

# ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY

87th SEASON

ASSEMBLY HALL, TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
SUNDAY 9th DECEMBER 1990

3.00 p.m.

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## REQUIEM      VERDI

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Heather Lorimer	Soprano
Marion Olsen	Mezzo-Soprano
Richard Braebrook	Tenor
Anthony Cunningham	Bass

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## CEREMONY OF CAROLS      BRITTEN

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Pauline Rogers	Harp
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*Orchestra led by*      RITA JAMES

CONDUCTOR  
**DEREK WATMOUGH**

*Programme 50p*

## VERDI: REQUIEM

On the 22nd May 1873, in Milan, the great Italian poet and novelist Alessandro Manzoni slipped on the steps of the church of San Fedele as he was going in to early morning Mass and was carried home unconscious. He was 89, and so his ensuing death was not entirely unexpected; but Verdi had regarded Manzoni with a quite extraordinary reverence ever since he had read the celebrated classic novel *I Promessi Sposi* at the age of 16, and the author's death left him heart smitten with emotion and grief. "perhaps after I have thought it over and measured my strength", he wrote to Giulio Ricordi, his publisher, "I shall propose something to honour his memory." ("Measured my strength" is interesting. Verdi at 60 was still at the height of his powers: *Aida* had been produced only a year earlier. But a really large-scale choral work was something he had never before attempted, and it presented unfamiliar problems.)

The "something" turned out to be the Requiem, which had its first performance at St Mark's Church in Milan on 22nd May 1874 (the first anniversary of Manzoni's death), with Verdi himself composing a specially chosen choir of 120 singers and an orchestra of 110 players. The work was rapturously received by the audience, and subsequent performances in Paris and Vienna were equally successful. London, too, was impressed, but there were some reservations expressed concerning the theatrical character of the music - an objection still felt by some. Theatrical it certainly is; but Verdi was simply using the musical language that came naturally to him; anything else would have been inconsistent with the depth and sincerity of his feelings. Furthermore, although the liturgical aspect is respectfully treated, the work was intended for the concert hall, not the church.

A third point concerns the character of the text, much of which comprises the terrifying medieval *Dies Irae* sequence, full of vivid - not to say lurid - imagery of the Last Judgment; for which, it could be argued, the uninhibited approach of a Berlioz or a Verdi is more appropriate than, say, the more restrained polyphonic settings of Palestrina and Victoria, fine though they are.

But the really clinching argument is, of course, the overwhelming effectiveness of the music. Verdi's *Requiem* is a work of astonishing imagination, beauty and power. And people who don't like it (one is tempted to say) don't really like music.

### Requiem and Kyrie

The work opens quietly with slow falling phrase on muted cellos. A gentle crescendo leads to a magical change from the minor to the major key. While the chorus murmurs the prayer for eternal rest. "Te decet hymnus", set to a plain-song-flavoured melody for unaccompanied choir, is followed by a repeat of the hushed opening music. The four soloists then enter successively with the urgent "Kyrie eleison" prayer set to a noble theme with choral accompaniment; and the movement

ends with "Christe eleison" (one of Verdi's departures from liturgical tradition): an eight part choral progression through remote keys to a final resting point in the 'home key' of A Major.

### Dies Irae

After a startling detonation of four staccato orchestral chords the chorus enters with a wild swirling theme powerfully expressive of power and grief, quieting down to a *sotto voce* monotone at "Quantus tremor est futurus". This leads straight into:

*Tuba mirum*. Trumpet fanfares, echoed 'off-stage', build up to a climax reinforced by the choir and the rest of the orchestra. "Mors stupebit" is given to the bass solo, with a subtle and effective orchestral accompaniment.

*Liber scriptus*. The mezzo-soprano enters unaccompanied on the dominant A, reaching the key chord of D minor with tremendous emphasis on "Unde mundus judicetur" (When creation comes to trial). An eloquent solo aria follows, punctuated by "Dies irae" from the chorus, whispered at first, then bursting with full force.

*Quid sum miser*. A trio for the three upper solo voices, accompanied by violins and viola with a solo bassoon and expressive flowing bass.

