

Ten years of Tamesis: Performance highlights

We're very proud and excited to be back here at Douai Abbey, in many ways our favourite and certainly our most prestigious concert venue. Our last concert here, "B is for Blessed" (November 2009), garnered us a great review in the Newbury Weekly News and, more importantly, led to this invitation to return for our final decennial performance.

Since our very first term in 2003, we've been delighted to find we're in demand for many more performances than the three per year that Louise originally planned. In October 2005, we joined Wokingham Choral Society at The Hexagon in Reading to perform Mozart's 'Requiem' in front of an audience of hundreds. Last summer, we anchored the Wokingham Jubilee Chorus summer prom, singing with over 200 other voices to a huge crowd, who cheered us patriotically despite the unseasonal rain! The two launch concerts we held for our *Spirituals* (2009) and *Remembrance* (2012) CDs were both proud moments - we enjoyed karaoke afterwards on the first occasion and, rather more soberly, appreciated the beautiful setting of Wellington College Chapel and the support of Soldiers' Charity chief of staff Robin Bacon for the latter.

There are exciting plans afoot for coming seasons, including a commission to perform at a popular and long-established Newbury Christmas fundraising concert in St Nicolas' Church; a possible choir tour to Bruges, to take our music to a European audience, and a collaboration with South Chiltern Choral Society and Reading Festival Chorus to perform Jenkins' 'The Armed Man' next Spring. We are also thrilled to be heading out of Berkshire to Bristol for our autumn 2013 concert, performing our 'Remembrance' programme at the prestigious church of St Mary Redcliffe, where former Tamesis member Dan Tyndall is now the vicar.

A performance of quite a different nature has been playing out in Tamesis over the last five years, and no summary of choir highlights would be complete without mentioning that it has reached a thrilling crescendo. Congratulations from us all to Maestro and founder Louise Rapple and bass Patrick Moore on their engagement just two weeks ago - we look forward with great interest to their musical choices when it comes to their wedding next year.

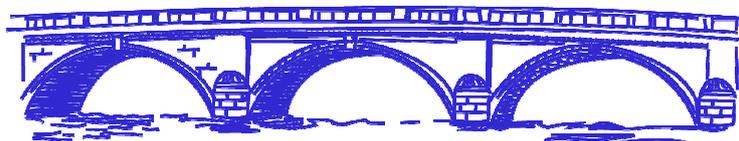
CAH, July 2013

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'Remembrance' video montage



tamesis chamber choir

director - Louise Rapple
www.tamesischamberchoir.co.uk

presents the final concert
in the 2012-13 season
"A la Carte"

A Summer Feast

Saturday July 13th 2013
7:45 pm
Douai Abbey, Woolhampton





Tamesis Chamber Choir

Sopranos

Miranda Bradshaw
 Rachel Burgess
 Clare Garner
 Katie Johnston
 Julie Kench
 Anne Owen
 Tania Pratt
 Charlie Watson
 Alison Wilkins
 Tamsyn Wilson

Tenors

Tim Beavan
 Nick Brown
 Simon Eastwood
 Laurence Hicks
 Graham Watt

Altos

Alison Evans
 Sarah Finch
 Marion Harris
 Vic Henshall
 Charlie Hodgkinson
 Liz Rapple
 Elysia Roberts
 Chloë Robson

Basses

Mark Bassett
 Andy Button
 John Cobb
 Ed Hobson
 John Kendall
 Patrick Moore
 Stephen Nichols
 Jeremy Robson

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-audition 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.

Happy Birthday, Tamesis! Yes, we are ten years old. To celebrate this small but significant milestone, we asked you, our audience and our singers, what you would like to hear us perform in our tenth anniversary season. Throughout last year you voted on our website - 62 people made 178 votes! Louise then collated all the results and fashioned them into three programmes. We called the season 'A la carte', because you chose the programmes from a menu of pieces. In the autumn, we performed part songs, folk songs and madrigals from the sixteenth century to the present day, and at our spring concert we explored the lighter side of the choral repertoire, including Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody*, which claimed joint first place in the voting table. This, our final concert in the season, showcases the wonderful sacred music that you chose, including Howells' *Take him, earth, for cherishing*, which tied with *Bohemian Rhapsody* with the most votes. The three concert programmes are all absolutely gorgeous: congratulations to you all on your good taste!



Louise began learning piano from six and sang in a Church choir from seven. She read Music and French at Reading University, specialising in performance. She studied conducting at the Conservatoire de Pau in southern France during her year abroad, and returned to direct the Reading University Singers for two years.

Having graduated, Louise became Organist and Choir Director at St John's Church in Crowthorne, later moving to the same position at Christ Church, Reading where she spent five happy years with a lovely choir. She founded Tamesis in 2003 and could not be happier with the way the choir has turned out! She also directs Tamesis Cathedral Singers, an occasional choir which sings Cathedral Evensongs twice a year. She is in demand locally as a deputy conductor, and enjoys the challenge of stepping in when other choir directors are indisposed; she regularly conducts Thames Valley Gay Chorus, Goring Chamber Choir and the Twyford Singers.

