds degrees in Music, Classics and Linguistics and is currently Professor of Music at the University of Bologna, specialising in 18th century choral music and music education. He also teaches literature at a High School in Mantova.

As well as conducting the Lancaster Singers, Marco directs the Coro Athena in Bologna, and its children's choir Piccolo Coro Athena. In September 2010 he will take up the post of Musical Director of the Preston Cecilian Choral Society.

Ian Pattinson

Ian Pattinson has been Organist at Lancaster Priory since 2001. He studied the organ at Birmingham Conservatoire and was organ scholar at St Philip's Anglican Cathedral in Birmingham before becoming organ scholar and later Assistant Organist at Blackburn Cathedral. In 2002 he achieved the distinction of Fellow of the Royal College of Organists.

Ian teaches organ and piano and also works extensively in Lancashire and Cumbria as a recitalist, and accompanist to soloists and choral societies.

LANCASTER SINGERS

Sopranos

Liz Eddington
Margaret Fancy
Joan Guénault
Barbara Hacking
Allison Hui
Andrea King
Jean Morris
Pamela Nickols
Harriet Pollock
Marilyn Pooley
Lauren Proctor
Hermione Roff
Trixi Schirok-Huggett
Lindsay Ward
Terry Wareham
Heather Willes
Sheila Wolfendale
Louise Wood

Altos

Vivienne Bonnett
Maggie Bremner
Jo Burrow
Doreen Champness
Mavis Fletcher
Emma Gallon
Anne Garden
Brenda Harding
Janet Hopkins
Ruth Hutchison
Sarah Jackson
Serena Lailey
Sally Richardson
Gillian Sheath
Annik Taylor
Jean Wangermann

Tenors

Graham Bartram
Peter Entwistle
John Falkingham
Tony Guénault
Douglas Lee
Peter Sampson
Richard Williams

Basses

Paul Barker
David Brooks
Chris Haughton
David Hopkins
Charlie Lewis
Berwyn Morris
John Nickols
John Shepherd

Friends of Lancaster Singers:

*Len Fletcher
Brian Hopkins
Beryl Kilpatrick
Audrey Mitton
Dick White
Pamela White
Mrs E Cole*

Corporate Friends:

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Lancaster Singers would be delighted to welcome you as a member of our Friends' Association. Please pick up an Application Form at this concert or contact Lauren Proctor for further details.

Tel: 07966 924087. E-mail: lancsingers@googlemail.com

Lancaster Singers would like to express thanks to the Vicar and Church Warden of Scorton St Peter's for their help with this concert, and their appreciation for the services of the Lancashire County Library in providing music. Thanks also to our rehearsal accompanist Allison Hui.



2010-11 season

Inspiring choral music: masterworks from Austria, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

In the forthcoming season, the Lancaster Singers will be performing several fine masterworks of choral music, presenting a mixture of well-known and seldom-performed works. A special feature of the concerts will be music for double choir, and each concert will be devoted to a specific geographical area.

Saturday 20th November 2010, Lancaster Priory, 7.30pm

Austrian and German composers, including:

W. C. Gluck, *De Profundis* (first modern performance in the UK)

R. Schumann, *Vier Doppelchörige Gesänge*, op.141 (to celebrate the bicentenary of Schumann's birth in 1810)

F. Schubert, *Deutsche Messe*, in the original version for organ and choir.

Other dates:

14 and 17 December 2010 – Christmas concerts, Ashton Memorial Lancaster

19 March 2011 – Morecambe Parish Church

11 June 2011 – Fulwood Methodist Church

12 June 2011 – Christ Church Lancaster

2011 will be the 35th anniversary of the founding of the Lancaster Singers. To mark this occasion we will be undertaking a tour in Italy and will record our first CD.

haffnerorchestra

Saturday 26 June 2010 7.30 pm

Ashton Hall, Town Hall, Dalton Square, Lancaster

Conductor: Natalia Luis-Bassa
Soloist: Amy Harman (Bassoon)
Leader: Julian Cann

6:30 p.m. Pre-concert talk by Amy Harman (no charge)

Elgar	<i>Salut d'Amour</i>
Weber	<i>Bassoon Concerto</i>
Tchaikovsky	<i>Symphony No 5</i>

Buy tickets online at www.haffnerorchestra.org, from Lancaster Visitor Information Centre, Meeting House Lane, Morecambe VIC, or at the door. Tel. 01524 582394 (credit card sales) or 01524 65531.

£11.50 (£10 concessions), 18 and under free.

November concert: Saturday 6 November 2010

Handel	<i>Music for the Royal Fireworks</i>
Mozart	<i>Clarinet Concerto</i> (soloist Janet Hilton)
Beethoven	<i>Symphony no 7</i>