*Rex tremendae majestatis*. The opening words are thundered out by the chorus basses, followed immediately by entries from all four soloists on "Salva me": a reminder that the majestic King is also the fount of grace ("Fons pietatis") whose prerogative is mercy. The full chorus combines and the movement builds up to a great emotional climax.

*Recordare*. A duet for soprano and mezzo soprano accompanied by a reiterated rhythmic figure given to the woodwind.

*Ingemisco*. The tenor soloist takes up the penitential prayer in a mood of tender lyricism evoked by the reference to Mary Magdalen ("Qui Mariam absolvisti").

*Confutatus maledictus*. This solo bass pleads for mercy at the hour of death in an expressive aria over a gently throbbing orchestral accompaniment. The final cadence moves unexpectedly into G minor, and the chorus blazes in again with "Dies Irae".

*Lacrymosa*. A simple and unforgettable tune, given first to the mezzo-soprano soloist and then taken up by the chorus. "Pie Jesu Domine" is set to a short unaccompanied passage for the solo quartet.

### Offertorium

The whole movement is set as a solo quartet. One of the great moments of the work comes with the entry of the soprano as Michael the Standard-Bearer ("sed signifer sanctus Michael"): on an E held for five whole bars. With "Quam olim Abrahae" Verdi seems to hint at the fugue which is usual at this point, but we are given instead a powerful sequence based on a falling chromatic scale. "Hostias..." is set to an exquisite melody which moves within the compass of five notes; "Quam olim Abrahae" is repeated, and the movement ends with the soprano floating gently and prayerfully on a high A flat.

### Sanctus

Trumpet callers usher in the chorus, divided into two choirs, who sing the whole of the Sanctus, Benedictus and Hosanna in an unbroken double fugue which bounces along joyfully in striking contrast to the rest of the work. "If it is dance-like," Donald Tovey writes, "the dance is that of the Sons of the Morning".

### Agnus Dei

The plaintive melody is set with daring originality, for the soprano and mezzo-soprano soloists, who sing in octaves, unaccompanied. The chorus follows, also in unison octaves. After the soloists have repeated the tune in the minor, the choir answers with a richly harmonised version of the last six bars. There is a third statement of the tune by the soloists decorated with three flutes in flowing counterpoint. Choir, soloists and orchestra unite at the close.

### Lux Aeterna

The violins shimmer with the never-fading light, introducing a trio for the three lower solo voices. The gentle intimate mood of the mezzo soprano's opening bars gives way to a darkly coloured funeral chant in B flat minor intoned by the bass. The three voices unite in a brief unaccompanied passage of luminous part-writing,

after which a repetition of "Et lux perpetua", set to a broad lyrical tune, carries the movement along to the end.

### Libera Me

Here we are back once again with the terror and despair suggested by thoughts of the Last Judgment. The soprano soloist, and then the chorus, mutter the opening words in monotone; and after an agitated, intensely dramatic recitative for the soloist the chorus erupts with the now familiar but always startling "Dies irae". There follows a passage of the most moving beauty: a repeat of "Requiem aeternam" as heard at the opening of the work, but with the unaccompanied choir, led by the solo soprano, singing music which was formerly only given by the orchestra. The work ends with a fugue on "Libera me Domine". Any feeling that its sprightliness is inappropriate to the solemnity of the text is entirely dispelled when the soprano soloist enters with the theme at half speed and in the major mode - yet another great moment. The final page has the soloist and chorus murmuring the prayer for deliverance in a hushed 'pppp'; and, as one commentator has put it, "the music ends, poised over the void".

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## CEREMONY OF CAROLS - BRITTEN

### REQUIEM - VERDI

#### Requiem and Kyrie Eleison (*Rest and peace and Lord have mercy*)

Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Bass and Chorus

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine: et  
lux perpetua luceat eis  
Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Sion,  
et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem.  
Exaudi orationem meam:  
ad te omnis caro veniet  
Kyrie eleison.  
Christe eleison.  
Kyrie eleison.

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord; and  
let eternal light shine upon them.  
To thee, O God, praise is met in Sion,  
and unto thee shall the vow be performed  
in Jerusalem, Harken unto my prayer:  
unto thee all flesh shall come.  
Lord, have mercy upon us.  
Christ, have mercy upon us.  
Lord, have mercy upon us.

