

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY PRESENTS

Dvořák

Stabat Mater

and

Largo from the New World Symphony



Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society
RTWCS Orchestra (leader Jane Gomm)

Erica Eloff – soprano

Helen Sherman – mezzo soprano

Nathan Vale – tenor

Håkan Vramsmo – baritone

Conducted by Richard Jenkinson

The Assembly Hall Theatre
Tunbridge Wells TN1 2LU
Sunday April 10th 2011, 3.00pm
Tickets from £5

Royal Tunbridge Wells

**CHORAL
SOCIETY**

www.rtwcs.org.uk

Programme £2.00

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The Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society is a member of NFMS ("Making Music") and is a Registered Charity No 273310.

For further information about the Society visit our website

www.rtwcs.org.uk

Programme

Note on applause:

We are more than happy to hear you applaud if you wish to show your appreciation of the performance! So as to cause as little disruption as possible to the flow of the piece we have indicated places where there is a suitable pause for applause by the symbol: 

Largo from Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95 (From the New World)

Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)



Stabat Mater: Movements I – V

Antonin Dvořák



INTERVAL – 20 MINUTES

Stabat Mater: Movements VI – X



Programme notes

Largo from Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95 (From the New World)

The *Symphony No. 9* was Dvořák's last and most popular of symphonies and was the outcome of his visit to America on the invitation of Mrs. Jeannette Thurber, the wife of a wealthy New York grocer who had decided that America should have a Conservatory of Music based on the European pattern, and had promptly founded one. She also thought that it should have a European director; two names were suggested to her, Dvořák, then aged 50 and with a considerable international reputation, and Sibelius, who was 32 and less well-known. She chose to invite Dvořák, who accepted, and in September 1892 he and his family arrived in New York.

The *Symphony No. 9* was the first of Dvořák's compositions to be written wholly in America; he sketched the first themes in December 1892 and completed it the following May. Anton Seidel conducted its first performance at a New York Philharmonic Society concert in December 1893.

The Largo is a supremely beautiful movement which was described as *Legend* in the original sketch and was inspired by the verses in Longfellow's poem *The Song of Hiawatha* describing Minnehaha's death and her burial in the forest. Some glorious harmonies precede a haunting theme played by the cor anglais, one of Dvořák's most beautiful creations. This melody, sounding like a spiritual itself, in fact became the basis of one, entitled *Goin' home*, with words married to Dvořák's theme by William Arms Fisher. The beauty and pathos of this tune are enhanced when it makes its reappearance at the end of the movement, after a livelier episode in which the woodwind have a passage that suggests the dancing flight of birds or insects and a menacing reference to a theme from the first movement. Famously it formed the theme music for a television commercial promoting a well-known brand of bread!



Stabat Mater

The text of the *Stabat Mater* is a typical example of religious poetry which flourished in Central Italy in late medieval times: essentially it is a meditation in which the listener is invited to share the anguish of Christ's mother Mary, who watched as her Son Jesus suffered on the Cross. The subject matter incorporates a prophecy recounted in the gospel of St. Luke, and said to have been spoken by Simeon when Christ was still a child, that a sword was to pierce the heart of Christ's mother Mary (Luke 2: 35): in other words that she would suffer greatly. As the poem progresses it moves from depicting the sorrow and tears of the grieving mother and develops into a prayer for still greater empathy, with the poet asking to share the pains of Christ on the Cross and thus to deserve the place in Paradise for which he prays in the closing words.

This powerful theme is set in a simple rhyming scheme (AAB) of short stanzas, almost inviting a composer to set each with a different affect. The words, first thought to be by Jacapone da Todi, a thirteenth century Franciscan monk, have also more recently been ascribed variously to St Gregory the Great (d. 604), St Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153), Innocent III (d. 1216), St Bonaventure (d. 1274), Jacopone (d. 1306), Pope John XXIII (d. 1334), and Gregory XI (d. 1378).

