

Programme

Buxtehüde (1637-1707) - Magnificat

Three Ave Marias:

Parsons (c. 1530-1570) - Ave Maria

Rachmaninov (1873-1943) - Bogoroditsye Dyevo

Mendelssohn (1809-1847) - Ave Maria

JS Bach (1685-1750) Chorale Prelude on 'Kyrie, Gott heilliger Geist' BWV 671 (Organ - Michael Howell)

Gorecki (1933-) - Totus Tuus Sum, Maria

INTERVAL

Tavener (1944-) - Hymn to the Mother of God and Hymn to the Dormition of the Mother of God

Two Ave Maris Stellas:

Monteverdi (1567-1643)- Ave Maris Stella from the Vespers of 1610

Grieg (1843-1907) - Ave Maris Stella

Howell - Centenary Toccata (Organ - Michael Howell)

Two Salve Reginas:

Palestrina (c. 1525-1594) - Salve Regina

Villette (1926-1998) - Salve Regina

Lauridsen (1943-) - O Magnum Mysterium

Many thanks to our accompanist Michael Howell

Tamesis is:

Sopranos

Heidi Cherry

Rachel Burgess

Rachel Butler

Sarah Dance

Penny Firshman

Lara Savory

Susie Solway

Tamsyn Wilson

Tenors

Tim Beavan

Andy Button

David Carter

Simon Eastwood

Jason Murray

Nick Wright

Basses

Philip Bysh

Reuben Casey

Christopher Cipkin

John Cobb

David Firshman

Eric Hansen

Austin Jacobs

Stephen Nichols

Jeremy Robson

Altos

Sarah Banks

Hilary Benson

Sarah Finch

Charlie Hodgkinson

Paula Nichols

Liz Rapple

Chloë Robson

Acknowledgements

Our grateful thanks go to the authorities at the Minster for providing us with such a lovely venue.

Tamesis Chamber Choir aims to offer something different from the choirs currently performing in the area. We are a high-standard, fun chamber choir performing several concerts per year. We re-audition formally each September but do also have vacancies during the year so if you are interested in singing with us, please contact Louise on 0118 931 4279 or lourap@yahoo.com.

Louise Rapple has been a musician from a young age, learning piano from six and singing in a Church choir from seven. She studied Music and French at Reading University, specialising in performance and graduating in 1998. She studied conducting at the Conservatoire de Pau in southern France during her year abroad, and returned to the UK to direct the Reading University Singers for two years, following that with seven years in Church music, as Organist and Choir Director at two local Churches. When not conducting Tamesis, she is a full-time piano teacher, teaching both in local schools and privately. She's been dreaming of directing a choir like Tamesis for some years and is thrilled with the reality.

Notes on the programme

We open our concert this evening with Dietrich Buxtehüde's stunning **Magnificat** - a piece which cannot in fact definitely be attributed to Buxtehüde! The only manuscript of the work bears no composer's name and it is generally agreed that the work bears little resemblance to any known work by Buxtehüde, the style being much more similar to the Franco-Italian middle baroque *bel canto* style. However, you will agree it is well worth hearing whoever wrote it!

We follow that with a collection of three settings of the **Ave Maria**. The text is 'Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.' The first setting is by Robert Parsons, one of only five of his choral works to survive complete, and a beautiful setting demonstrating superb contrapuntal writing. This is followed by Sergei Rachmaninov's setting, which doesn't in fact include the final section of the text but finishes at 'Blessed be the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.' This setting was the concluding part of the **Vespers** section of Rachmaninov's **All-night Vigil**, written in 1914. Our final setting of this text is by Felix Mendelssohn and is a very tuneful and jolly setting which we as a choir have found to be the most catchy melody in this concert's repertoire!

We finish the first half this evening with Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki's **Totus tuus sum, Maria**, first performed in a High Mass said by Pope John Paul II in Victory Square, Warsaw, in 1987. Gorecki was a Polish composer and his music reflects a deeply Polish influence. This piece is in fact dedicated to

Pope John Paul II on the occasion of his third pilgrimage back to his homeland, Poland.

John Tavener is another contemporary composer, probably most famous for his **Song for Athene** which was chosen as the recessional music for Princess Diana's funeral. The two **Hymns** we hear here were written in 1985 in memory of Tavener's mother. The first is a setting of a text from the Liturgy of St Basil which speaks of the almost cosmic power attributed to the Mother of God by the Orthodox Church. The second comes from the Vigil Service of the Dormition (falling asleep) of the Mother of God. She invites the apostles to gather from the ends of the earth to bury her body in Gethsemane, and asks God to receive her spirit.

The **Ave Maris Stella** begins 'Hail, star of the sea, life-giving mother of God and perpetual virgin' and continues in praise of Mary. The Monteverdi setting forms part of his **Vespers of 1610**, one of his best-known works. Grieg's setting is one of only three sacred works of his entire output, and was originally written for solo voice and piano, in 1898. The **Salve Regina** is another major Marian text, this one beginning 'Hail holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope'. The two settings of this text that we hear tonight contrast beautifully, being written around 400 years apart but still both retaining a similar beauty. Palestrina wrote more than 400 motets during his lifetime, of which the bold double-choir setting of the **Salve Regina** which we hear tonight was one of his later works. Villetta's setting was written in 1958 but, like all of his relatively small output, has only recently won the popularity it deserves on account of its technical complexity.

We conclude this evening with one of the most beautiful choral works to have emerged in recent years. Morten Lauridsen's stunning **O magnum mysterium** was written in 1994 and in fact employs a Christmas text: 'O great mystery and wondrous sacrament, that animals should see the new-born Lord, lying in their manger! Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy to bear the Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia!'

2005-6 The 'Biblical Characters' Season

Our second concert, **Crucifixus pro nobis**, will take place on **Saturday March 4th 2006** and will feature music inspired by Christ on the Cross. The summer concert will involve other Biblical characters such as Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, and Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo...

Keep in touch... If you would like to be kept informed of Tamesis' forthcoming events and concerts, please sign our visitors' book and we'll make sure your details are included in the mailing list. Do also keep an eye on our website, www.tamesischamberchoir.co.uk which is regularly updated with news and events.

tamesis

chamber choir

musical director - louise rapple

presents the first concert in the
"Biblical Characters" concert
series for the 2005-6 season

Magnificat

Saturday November 12th 2005
7:30 pm
The Minster Church of St
Mary the Virgin, Reading

www.tamesischamberchoir.co.uk