#### Dies Irae (*Day of Anger*)

Solo Quartet and Chorus

#### Dies Irae (*Day of Anger*) - Chorus

Dies irae, dies illa  
Solvat saeculum in favilla  
Teste David cum Sibylla  
Quantus tremor est futurus  
Quando iudex est venturus  
Cuncta stricte discussurus

The day of wrath, that day shall  
dissolve the world in ash, as  
David prophesied with the Sybil.  
What trembling shall there be  
when the judge shall come  
who shall thresh out all thoroughly!

#### Tuba Mirum (*Trumpets Sounding*) Bass & Chorus

Tuba, mirum spargens sonum  
per sepulchra regionum,  
Voget omnes ante thronum.  
Mors stupebit et natura  
Cum resurget creatura  
Iudicanti responsura.

The trumpet, scattering a wondrous sound  
through the tombs of all the lands,  
shall drive all unto the Throne.  
Death and nature shall be astounded  
when creation rises again  
to answer to the Judge.

Liber scriptus proferetur  
In quo totum continetur  
Unde mundus iudicetur.  
Judex ergo sum sedebit  
Quinquid latet apperebit:  
Nil inultum remanebit.  
Dies irae, dies illa  
Solvat saeculum in favilla  
Teste David cum Sibylla

*Liber Scriptus (Open lies the Book) Mezzo Soprano & Chorus*

Awritten book shall be brought forth  
in which shall be contained all  
by which the world shall be judged  
And therefore when the judge shall sit,  
whatsoever is hidden shall be manifest;  
and naught shall remain unavenged.  
The day of wrath, that day shall  
dissolve the world in ash, as  
David prophesied with the Sibyl.

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus  
Quem patronum rogaturus  
Cum vix justus set securus?

*Quid Sum Miser (What shall I plead) Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano & Chorus*

What shall I say in misery?  
Whom shall I ask to be my advocate,  
when scarcely the just may be without fear?

Rex tremendae majestatis  
Qui salvandos salvas gratis  
Salva me, fons pietatis

*Rex Tremendae (King Omnipotent) Solo Quartet & Chorus*

King of awful majesty,  
who freely savest the redeemed,  
save me, O fount of mercy.

Recordare, Jesu pie,  
Quod sum causa tuae viae  
Ne me perdas ille die.  
Quaerens me sedisti lassus  
Redemisti crucem passus  
Tantus labor non sit cassus.  
Juste Judex ultionis  
Donum fac remissionis  
Ante diem rationis

*Recordare (Ah, remember) Soprano & Mezzo-Soprano*

Remember, merciful Jesus,  
that I am the cause of your journey,  
lest thou lose me in that day.  
Seeking me didst thou sit weary;  
thou didst redeem me, suffering the cross.  
Let not such labour be frustrated.  
O just Judge of vengeance,  
give the gift of remission  
before the day of reckoning.

Ingemisco tanquam reus:  
Culpa rubet vultus meus.  
Supplicanti parce, Deus.  
Qui Mariam absolvisti  
Et latronum exaudisti,  
Mihi quoque spem dedisti.  
Preces meae non sunt dignae  
Sed tu bonus fac benigne,  
Ne perenni cremer igne.  
Inter oves locum praesta  
Et ab haedis me sequestra  
Statuens in parte dextra.

*Ingemisco (I lament) Tenor*

I groan as one guilty;  
my face blushes at my sin.  
Spare me, thy supplicant, O God.  
Thou who didst absolve Mary  
and didst hear the thief's prayer,  
hast given hope to me also.  
My prayers are not worthy,  
but do thou, good Lord, show mercy,  
lest I burn in everlasting fire.  
Give me my place amongst thy sheep  
and put me apart from the goats,  
setting me on the right hand.

Confutatis maledictis  
Flammis acerbis addictis,  
Voca me cum benedictis.  
Oro supplex et acclinis,  
Cor contritum quasi cinis,  
Gere cunam mei finis  
Dies irae, dies illa  
Solvat saeculum in favilla  
Teste David cum Sibylla

*Confutatis (When the cursed) Bass & Chorus*

When the damned are confounded  
and condemned to sharp flames,  
call me with the blessed.  
I pray, kneeling in supplication,  
my heart contrite as ashes,  
take thou mine end into thy care.  
The day of wrath, that day shall  
dissolve the world in ash, as  
David prophesied with the Sibyl.