Whatever its provenance, it is clear that the poem as a hymn was well known to all classes by the end of the fourteenth century. It is found in several European (but not English) Missals of the fifteenth century, but was not officially introduced into the Roman Breviary and Missal until 1727. (In the Breviary it is divided into three parts: at Vespers, *Stabat Mater dolorosa*; at Matins, *Sancta Mater, istud agas*; at Lauds, *Virgo virginum praeclara*). The *Stabat Mater* is particularly associated with the devotional rite of the Stations of the Cross and, when the Stations were performed in church or an outdoor procession, it was customary to sing stanzas of the hymn while walking from one Station to the next.

This most moving piece of music was Dvořák's response to the death of his daughter. After having to postpone the orchestration he returned to the piece a year later, after the death of his two surviving children. The anguish is there for us all to hear, and yet the composer manages to retain a sense that they have "gone to a better place". One can only imagine how, or if, his Catholic faith sustained him, but the final movement in a major key certainly suggests the triumph of life over death. Dvořák was a devout Catholic, and his most enduring choral works are all religious: the *Te Deum*, the *Requiem* and the *Stabat Mater*.

The text of the *Stabat Mater* is divided into ten separate movements and is freely treated, contrasting with Verdi's later single-movement setting, where the drama comes from the textual treatment rather than the musical form alone. The impressive first movement of Dvořák's work describes the Virgin Mary by the Cross, and the music is echoed in the final movement, where the poet prays that his soul too may enter Paradise. Of the other movements, the music of the *Eia Mater* is particularly notable, although the setting of the words is not always felicitous, while the *Tui Nati* is a simple and successful setting. The lyrical passages evoke a certain melancholy, showing the deep influence on Dvořák of Czech folk music.

Dvořák conducted performances of the *Stabat Mater* in the Royal Albert Hall in London in March 1884 and at that year's Three Choirs Festival in Worcester Cathedral. This second occasion also marked the cathedral's 800th anniversary. Following these performances, Dvořák received a number of commissions from choral festivals, including a suggestion that he should set Newman's *The Dream of Gerontius* for Birmingham. In the event, he wrote the *Requiem* for Birmingham instead. Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* was last performed by the Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society on 2nd May 1906 – the second concert that the choir staged after its formation.

Performers

Richard Jenkinson – Conductor

Richard was a scholarship student at the Royal College of Music in London, where he won many prizes and awards for his work, and where Sir David Willcocks was a huge influence and guide. He works regularly with many choral societies, chamber choirs and church choirs in and around London/Southern England, and has appeared at most of the major venues.

Richard is now enjoying the challenges of his exciting new appointment as Conductor of The London Orpheus Choir, following in the illustrious footsteps of James Gaddarn, and developing his own chamber choir Meridian Voices.

Other projects include helping to develop great choral singing in local secondary schools, running RTWCS's own "Vocal Academy," and leading musical exchanges between his English choirs and their twin town counterparts abroad.

This season includes appearances at Winchester, Hereford and Arundel Cathedrals, and conducting performances of many great works, such as Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*, Haydn's "Nelson" Mass, Duruflé's *Requiem* and Bach's *St. John Passion*, plus works by Vaughan Williams, Rutter, Buxtehude, Pergolesi – and many more.

Away from music, Richard continues to enjoy sport (mostly viewed from the safety of a comfy sofa!) plus good wine and local beer!



Jane Gomm – Orchestra Leader

Sussex-born Jane studied the violin at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Since leaving college she has been a member of the London Mozart Players, the London Festival Orchestra and the Orchestra of St. Johns and in 1986 joined the City of London Sinfonia.

Jane also directs her own chamber music group, The Ruskin Ensemble and has performed with them at the Edinburgh and Brighton Festivals, the British Embassy in Paris, Number 11 Downing Street and music clubs and country houses throughout the British Isles and the Netherlands.



Erica Eloff – Soprano



Winner of the 2008 London Handel Competition, Erica was born in South Africa. She graduated from the Potchefstroom University with a B.MUS degree and Post Graduate Diploma in Performance (Cum Laude).

