

making up Rachmaninov's All-Night Vigil, which was premiered in 1915. It concludes the first half of the piece, Vespers, which is followed by the second half, Matins. The Russian Orthodox Church, for which the vigil was written, was suppressed following the 1917 revolution, which prevented the piece achieving wide recognition until the 1960s.

The words of Britten's Hymn to St Cecilia were written by W H Auden and they are wonderfully colourful. St Cecilia is the patron Saint of music, and the following refrain underpins the work:

Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
to all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

Britten was born on St Cecilia's Day, and had long wanted to write a piece dedicated to the saint, but he couldn't find a text that satisfied him. He had previously collaborated with Auden on several works, and so asked the poet to provide him with a text, which Auden did during 1940. Britten finished the work in 1942.

How lovely are thy dwellings is the fourth movement of Brahms' A German Requiem, written between 1865 and 1868. The text for the Requiem is sacred, but non-liturgical, deriving its text from the German Lutheran Bible. For Brahms, it seems the piece was more a humanist rather than a Christian work. The soaring melody of this movement, and its serene, pastoral feel, allow an opportunity for contemplation and rest in the middle of the seven movements of the Requiem. As the pivotal, central movement, it effects a transition from the grief of the first part of the work to the certainty of comfort of the final part.

We finish our concert this evening with Steal Away, a setting of the traditional American Negro Spiritual. This arrangement by David Blackwell is taken from the anthology *Spirituals for Choirs*, edited by Bob Chilcott. Tamesis made a very successful recording of the collection earlier in the year, and CDs will be on sale at the back of the Abbey during the interval and after the concert. In Bob Chilcott's own words: "The Tamesis Chamber Choir sing this repertoire with real style and spirit, and show what a clearly accomplished group of singers they are."

LER, Nov 2009

2009-2010 The "Three Bs" Season

Our next concert, "B is for British", will take place at the Church of St James the Less in Pangbourne on Saturday 6th March, 2010.

Our summer concert, "B is for Bohemian", will take place at St Laurence's Church in Reading Town Centre on Saturday 19th June, 2010.

We are joining the Salvation Army Band in a concert in aid of Rotary International on Saturday 27th February, 2010 at *****

Please see our website,
www.tamesischamberchoir.co.uk for details of all these concerts and to buy tickets.

tamesis chamber choir

musical director - louise rapple

presents the first concert in the
2009-10 "Three Bs" season

B is for Blessed

Saturday November 21st 2009
7:45 pm
Douai Abbey,
Upper Woolhampton

www.tamesischamberchoir.co.uk

Programme

Beatus Vir - Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

Magnificat - Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707)

Interlude:

Prelude & Fugue in C, BWV 545 - JS Bach (1685-1750)

Organist: John Cobb

A selection of motets by Anton Bruckner (1824-96)

Ave Maria

Virga Jesse

Christus factus est

Os justi

Locus Iste

INTERVAL

Komm, Jesu, Komm - Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Bogoroditsye Dyovo - Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

Interlude:

St Bride assisted by angels - Judith Bingham (b. 1952)

Organist: Christopher Cipkin

Hymn to St Cecilia - Benjamin Britten (1913-76)

How lovely are thy dwellings - Johannes Brahms (1833-97)

Steal Away - trad. arr. David Blackwell

Many thanks to our organist Christopher Cipkin

Tamesis is:

Sopranos

Miranda Bradshaw

Katie Breakspear

Rachel Burgess

Bethan Davies

Penny Firshman

Clare Garner

Jenny Haggart

Kat Penn

Jessica Reid

Tamsyn Wilson

Altos

Anna Ashcroft

Alison Evans

Sarah Finch

Helen Gilfillan

Charlie Hodgkinson

Paula Nichols

Liz Rapple

Chloë Robson

Basses

Andy Button

John Cobb

Austin Jacobs

Patrick Moore

Stephen Nichols

Grateful thanks to Father Oliver, Father Gervase and the authorities at Douai Abbey for inviting us to perform in this beautiful building and making us so welcome.

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

Louise Rapple graduated in Music and French from Reading University in 1998, specialising in performance. She studied conducting at the Conservatoire de Pau in southern France 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 works at Shiplake College, teaching piano, conducting choirs and administrating all sorts of things. She also directs Tamesis Cathedral Singers, a larger choir whose members visit Cathedrals twice a year to sing Evensong. In order to prevent her life from being entirely over-run by music, she cycled from Land's End to John O'Groats in July this year, in aid of Sustrans, the sustainable transport charity.

Notes on the programme

Monteverdi's Beatus Vir (Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord), is a setting of Psalm 112, published in 1641 in the collection *Selva morale e spirituale*. Its origins lie in a madrigal published in 1619, a light-hearted secular duet with an ostinato bass similar to the bass line heard here. It also has the distinction of being the very first piece Tamesis ever performed in concert!

Buxtehude's Magnificat cannot actually be definitely attributed to that composer. 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 Buxtehude! The style is much more similar to the Franco-Italian middle baroque bel canto style of Carissimi and Lully, which was widely imitated, but not by Buxtehude.

The five Bruckner motets chosen here span 25 years. The first, Ave Maria, was written in 1861 while Bruckner was organist at Linz Cathedral. He had just spent five years studying counterpoint, forbidden to write 'free' composition; when released, his creativity flowered in this motet. Locus iste (This place was made by God) is a gradual for the dedication of a Church, and was written in 1869, while the composer was still in Linz. Os justi (the just man, in his heart, shall see wisdom from the Lord) is a motet in the Lydian mode, written in 1879. Christus factus est (Christ is made obedient for us) is a gradual for Maundy Thursday, written in 1884 when Bruckner was living in Vienna and devoting most of his energies to writing symphonic music. Virga Jesse (The rod of Jesse has blossomed) is a text from the Feast of the Annunciation, written in 1885.

The text of Bach's motet Komm, Jesu, Komm (Come, Jesus, come; my flesh is weary) comes from a setting of hymnbook poetry written in 1684, which then appeared in the *Leipziger Gesangbuch* in 1697. Set for double choir, the motet is composed in several sections, the longest of which is the lilting and hypnotic Du bist der rechte weg, die wahrheit und das Leben (Thou art the way, the truth and the life - taken from John 14:6), with its gorgeous, seemingly endless, suspensions. The motet finishes with a chorale setting, beginning: Drauf schliess ich mich in deine Hände Und sage, Welt, zu gutter Nacht! (Thus I yield myself into Thy hands, and bid the world good night.)

Bogoroditsye Dyovo is one of fifteen a cappella pieces