Lacrimosa dies illa  
Qua resurget ex favilla  
Judicandus homo reus.  
Huic ergo parce, Deus,  
Pie Jesu Domine  
Dona eis requiem. Amen.

*Lacrimosa (Day of bitter lamentation) Solo Quartet and Chorus*

The day is one of weeping on which  
shall rise again from the ashes,  
the guilty man, to be judged.  
Spare then this one, O God,  
merciful Lord Jesus;  
give them peace. Amen.

## Offertory, Domine Jesu (*Lord of Lords*)

Solo Quartet

Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae, libera animas omnium  
fidelium defunctorum de poenis inferni et de profundo lacu;  
Libera eas de ore leonis, ne absorbeat eas Tartarus, ne cadant  
in obscurum. Sed signifer sanctus Michael repraesentat eas in  
lucem sanctam, quam olim Abrahae promisti et semini ejus.  
Hositas et presces tibi, Domine, laudis offerimus.  
Tu suscipe pro animabus illis quarum hodie memoriam  
facimus: quam olim Abrahae promisti et semini ejus.

O Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory, deliver the souls of all the  
departed faithful from the torments of hell and from the bottom-  
less pit; deliver them from the mouth of the lion, lest Tartarus  
swallow them, lest they fall into the darkness. But let St.  
Michael the standard-bearer bring them forth into the holy  
light: which thou didst once promise to Abraham and his seed.  
To thee O Lord, we render our offerings and prayers with praises.  
Do thou receive them for those souls which we commemorate  
today; which thou didst once promise to Abraham and his seed.

## INTERVAL

### *Sanctus (Holy!)*

Fugue for Double Chorus

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, domine Deus Sabaoth  
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua  
Hosanna in excelsis!  
Benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini.  
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.  
Hosanna in excelsis!

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of Sabaoth,  
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.  
Hosanna in the highest!  
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord  
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.  
Hosanna in the highest!

### *Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)*

Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano and Chorus

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,  
dona eis requiem.  
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,  
dona eis requiem semper eternam.

Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,  
Grant them rest.  
Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,  
Grant them eternal rest.

### *Lux Aeterna (Light for ever)*

Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor & Bass

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine, cum sanctis tuis, quia pius es.  
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat  
eis cum sanctis tuis in aeternum; quia pius es.

Let everlasting light shine upon them, O Lord, with thy  
saints, for thou art merciful. Grant the departed eternal rest,  
O Lord, and let everlasting light shine upon them with thy  
saints for ever, for thou art merciful.

### *Libera Me (Lord, Deliver me)*

Soprano and Chorus

Libera me, Domine de morte aeterna in die illa tremenda;  
quando coeli movendi sunt et terra;  
Dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignem.  
Tremens factus sum ego, et timeo, dum discussio venient  
atque ventura ira,  
quando coeli movendi sunt et terra.  
Dies irae, dies illa calamitatis et miseriae,  
dies magne et amarae valde.  
Requiem aeternam dona eis,  
Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis  
Libera me, etc

Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death on that awful day,  
when the heavens shall be moved, and the earth;  
When thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.  
I am seized by trembling, and I fear the moment when the  
trial comes, and the coming wrath,  
when the heavens shall be moved, and the earth.  
A day of wrath, that day of calamity and misery,  
an exceedingly great and bitter day.  
Grant them eternal rest,  
O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
Deliver me, O Lord etc.

## OUR NEXT CONCERT

WILL TAKE PLACE ON

Sunday 14th April 1991

at 3.00pm in The Assembly Hall

*Sea Symphony* — Vaughan-Williams

*Gloria* — Poulenc

Tickets: Tiered Seating £7.00, Circle £5.00, Stalls £3.00

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## THE SOLOISTS

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**Heather Lorimer** was born in Wallasey in Cheshire in 1961. She studied with Frederic Cox at the RNMC in Manchester from 1979 to 1984, and also studied under Iris Dell Aqua. Her more recent engagements have included appearing as Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and The Countess in *Le Nozze Di Figaro* at Glyndebourne in 1989, and working with the ENO, Opera 80, and Travelling Opera. Earlier this year she was the winner of the 1990 Bel Canto and Opera Duet Competition with her husband, Gerard Quinn.