As well as performing opera roles her many oratorio performances in the UK, Germany, Norway and South Africa include the *St John- and St Matthew Passions* and other cantatas by Bach; Beethoven *Missa Solemnis in D*; *Messiah* and *Theodora* by Handel; Haydn *Creation*; Gounod *Messa di St. Cecilia*; *Krönungsmesse* and *Exsultate, jubilate* by Mozart; *Carmina Burana* by Orff; Schubert *Mass in G major*; Vaughan Williams' *Benedicite, Hodie* and *Serenade to music*; Vivaldi *Gloria*; Dvořák *Te Deum*; and the *Requiem's* of Brahms, Fauré, Mozart, Rutter, Lloyd-Weber and Martin Watt. Many of these performances took place in major concert venues including the Royal Albert Hall, St. John Smith's Square, Cadogan Hall and the De Montfort Hall, Leicester.

Erica has been interviewed by Petroc Trelawny on *In Tune* for BBC 3, by Bob Jones for ClassicFM, and has appeared several times on South African Radio and Television (SABC).

Future plans include *The Creation* in Cadogan Hall, various recitals throughout the UK, Violetta *La Traviata* for Opera at Bearwood and a concert tour through South Africa with Mark Nixon and Margriet van Reisen.

Helen Sherman – Mezzo Soprano



Born in Australia, Helen Sherman studied at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Following her success in the 2007 Australian Singing Competition she was awarded a scholarship to the Royal Northern College of Music.

Over the last year, Helen has given debut concerts at Wigmore Hall, the Purcell Room, Bridgewater Hall and Royal Albert Hall and appeared with Roger Vignoles and Mikhail Zemtsov in the Cambridge Summer Recital series. At the RNCM she sang the roles of Hélène (Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène*), Sesto (Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*) and Cyrus (Handel's *Belshazzar*). She also recorded with the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra as part of an International Opera Productions prize and broadcast a recital for ABC Classic FM in Australia.

Future engagements include concerts at Wigmore Hall, City of London Festival and a performance of Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder* with the Liverpool Mozart Orchestra. An experienced concert soloist, Helen has performed in the United Kingdom, Europe and Australia in works from Bach to Weigl.

Nathan Vale – Tenor

Nathan Vale was a Choral Scholar at Wells Cathedral before commencing his studies at the Royal College of Music. He was one of the first recipients of the Peter Pears Scholarship, and graduated from the Royal College in 2008. He is the winner of the 2006 London Handel Singing Competition, where he was also awarded the Audience Prize. Nathan currently studies at the National Opera Studio.

Concert highlights include, Bach's *Weinachts-Oratorium* with the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra and Harry Christophers, Handel's *Messiah* with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano and Sir Neville Marriner, Evangelist in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Northern Sinfonia and Thomas Zehetmair.

His operatic engagements include, Lurcanio in *Ariodante*, Oronte in *Alcina*, Emilio in *Partenope*, and cover Lurcano in *Poppea* for ENO, Belfiore *La Finta Giardiniera*, Pedrillo *Die Entführung Aus Dem Serail*, Nencio in Haydn's *L'Infidelta Delusa* and First Prisoner in *Fidelio*.

Recent and future engagements include Lurcanio in *Ariodante* with Bolshoi Opera, Male Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia*, *L'enfant est les Sortilèges* and Britten's *War Requiem*. Nathan has also made a recording of English Songs with pianist Paul Plummer for SOMM Records.



Håkan Vramsmo – Baritone

Born in Sweden, Håkan Vramsmo graduated from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London in 2001 with distinction and immediately went on to sing at the opening night of the BBC Proms.

He has performed at major venues and festivals throughout Europe including Wigmore Hall, Bridgewater Hall, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Santiago de Compostela, Madrid, Barcelona, Stuttgart Liederhalle, Sibeliusacademin, Aldeburgh, Bath, Cheltenham and Newbury. He has also recorded for BBC Radio 3, Swedish Radio and Television.