Louise works full-time at Shiplake College, teaching piano, playing the organ and administrating all sorts of things. As part of her work there she runs the College Chamber Choir and Shiplake Community Choir, a choir for singers of all ages and abilities, singing a mainly popular repertoire.

Forthcoming events

Visit www.tamesis.is for latest news and tickets

Saturday November 16th 2013

St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol
"Redcliffe Remembers"

We are pleased and proud to have been invited to perform a concert at this prestigious venue in Bristol. We will be performing selections from our 2012 *Remembrance* CD along with selections from Karl Jenkins' 'The Armed Man'. Proceeds from the concert will be split between St Mary Redcliffe and ABF The Soldiers' Charity.

Saturday December 7th 2013

St Nicolas' Church, Newbury
Charity Christmas Carol Concert

Tamesis is delighted to have been invited to perform a choral programme at this year's annual fundraising Christmas concert, in aid of Macmillan and Newbury Cancer Care, in the presence of the High Sheriff and Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire.

The "Flora and Fauna" season for 2014
Dates for your diary

Because, happily, we seem to be so much in demand at the moment, this year our main season theme will cover just two concerts:
 Saturday March 15th at Greyfriars in Reading, and
 Saturday June 21st at St Laurence's in Reading

cal serialism towards a more traditional, romantic mode of expression. His fame arrived in 1992 when a re-cording of his Third Symphony became a worldwide commercial and critical success. **Totus tuus sum, Maria** (*I am entirely yours, Mary*) was written in 1987 and was first performed that same year in a High Mass said by Pope John Paul II in Victory Square, Warsaw. It remains his best-known a cappella choral piece of the 1980s.

Lobet den Herrn J S Bach (1685-1750)

Chosen by: Lucy Allen

Bach wrote six motets during his lifetime, of which **Lobet den Herrn** is generally listed as the last. It isn't known exactly when it was written, but it is likely that Bach composed it during his time as Cantor at the Thomasschule in Leipzig, a post he held from 1723. In this post, Bach would supplement his income and that of his choir by performing at weddings and funerals; it is likely that he composed his motets for these occasions, as well as for in-school training. **Lobet den Herrn** is the only motet composed for four voices and continuo, and takes its text from Psalm 117: *Praise the Lord, all ye heathen; praise him all ye nations.*

Locus iste Anton Bruckner (1824-1896)

Chosen by: Tim Beavan, Andy Button, Jane Robson

If there is a conundrum associated with Bruckner, it seems to be that his music and life do not reflect each other at all. Bruckner the man was a simple, country teacher and organist with a deep Catholic faith, who was entirely without arrogance and who loved to drink beer. By contrast, his music shows a depth and musicality ahead of its time, and his output was enormous – he wrote nine symphonies, six masses, over forty motets and many other choral and orchestral works. **Locus iste** (*This place was made by God*) is a gradual for the dedication of a Church, and was written in 1869, while Bruckner was organist at Linz Cathedral.

LER, July 2013

Ten years of Tamesis: statistics

- Total number of performances: 53
- Total number of members: 90
- Number of original members still singing with the choir: 5
- Number of different pieces the choir has performed: 312
- Number of CDs recorded: 2
- Total hours of rehearsal: 626
- Total minutes of rehearsal: 37560
- Number of babies born to participating choir members: 18

A big thank you

to our organist, Simon Dinsdale, and to Father Oliver Holt here at Douai Abbey for the use of this wonderful building and for making us so welcome.

Programme

Hear my prayer, O Lord Purcell

Beatus Vir Monteverdi

Sopranos: Charlie Watson and Tamsyn Wilson

Tenors: Nick Brown and Laurence Hicks

Bass: Jeremy Robson

Take him, earth, for cherishing Howells

Interlude

Ave Maria Schubert

Voice: Tania Pratt

O vos omnes Casals

Miserere Mei Allegri

Sopranos: Julie Kench and Tamsyn Wilson

Alto: Elysia Roberts

Bass: Patrick Moore

For the fallen Guest

Interval

Ave Maria Mendelssohn

Tenor: Simon Eastwood

Semi-chorus: Charlie Watson, Alison Wilkins, Vic Henshall, Marion Harris, Simon Eastwood, Graham Watt, Jeremy Robson, Patrick Moore

O magnum mysterium Lauridsen

Interlude

Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier Bach arr. Parry

Sopranos: Julie Kench and Tania Pratt

Alto: Louise Rapple Tenor: Simon Eastwood

Baritone: Jeremy Robson Bass: Patrick Moore

Totus tuus sum, Maria Gorecki

Lobet den Herrn Bach

Locus Iste Bruckner

Notes on the programme

Hear my prayer, O Lord Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Chosen by: Alison Beavan

This 'full anthem' was most likely composed in the early 1680s while Purcell was organist at the Chapel Royal, a post he took on in 1679. It is one of nearly 70 anthems and services that Purcell composed from 1679 until his early death in 1695. **Hear my prayer, O Lord** is the opening fragment of a never-completed work, this being deduced from the manuscript, which survives in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. It is in Purcell's own hand and it includes supplementary ruled pages in preparation for additional music. The fragment that does exist is an exquisite expression of the anguish of the text, a single span of music gradually increasing in tension towards a powerful climax.

