

2 - Elgar didn't achieve real success until his forties, so there is hope for me yet! Mozart's setting is one of the best-known choral settings of all time. It was written in June 1971, less than six months before his death, while he was in the middle of writing The Magic Flute.

Britten's Rejoice in the Lamb is set to words by Christopher Smart. The original poem, Jubilate Agno (Latin for 'Rejoice in the Lamb'), is very much longer than Britten's cantata; Britten selected bits and pieces of the original to set to music. Smart was an eighteenth-century poet, "deeply religious but of a strange and unbalanced mind", according to the Reverend Canon Walter Hussey, who commissioned the cantata in 1943 for the fiftieth anniversary of the consecration of St Matthew's Church, Northampton. The poem was written while Smart was in an asylum, and the main theme of the poem is the worship of God by all creatures and beings, each in its own way - demonstrated particularly by the sections about Smart's cat, and the mouse, both praising God simply by being themselves.

The final text that we compare this evening is the O Magnum Mysterium. This is a responsorial chant from the Matins of Christmas, and translates as: O great mystery and wonderful sacrament, that animals should see the new-born Lord lying in a manger! Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy to bear Christ the Lord. Alleluia. Victoria's setting was published in 1572 as part of his first collection of motets. At this time, Victoria was employed at the German College in Rome, and was friends with, and influenced by, Palestrina. It is possible that he was also taught by Palestrina, although there is no evidence for this.

Lauridsen's setting of the same text, by contrast, was written in 1994, and is currently his best-known and best-loved work. Lauridsen himself calls the piece 'a quiet song of profound inner joy' and I defy anyone not to be moved by this music. Close your eyes and let its beauty wash over you... and then open them again with a start as the first, famous notes of Zadok the Priest trumpet forth from the organ. This introduction has to be one of the best-known motifs in classical music, and tonight the coalition between Zadok the Priest and Nathan the Prophet, as they anoint Solomon King, fits our theme perfectly. Written in 1727 for the coronation of King George II, the anthem has been sung at every coronation since that time, but the words go back even further - they have been used at every English coronation since King Edgar was crowned in Bath Abbey in 973 AD.

LER, Nov 2010

... Next in our 'Coalition' season ...

Ministry of Arts

Saturday 5th March 2011, 7:30pm
St Peter's Church, Caversham

Ministry of Entertainment

Saturday 18th June 2011, 7:30pm
St Laurence's Church, Reading

For details and tickets, please see our website,
www.tamesischamberchoir.co.uk

tamesis

chamber choir

musical director - louise rapple

presents the first concert in the
2010-11 "Coalition" season

The Ministry of Faith

Saturday November 20th 2010
7:30 pm
Wesley Methodist Church

www.tamesischamberchoir.co.uk

Programme

Blest pair of sirens - C Hubert H Parry (1848-1918)

Ave Maria - Robert Parsons (c.1535-1571/2)

Ave Maria - Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Interlude:

Laudamus Te from Gloria - Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Esurientes from Magnificat - Antonio Vivaldi

Tamsyn Wilson and Tania Pratt - sopranos

Faire is the heaven - William Harris (1883-1973)

Ave verum corpus - Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Ave verum corpus - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

INTERVAL

Rejoice in the Lamb - Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Interlude:

Pie Jesu from Requiem - Andrew Lloyd-Webber (1948-)

Kat Penn and Bethan Davies - sopranos

O magnum mysterium - Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)

O magnum mysterium - Morten Lauridsen (1943-)

Zadok the Priest - Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759)

Tamesis is:

Sopranos
Miranda Bradshaw
Katie Breakspear
Rachel Burgess
Bethan Davies
Clare Garner
Claudia Lange
Kat Penn
Tania Pratt
Tamsyn Wilson

Altos
Emily Clark
Alison Evans
Sarah Finch
Charlie Hodgkinson
Liz Rapple
Chloë Robson

Tenors
Tim Beavan
Nick Brown
Simon Eastwood
Graham Watt

Basses
James Allen
Andy Button
John Cobb
Patrick Moore
Dan Tyndall

Are you thinking of joining a choir?

Louise's choral empire includes choirs for all tastes and levels of experience! If you're a good choral singer and sight reader, you might like to audition for **Tamesis Chamber Choir**. We audition annually in September, but there may also be vacancies at other times of the year.

If you're a competent singer with some experience, but you can't commit to frequent rehearsals, **Tamesis Cathedral Singers** might be for you - it's a "scratch" choir that sings two Cathedral Evensongs and a Carol Service each year, on just a couple of rehearsals. There are no auditions and you can join us for any or all of the services, depending on your availability.

If you're new to choral singing or fancy something a bit less formal, the **Shiplake Community Choir** might be right up your street. We're learning and developing our skills in part singing and music reading - you don't have to have any experience, just be willing to give it a go!

To find out more, contact Louise on lourap@gmail.com or 0118 931 4279.

Grateful thanks to the authorities at Wesley Methodist for the use of the Church and for making us so welcome. Many thanks also to our organist, Simon Dinsdale, who has had more notes to play in this concert than any other Tamesis concert in our history!

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. Louise 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, and the Shiplake Community Choir.

Notes on the programme

John Milton's *Blest pair of sirens* refers to the twin joys of Voice and Verse. The ode forms part of Milton's *Poems of 1645*, written when he was 37. Over two hundred years later, Parry's 1887 setting of the work established him as the leading English choral composer of his day. It is dedicated to Charles Villiers Stanford, who commissioned it for the London Bach Choir. Stanford was one of the first British musicians to recognise Parry's talent, describing him as "the greatest English composer since Purcell".

As part of our 'Coalition' theme, we compare and contrast three texts this evening, and the first is the *Ave Maria*. This is the Latin text that we know in English as the *Hail Mary*, the traditional biblical prayer asking for the intercession of the Virgin Mary. Parsons' setting of the text was probably written while he was Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, to which he was appointed in 1563. It is one of only five of his choral works to survive complete, and is a beautiful setting demonstrating superb contrapuntal writing. By contrast, Mendelssohn's setting is joyful and catchy. It is the second of three sacred pieces (op. 23, no.2) published in 1830, when the composer was 21.

Harris's enchanting *Faire is the heaven* fits into our 'Coalition' theme both by being set for double choir, and also for its collaboration between the composer and the lyricist. It is William Harris's most famous work, and is a sublime anthem with words by Edmund Spenser. Listen out for gems such as 'in full enjoyment of felicitie' and the closing line 'how then can mortall tongue hope to expresse the image of such endlesse perfectnesse'. Harris himself was principally an organist, first at New College and Christ Church, Oxford, and later at St George's Chapel, Windsor.

Next to get the comparison treatment is the *Ave Verum Corpus*. This is a short Eucharistic hymn which dates from the fourteenth century and which begins 'Hail, true body' in English. The two settings heard tonight are arguably two of the most famous three settings in Church music - the other being by William Byrd. The Elgar setting is short and sweet, and was written in 1887, when Elgar was 30. It is his opus no.