Most recently Håkan has performed Schubert's *Winterreise* and *Elijah*, as well as performing at the BBC Proms and the Isle of Man, Dublin, Nürnberg and Wrocław Festivals. He has also recorded songs by Finzi, Barber and Schubert for BBC and *Private Joe* by Panufnik for Polish radio/Television and Elizabeth Maconchy's opera *The Departure* for Chandos Records.

His operatic roles have included Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*), Valentin (*Faust*) and Belcore (*L'Elisire D'amore*), Sancho Panza (Mendelssohn's *Die Hochzeit des Camacho*), High Priest (*Samson & Delila*), Tarquinius (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Il Conte (*Nozze di Figaro*), Papageno (*The Magic Flute*), Schaunard and Marcello (*La Bohème*), Ernesto (*Il mondo della luna*) and Axel in the world premiere of Anna Meredith's *Tarantula in Petrol Blue*.



The choir



In November 1904 rehearsals began for the **Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society's** first concert, a performance of Brahms' *Requiem*, under the baton of its founder, Francis J Foote, in May 1905. The Society has been staging concerts almost every year for over a hundred years since that inaugural concert. Recent highlights have been the concert to celebrate our Centenary in 2004, when we welcomed the Bach Choir of Wiesbaden to sing with us, many joint concerts with them, both here and in Wiesbaden and a performance of Haydn's *The Creation* in November 2007 to celebrate the 100th birthday of our distinguished President, Roy Douglas.

The Society continues to flourish as membership and audiences grow and we look forward to a future of many more memorable concerts. If you are interested in joining the choir please email Trevor Hurrell at hurrellt@gmail.com.

Sopranos

Glynis Avis	Suzie Duke	Abigail Ingram	Pat Prior
Diana Blower	Jill Dunstall	Jenny Jessup	Helena Read
Sylvia Byers	Joyce Eckett	Eve Johnson	Jane Reed
Heather Champion	Marie-Therese Feeley	Jackie Kennedy	Sue Rogers
Susan Chandler	Elena Gente	Elena Lewis Grey	Ali Rycroft
Amy Cordani	Marion Gibbon	Helen MacNab	Ann Spillman
Sue Cordani	Ann Greenfield	Barbara Maw	Audrey Wallin
Liz Crothall	Lynn Groves	Anne Metherell	Selma Wells
Patsy Dale	Audrey Hadfield	Sally Paisley	
Diana Dann	Barbara Hazelden	Michèle Palmer	

Altos

Kate Brown	Nicola Gooch	Liz Lambert	Shirley Robinson
Margaret Butcher	Sharon Harrison	Moira Mc Millan	Olivia Seaman
Marion Chase	Shirley Harrison	Jessica Mookherjee	Yvonne Spencer
Pauline Coxshall	Heather Herrin	Shirley Morgan	Audrey Stuart Black
Judith Day Robinson	Teresa Hurley	Shirley Nankivell	Celia Sumner
Joanna Finlay	Jane Jackson	Sylvia Parsons	Muriel Thatcher
Eileen Gall	Sheila Jones	Liz Rathbone	Felicity Wilkin
Ruth C Gray	Victoria Joyce	Rosalyn Robertson	

Tenors

Donald Haley	José-Luis Parody	Toby Thompson	Steve Williamson
Gareth Looker	Warren Silk	Jeremy Tucker	
David Miller	Alan Spencer	Derek Watmough	

Basses

Clive Brock	Roy Dunstall	John Moffat	Richard Segall Jones
Gerald Chew	David Ham	Cyril Rogers	Clive Steward
Patrick Connelly	Trevor Harrison	Eric Scott	
Michael Dowden	David Lyall	David Scott-Cowan	

Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society Orchestra

First violins

Jane Gomm
Gregory Warren-
Wilson
Nicky Goodwin
Ingrid Sellschop
Tim Good
Anne Martin