Beatus Vir Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

Chosen by: Graham Watt, Chloë Robson

Beatus Vir is a setting of Psalm 112, *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord*. In 1640 and 1641 Monteverdi published the collection *Selva morale e spirituale*, which translates literally as *moral and spiritual forest*. This collection is considered Monteverdi's most significant anthology of liturgical works since his *Vespers* in 1610, and it presents works which were composed at San Marco in Venice, where Monteverdi had served as conductor since 1613. It is seen as Monteverdi's testament of Church music, compiled when he was already 74 years old. The origins of **Beatus Vir** lie in a madrigal published in 1619, a lighthearted 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!

Take him, earth, for cherishing Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

Chosen by: Geoffrey Bradshaw, Miranda Bradshaw, Rachel Burgess, Andy Button, Patrick Moore, Stephen Nichols, Jeremy Robson

Howells' masterpiece, **Take him, earth, for cherishing** was the result of a commission occasioned by the death of John F Kennedy. It was first performed in 1964 at an American-Canadian memorial service in Washington. It is set to text by the 4th century writer Prudentius and the words are quite beautiful: *Take him, earth, for cherishing; to thy tender breast receive him. Body of a man I bring thee, noble even in its ruin*. As the music moves from unison melody to extravagant harmony it reflects the sweep from body to spirit, from earthly to divine, and also the ambiguity of death: both sorrow in mourning and joy at passing into paradise. This work was particularly poignant for Howells as he lost his nine-year-old son, Michael, to polio in 1935, a loss that was to colour his work for the rest of his life.

Miserere mei Gregorio Allegri (1582-1652)

Chosen by: Lisa Holbrook, Jane Robson

Miserere mei is based on psalm 51, *Have mercy on me O God after thy great goodness* and is the only piece of music for which Allegri is now remembered. It was composed to be sung in the Sistine Chapel on the Wednesday of Holy Week and on Good Friday. Written exclusively for the papal choir in Rome, excommunication was reputedly the penalty for copying the manuscript. Popular legend (backed up by family letters) has it that the 14-year-old Mozart visited the Sistine Chapel

for the Wednesday service and, later that day, wrote down the entire **Miserere** note for note, returning on Good Friday to make minor corrections to his score. Far from being excommunicated, the following year he was summoned to see the Pope about the matter and roundly praised for his feat of musical genius!

For the fallen Douglas Guest (1916-1996)

In 1971 Guest was commissioned to write a piece for the Remembrance Service in Westminster Abbey and decided to set Laurence Binyon's eternal poem **For the fallen** – *They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old*. His perfect motet has since become a staple at Remembrance services, and it is the closing piece on our 2012 CD *Remembrance*, which is on sale this evening, with all profits going to ABF The Soldiers' Charity.

Ave Maria Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Chosen by: Liz Rapple, Fiona Rollason

Written in 1830, **Ave Maria** is the second of three sacred pieces (op. 23, no.2) that were published when the composer was just 21. The setting 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. Cast in three parts, the devotional simplicity of the outer sections (which share the same basic musical material) contrasts tellingly with the floated contrapuntal textures of the 'Sancta Maria', where the men state the theme over the organ's walking bass line, while the ladies gently echo *ora pro nobis (pray for us sinners)*.

O vos omnes Pablo Casals (1876-1973)

Chosen by: Rachel Burgess, Andy Button

Pau Casals, known throughout his professional career as Pablo, is best remembered as the foremost cellist of the first half of the twentieth century, and as one of the greatest cellists of all time. However, he was active throughout his life as a composer, although his output was small. **O vos omnes** is one of a number of pieces he wrote for the Benedictine monks of Montserrat, the Abbey near his native city of Barcelona. The piece translates as *O ye that pass by, behold and see if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow. O ye people, is it nothing to you?* Written in 1932, the piece was originally scored for tenors and basses; Casals later re-wrote it for mixed choir and published it in that form in 1965.

O magnum mysterium Morten Lauridsen (1943-)

Chosen by: Geoffrey Bradshaw, Frank Clark, Liz Rapple

The text of **O magnum mysterium** is in fact 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*. Lauridsen's setting was written in 1994, and is one of his best-known and best-loved works. His popularity as a composer began to escalate around that time, and by the turn of the twentieth century he had eclipsed Randall Thompson as the most frequently performed American composer.

Totus tuus sum, Maria Henryk Górecki (1933-2010)

Chosen by: Chloë Robson, David Welsh

Polish composer Górecki made his name in the 1950s and 60s with his adherence to dissonant modernism. However, he then began to move away from this radi-