



WIMBLEDON CHAMBER CHOIR

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Supported by

The Humphrey Richardson Taylor
Charitable Trust

ST MARY'S CHURCH, MERTON PARK
Saturday, 4 December 2021 at 7.30pm



Tamara Ravenhill (soprano)
Alexandre Garziglia (tenor)
Steven Neugarten (piano)

Lorna Perry (mezzo soprano)
Crispin Lewis (bass)
Peter Smith (conductor)

PETITE MESSE SOLENNELLE

Giachino Rossini (1792-1868)

Up to the age of 37, Rossini had a spectacularly successful career as a composer of operas. While his comic operas, especially *The Barber of Seville*, remain popular, his serious operas are performed less often nowadays, though the overture to *William Tell* remains a perennial favourite. In 1830, for reasons which have never been explained satisfactorily, he announced his intention to write no more operas. In 1832 he composed a setting of the *Stabat Mater* for chorus, soloists and orchestra, but thereafter he wrote little until his old age, when he composed a number of mainly short pieces for private performance, which he dubbed "the sins of my old age". The largest of these was the *Petite Messe Solennelle*, apparently written to a commission from a friend.

The official title of the piece is *Messe Solennelle*, the soubriquet "Petite" deriving from a typically flippant comment by the composer. It is of course not small, nor particularly solemn. Indeed it is difficult to know how seriously Rossini took his religion: the tempo marking of the *Credo* ("Allegro Cristiano") might suggest that his tongue was not too far from his cheek.

The Mass was originally accompanied by two pianos and harmonium. (At the first performance Rossini himself acted as page-turner for one of the pianists.) The second piano part largely reinforces the first, and the harmonium adds colour, but does not play a fundamental role, so a performance with solo piano loses very little. The style of the music is, as would be expected, operatic, but Rossini does include two lengthy fugues (*Cum Sancto Spiritu* and *Et Vitam*) to show off his contrapuntal skills. As well as the six sections of the Ordinary of the Mass, Rossini added a setting of *O Salutaris Hostia*, a hymn often sung during the liturgical Mass.

(the words of the Mass appear on a separate sheet, apart from the O Salutaris – see over)

PETITE MESSE SOLENNELLE

Kyrie: Soloists and chorus

Gloria: Soloists and chorus

Gratias agimus: Trio (mezzo, tenor and bass)

Domine Deus: Tenor solo

Qui tollis: Duet (soprano and mezzo)

Quoniam: Bass solo

Cum sancto spiritu: Soloists and chorus

Interval (15 minutes)

Credo: Soloists and chorus

Crucifixus: Soprano solo

Et resurrexit: Soloists and chorus

Preludio religioso: Piano solo

Sanctus: Soloists and chorus

O salutaris: Soprano solo

O salutaris hostia
quae caeli pandis ostium,
bella premunt hostilia:
da robur, fer auxilium

*O saving Victim! opening wide
The gate of heaven to man below,
Our foes press hard on every side,
Thine aid supply, thy strength bestow.*

Agnus Dei: mezzo solo and chorus

Wimbledon Chamber Choir

Soprano

Rosalind Boxall
Steffi Campbell Smith
Sally Carter
Susan Clark
Geraldine Hine
Liz Verran
Rosemary Wilson

Alto

Susan Andrew
Margaret Austen
Heather Blake
Alison Emblow
Lorna Nunn
Joanne Salibi
Mary Sandbrook

Tenor

Peter Clark
Frederick Irvine
John Mitchell
Susan White

Bass

Christopher Baker
Andrew Black
Peter Campbell Smith
Kevin Hollands
Neville Squires

Next Concert

Saturday 2 April 2022 at 7.30pm

St. Matthews Church, Durham Road SW20 0DE

Concert with orchestra

To include:

Joseph Haydn Maria Theresa Mass

and music by Michael Haydn, Purcell Mozart and Albinoni

To join our email mailing list, please contact wimbledonchamber@virginmedia.com

Wimbledon Chamber choir gratefully acknowledges the support of the H R Taylor Charitable Trust.