



and



Directed by Richard Roddis

With

Natalia Clifton-Griffiths - Soprano

James Gumpert - Alto

Marc Finer - Tenor

Jeremy Leaman - Bass

Saturday 14 October 2006

Derby Cathedral



PROGRAMME

Fanfare for St Edmundsbury

Benjamin Britten

Dixit Dominus

GF Handel

INTERVAL

Nelson Mass
(Missa in Angustiis)

Joseph Haydn

Programme notes

Fanfare for St Edmundsbury

The piece was written for a "Pageant of Magna Carta" in the grounds of Bury St Edmunds Cathedral in 1959. It is scored for 3 trumpets, each playing the notes of the harmonic series in different keys and in music of different styles. The score instructs that "The trumpeters should be placed as far apart as possible, even when the Fanfare is played indoors."

Dixit Dominus

Psalm 110 (109 in the Catholic psalter)

This setting of this well-known Vespers psalm is as dramatic as anything to be found in Handel's operas or oratorios. Yet it is a very early work, written in April 1707 when he was barely 22 years old and had not long arrived in Rome. It seems likely that Handel intended this as part of a setting of the full Vespers service, for he also wrote settings of two other Vesper psalm texts. Scored for five soloists, chorus, strings and continuo, *Dixit Dominus* has rightly been called a virtuosic *tour de force*. It shows that in the space of only a few months following his arrival in Italy Handel had thoroughly assimilated the highly charged, emotional style that characterised Italian music of the late Baroque.

The power and vitality are evident from the first movement, a spirited Allegro revolving around four contrasting musical ideas. At the words "donec ponam inimicos", Handel introduces a plainsong figure, which will return in the doxology toward the end of the piece at the phrase "Sicut erat in principio" ("As it was in the beginning") - a nice if rather obvious touch. After two delightful Italianate arias for alto and soprano respectively, the ensuing chorus "Juravit Dominus" ("The Lord hath sworn") opens with a passage marked *grave*, the harmonisation of which is rather advanced. The G minor Allegro that alternates with it in this movement is fiery. The brisk but stately chorus that follows contrasts a dignified rising figure at the words 'Tu es sacerdos in aeternum' with cascading semiquavers. (This same music was reworked 30 years later into an eight-part chorus in *Israel in Egypt*). A flowing allegro full of luscious suspensions and scale passages, opened by the soloists and taken up by the full chorus, builds in intensity to depict God in his anger breaking the kings.

"Judicabit in nationibus" ("He shall judge among nations") is a beautifully crafted chorus in two distinct but complementary sections, the second of which gives the choir an opportunity for some delicate, virtuosic runs. The music of both sections merges towards the end.

Following the atmospheric "De torrente in via bibet" ("He shall drink of the torrent in the way"), in which the men's voices softly punctuate the languorous soprano solo line, the choir takes off upon a dazzling finale, in which a sparkling

"Gloria" full of panache leads into a driving fugue at double the previous speed. This is the youthful Handel at his most virile.

Author: William Gould

Text –

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|--|---|
| 1. Dixit Dominus Domino meo: Sede a dextris meis, donec ponam inimicos tuos, scabellum pedum tuorum. | 1. The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand: Until I make thy enemies thy footstool. |
| 2. Virgam virtutis tuae emittet Dominus ex Sion: dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum. et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen. | 2. The Lord will send forth the sceptre of thy power out of Sion: rule thou in the midst of thy enemies. |
| 3. Tecum principium in die virtutis tuae in splendoribus sanctorum: ex utero ante luciferum genui te. | 3. With thee is the principality in the day of thy strength: in the brightness of the saints: from the womb before the day star I begot thee. |
| 4. Juravit Dominus et non paenitebit eum. | 4. The Lord hath sworn, and he will not repent: |
| 5. Tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech. | 5. Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech. |
| 6. Dominus a dextris tuis, confregit in die irae suae reges. | 6. The Lord at thy right hand hath broken kings in the day of his wrath. |
| 7. Judicabit in nationibus implebit ruinas: conquassabit capita in terra multorum. | 7. He shall judge among nations, he shall fill ruins: he shall crush the heads in the land of the many. |
| 8. De torrente in via bibet: propterea exaltabit caput. | 8. He shall drink of the torrent in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head. |
| 9. Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto: sicut erat in principio, et nunc | 9. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen |

(Soprano duets in passages 6 & 8 by Helen Alexander and Gillian von Fragstein)