**Marion Olsen**, the New Zealand born mezzo soprano, began her singing studies in 1974 at Otago University, Dunedin, with Miss Honor McKellar. In 1981 she was awarded grants from the NZ Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council and the Blair Trust to enable her to study with David Harper in England. She has participated in courses at the 'Britten Pears School for Advanced Musical Studies' at Aldeburgh and the European Opera Centre's International Summer School in Belgium in 1984.

Engagements over the past two years have included performances of the Verdi *Requiem* in the Barbican, the title role of *Carmen* for Wellington City Opera in New Zealand, Dorabella in *Così Fan Tutti* in the Far East with the European Opera Company, the Angel in Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, *A Child of our Time* by Michael Tippett, the Mozart *Requiem*, The Vivaldi *Gloria*, Haydn's *Maria Theresa Mass*, Bach's *B Minor Mass*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, recitals in London and Paris and, as part of New Zealand's 150th Anniversary, Marion Olsen has been invited to take part in three concerts in Covent Garden, Glasgow and Dublin.

**Richard Braebrook**, our tenor for this afternoon, was born in Huddersfield and is currently in his eighth season at the London Coliseum with the ENO. He studied at the Royal College of

Music and has sung with the BBC singers and the former D'Oyly Carte Company as Principal Tenor, touring the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the USA. He is a founder member of the Kensington Gore Singers with whom he has sung for the Queen Mother at Windsor. In his capacity as an accomplished pianist and conductor he was also Musical Director of the Feltham Choral Society. Richard has sung with many major societies throughout the UK and looks forward very much to singing with the TWCS here again. His recent concerts include memorable performances of the *St. John Passion* (Evangelist), *Dream of Gerontius* (Elgar), *Messiah* (Handel), *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* (Britten), and *Elijah* (Mendelssohn). He has entertained recently on a P&O cruise liner and has been to Russia to sing.

**Anthony Cunningham** was born in Wigan, Lancashire. He studied at Manchester Polytechnic and for over ten years followed a career as a Chartered Librarian. He studied singing with John Cameron, whilst following a freelance career in fringe opera, oratorio and work in the light music field.

On the operatic stage he has worked with English National Opera for several years singing and understudying many roles, including Angellotti (*Tosca*), Krusina (*Bartered Bride*), Johann (*Werther*), and Marullo (*Rigoletto*). Engagements also include working with the Music Theatre Company and appearing as a guest artist at the Henley Music and Arts Festival as well as the Brighton and France-Jersey Festivals.

Anthony also pursues a busy concert and recital career throughout the country, having sung with many choral and music societies, including Mozart's *Requiem* under David Willcocks at the Royal Albert Hall, Donizetti's *Requiem* at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* at the Festival Hall and *Boris Gudunov* at the Barbican.

# THE ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY

<b>Honorary Life President:</b>	John H. Johnson
<b>Chairman:</b>	Helen McNab
<b>Musical Director and Principal Conductor:</b>	Derek Watmough
<b>Honorary Life Member:</b>	Anthony Smith-Masters

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We are most grateful for the support of Patrons and Vice Patrons, and new ones are always welcome. Please ring or write to the General Secretary, Mr L. A. Lee, 233 Greggs Wood Road, Tunbridge Wells (Tunbridge Wells 21937).

The choir rehearses on Monday evenings from September to April. New members are always welcome. There is a simple and private audition. Please contact the Membership Secretary Miss M Standen - 38 Sandhurst Avenue, Pembury, Kent TN2 4JZ, Tel Pembury 2048 - we shall be pleased to have you join us.

# SOME FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

The Green Room Club  
At Trinity Arts Centre

20th January 1991	at 3.00 pm
17th February 1991	at 3.00 pm
17th March 1991	at 3.00 pm
21st April 1991	at 3.00 pm
19th May 1991	at 3.00 pm

## ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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### Future Concerts in The Assembly Hall

3rd February 1991	at 3.00 pm
3rd March 1991	at 3.00 pm
7th April 1991	at 3.00 pm



The Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society acknowledges, with thanks,  
financial assistance from the South East Arts Association