Second violins

Rachel Hess
Joyce Fraser
Rachel Eyres
Julia Chellel
Shereen Godber

Viola

Nigel Goodwin
Mike Briggs
Lynn Whitley
Jane Taunton

Cello

David Burrowes
Will Bass
Felix Buser

Double Bass

Andrew Laing
Helen Greave

Flute

Clare Jefferis
Claire Specht

Oboe (1st doubling cor anglais)

Sheila Marshall
Christine Geer

Clarinet

Andrew Sutton
Kate Fish

Bassoon

Julia Staniforth
Jo Turner

Horns

Ian Stott
Jason Koczur
Alexia Cammish
Stuart Carruthers

Trumpets

Edward Maxwell
Richard Thomas

Trombones

Amy Wetmore
Geoff Batchelor
Alastair Warren

Tuba

Jeff Miller

Timpani

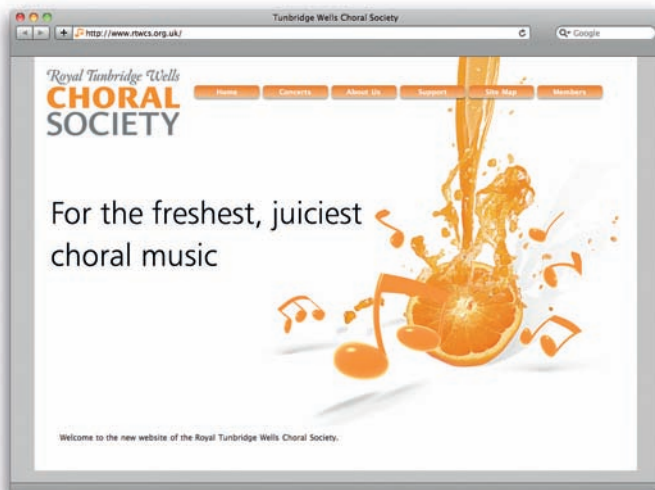
John Rockliffe

Organ

Christopher Harris

**For more information about the Royal
Tunbridge Wells Choral Society visit
www.rtwcs.org.uk**

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The words

I

Stabat Mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem lacrimosa,
Dum pendebat Filius.

Cujus animam gementem,
Contristatam et dolentem
Pertransiit gladius.

O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa benedicta,
Mater Unigeniti!

Quæ mærebat et dolebat,
Pia Mater, dum videbat
Nati poenas incliti.

II

Quis est homo qui non fleret,
Matrem Christi si videret
In tanto supplicio?

Quis non posset contristari,
Christi Matrem contemplari
Dolentem cum Filio?

Pro peccatis suæ gentis
Vidit Jesum in tormentis,
Et flagellis subditum.

Vidit suum dulcem Natum
Moriendo desolatum,
Dum emisit spiritum.

III

Eia, Mater, fons amoris
Me sentire vim doloris
Fac, ut tecum, lugeam.

IV

Fac ut ardeat cor meum
In amando Christum Deum,
Ut sibi complaceam.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,
Crucifixi fige plagas
Cordi meo valide.

V

Tui Nati vulnerati,
Tam dignati pro me pati,
Poenas mecum divide.



The grieving Mother stood weeping
beside the cross,
While her Son was hanging there.

Her mourning soul,
Compassionate and suffering
Was pierced as by a sword.

O how sad and afflicted
Was that blessed
Mother of the only begotten!

How she sorrowed and grieved,
The devoted Mother, while she watched
The agonies of her glorious child.

Who is the man who would not weep
If he should see the Mother of Christ
In such great distress?

Who would not be saddened
If he should behold the Mother of Christ
Suffering with her only Son?

For the sins of his people
She saw Jesus in torments,
And subjected to the scourge.

She saw her sweet child,
Dying, forsaken,
While he gave up his Spirit.

Oh Mother, fount of love
Let me feel the force of your grief
So that I may grieve with you.