Nelson Mass (Missa in Angustiis)

The Mass in D was written in the summer of 1798, about five years before ill health forced an end to Haydn's composition. He had just completed his premier oratorio, *The Creation*, inspired by Handel works he heard on his London visits. Haydn named this mass *Missa in Angustiis*, perhaps meaning *Mass in Fear* or *Mass for Stress*, this may have reflected personal stresses or Esterhazy family events, or it may have arisen from Austria-Hungary's stressful political situation. Two years previously, Haydn had written a *Mass in Time of War*, recognizing the concern gripping all of Europe, which was cowering before the shadow of the ambitious young Napoleon; the Mass in D may similarly have reflected political concerns, although it may be significant that this title does not read *Mass in Time of Fear*, to parallel the title of the earlier work.

The title, (*Lord*) *Nelson Mass* was applied to this music by others after 1800, probably because the work was among those performed for Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton when they visited Prince Esterhazy at Eisenstadt Castle in September of 1800. Ironically, the Battle of Aboukir, in which Nelson's fleet took the French by surprise and decimated them, occurred while Haydn was at work on the Mass. Haydn, however, could not have known of Nelson's victory until weeks after the Mass was finished, and apparently never sanctioned naming the mass for the English hero.

The Mass has also been known in some venues as the "Coronation" or "Imperial" mass, which may have been due to bad history, or simply to a misidentification among the Haydn masses (Haydn's *Missa Cellensis* was contemporaneous with the 1765 coronation of Josef II as Holy Roman Emperor). In any event, there is no clear linkage between this Mass and national or international events.

Given Haydn's own title, it is puzzling that the Mass does not exhibit an obvious character of sorrow, stress, or fear. Much of the work, to the casual listener, evokes joy and feelings of hope, which seem unrelated to the sombre title. It must be remembered that Haydn's assignment, for all six of the last masses, was to write such works for the name day of Princess Esterhazy, this one in September 1798. Obviously, one does not celebrate such an important event with sombre music, and that probably accounts for the overall cast of this work.

Movements -

1. Kyrie - Chorus with prominent soprano solo. D minor.
2. Gloria - Mainly choral, but with participation of all the soloists. D major.
3. Qui tollis - Bass and soprano soloists, with chorus answering in litany fashion.
4. Quoniam - Soloists (the soprano again prominent) and chorus. 5. Credo.- Chorus with sopranos in octaves with tenors and altos in octaves with basses, closely imitating each other until the final "descent from heaven."
6. *Et incarnatus*- The Incarnation and Crucifixion. Soloists and chorus. 7. *Et resurrexit*.- All choral, except for a striking announcement by the solo soprano of "the life of the world to come".
8. Sanctus - Chorus.
9. *Benedictus* - Mainly for quartet but with the celebrated trumpet interruption before the closing choral "Osanna".
10. *Agnus Dei* - An expansive movement, consisting of an adagio (quartet) and a broad jubilant contrapuntal chorus to "Grant us peace." Author: Ivor Keys .

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(Programme notes were supplied through the Programme Note Bank of Making Music, the National Federation of Music Societies)

The Derwent Singers:

Sopranos: Helen Alexander, Ruth Blackwell, Katharine Choonara, Jenni Curtis, Sheila Harding, Gillian von Fragstein, Eleanor Jack, Elizabeth Jack, Fran Leyshon.

Altos: Elaine Armitage, Laura Burns, Jane Davies, Jenny Jones, Jo Lugg, Mary Poilet.

Tenors: Richard Arter, Richard Fish, Pauli Komi, Richard McLachlan, John Whiteman.

Basses: Michael Castles, Richard Gibson, Richard Hair, Christopher Jack, Leonard Johnson.

The choir maintains a mailing list and if you would like to be included, and receive information regarding future concerts, please contact the Publicity Secretary - Laura Burns (07843 488656) or visit our website on www.derwentsingers.org.uk or e-mail: mailing@derwentsingers.org.uk

The Helix Ensemble

Formed in 1952, the Helix Ensemble is a flexible group of experienced players from the East Midlands. Their usual programmes aim to explore rarely performed chamber or small orchestral works alongside more traditional items for this combination. The Helix Ensemble also aims to introduce a variety of contemporary works and has given a number of first performances by composers in the region. In recognition of their innovative programming policy, the Performing Rights Society has twice awarded Helix an Enterprise Award.

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Viola	Elspeth Brien Andrew Chadwick		
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