Grant that my heart may burn
In loving Christ my God,
So that I may be pleasing to him.

Holy Mother, grant that the wounds
Of the Crucified
May strike deep into my heart.

Share with me the pain of your wounded Son,
Who was so gracious
As to suffer for me.

INTERVAL – 20 MINUTES

VI

Fac me vere tecum flere,
Crucifixo condolere,
Donec ego vixero.

Juxta crucem tecum stare
Te libenter sociare
In planctu desidero.

VII

Virgo virginum præclara,
Mihi jam non sis amara,
Fac me tecum plangere.

VIII

Fac, ut portem Christi mortem,
Passionis fac consortem,
Plagas recolere.

Fac me plagis vulnerari,
Cruce hac inebriari,
Ob amorem Filii.

IX

Inflammatum et accensum,
Per te, Virgo, sim defensum
In die judicii.

Fac me cruce custodiri,
Morte Christi præmuniri,
Confoveri gratia.

X

Quando corpus morietur,
Fac, ut animæ donetur
Paradisi gloria. Amen.



Let me weep with you, devotedly, sincerely,
And bemoan the Crucified
As long as I shall live.

To stay with you beside the cross
And to join in your lamentation
Is all that I desire.

Most excellent of all virgins,
Do not be harsh to me,
But let me share your sorrowing.

Grant that I may carry the death of Christ,
Be his companion in his Passion,
And commemorate his wounds.

Let me be wounded by what has hurt him,
Let me be intoxicated by the Cross and by
The blood of your Son.

Lest I be set afire in the flames of damnation,
Through you, O Virgin, may I be defended
On the day of judgement.

Make me a guardian of the cross,
Protector of the death of Christ,
Cherisher of grace.

When my body comes to die,
Grant that my soul may be given
The glory of Paradise. Amen.

Advance information

We hope you enjoyed this concert – if so, you may like to be kept informed about our future concerts. Please fill in your details below and return to us and we will send you advance information as it becomes available.

Please send me advance information about RTWCS concerts.

Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms) _____ First name _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Email _____

Please return to: Gareth Looker (RTWCS Publicity Officer)

Looker Strategic Communications Ltd., 1 Lime Hill Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN11 1LJ

Forthcoming concerts to be given by the choir

Wiesbaden, with the Bach Chor Centenary of the Lutherkirche

Rutter: *Requiem*

Mendelssohn: *Hear My Prayer*



Summer Concert 2011: In memory of Richard Gosling

Saturday June 25th

St John's Church, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 9LG

Rutter: *Requiem*

Mendelssohn: *Hear My Prayer*

With the RTWCS Orchestra.



Autumn Concert 2011

Saturday November 12th, 7.00pm

The Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells,
TN1 2LU

Mendelssohn: *Elijah*

With the RTWCS Orchestra.

Christmas Concert 2011

Sunday December 12th, 6.30pm

St Mary's Church, Goudhurst TN17 1AN

Handel: *Messiah (excerpts)*

Williamson: *A World at the Manger*

Plus traditional carols performed by choir
with audience participation.

With the Mayfield Brass Band.



Other local concerts

Tonbridge Music Club

Saturday 7th May 2011 at 8.00pm;

Big School, High Street, Tonbridge, Kent
TN9 1JP

London Conchord Ensemble

Pierné: *Sonata da Camera*

Poulenc: *Sextet*

Barber: *Summer Music*

Brahms: *Clarinet Trio in A minor, Op 114*

www.tmc.org.uk

Sussex Festival Choir

Sunday 31st July 2011 at 7.15pm;

Arundel Cathedral, Arundel, West Sussex
BN18 9AY

Bach: Mass in B minor

With soloists Dame Emma Kirkby, Sarah
Connolly, Neil Jenkins and David Wilson-
Johnson

[http://sites.google.com/site/sussexfestival
choir/home](http://sites.google.com/site/sussexfestivalchoir/home)