



ST. MATTHEW'S CHOIR

Presents

ROSSINI  
MESSE  
SOLENNELLE

SUNDAY 29TH MARCH 7.30 PM

ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH, NORTH COMMON ROAD, EALING, W5 2QA

## ABOUT ROSSINI



Gioachino Rossini was born on 29 February 1792 and wasted no time establishing himself as a composer. His first opera, *La Cambiale di Matrimonio*, was produced at Venice when he was just 18. Two years before this he had already received the prize at the Conservatorio of Bologna for his cantata *Il piantô d'armonia per la morte d'Orfeo*.

By 1815, at the age of 23, he was appointed musical director of the royal theatres, Naples. The following year the *Barber of Seville* had its premiere. Nine years later he was in Paris, directing the Théâtre Italien. Between 1815 and 1823 Rossini produced 20 more operas. Following the premier of *Guillaume Tell* in 1829, he returned to Bologna. His mother had died in 1827, and he was anxious to be with his father.

By this time his sacred choral writing was limited to a *Messa di Gloria* (1820) and some smaller fragments, and he was to produce six movements of his *Stabat Mater* in 1832. This was to be his last major work until 1864, when he wrote the *Petite Messe Solennelle*. He had returned to Paris in 1855, living in comfortable retirement in Passy, amid the companionship of a glittering group of artistic and intellectual celebrities. During these last years Rossini composed over 150 vocal and solo piano pieces into 14 unpublished albums, under his self-deprecating and ironic title, *Péchés de vieillesse* (Sins of Old Age).

## ABOUT PETITE MESSE SOLENNELLE

Rossini's skill and sense of humour are clear in the *Petite Messe Solennelle*. He prefaces the score of the Messe with:

*"Petite Messe Solennelle, in four parts with accompaniment of two pianos and harmonium, composed during my country vacation at Passy. Twelve singers of three sexes – men, women and castrati – will be sufficient for its execution: that is, eight for the chorus, four for the solos, a total of twelve cherubim. Dear God, forgive me the following comparison: twelve are also the Apostles in the celebrated jaw-stroke (coup de michoire) painted in fresco by Leonardo, called The Last Supper, who would believe it! Among your disciples are some who strike false notes!! Lord, rest assured, I swear that there will be no Judas at my supper and that mine will sing properly and con amore your praises and this little composition which is, alas, the final sin of my old age."*

Originally scored for two pianos and harmonium, Rossini was reluctant to produce an orchestral version. He was unable to secure a papal dispensation to allow women to sing in church, and particularly didn't want it performed with boys' voices. He did eventually produce a version for orchestra, which was never publicly performed during his lifetime, and in typical understatement, said that

he had added some "modest strings and winds to the accompaniment".

Rossini is able to combine a wide variety of styles in this work, and shows a level of understanding of the voice and the instruments that only a master has. Conceived as a chamber music piece, the rhythm and clarity of scoring is major feature. Stylistically, there are fugues and expressive a capella movements for the choir, an aria for each voice, and contemplative piano solo. There is no 'home key' for the work, with each movement being written in what is the right key for that piece and the chosen instrument or voices, hence the short *Ritornelle* (return) after the prelude, to bridge the gap between F sharp minor and the unaccompanied C major of the *Sanctus*.

At the end of the manuscript is another message to God:

*"Dear God, there you have it, finished, this poor little mass. Is it really sacred music or is it damned music that I have created? (Est-ce bien de la musique sacrée que je viens de faire ou bien de la sacrée musique?) I was born for opera buffa, as you well know! Little technique, a little heart, that is all. So may you be blessed and grant me Paradise."*

G. Rossini, Passy, 1863

## CONDUCTOR

PHIROZ  
DALAL



Phiroz Dalal's music training began at a young age when he started with the piano with Eileen Rowe in Ealing. He was introduced to the music at St Matthew's in 1983 and in 2003 took over as director of the concert choir. He has a Masters in Choral Education from the University of Roehampton and sings with the BBC Symphony Chorus. He is a chartered engineer, specialising in designing and building bridges.

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PIANO  
JENNIFER  
CARTER



Jennifer Carter was born in Bristol in 1985, and won scholarships to the Junior Department of the Royal Welsh College of Music, and to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She has been awarded a further scholarship for her postgraduate studies at Guildhall, and has played in St George's Bristol and LSO St Luke's. Overseas tours include Scandinavia with her piano trio, Trio Theophilus, and a tour of Germany with a Munich International Competition prizewinner.

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PIANO  
LOUISA  
LAM



Louisa Lam has a Masters from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and works in London, as an accompanist and teacher. She has performed at Barbican Hall, Wigmore Hall and St Paul's Cathedral and the Auditori Winterhur in Barcelona. She is also resident pianist at the Ardingly International Music School and Abingdon Summer School for Singers [www.louisalam.com](http://www.louisalam.com)

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ORGAN  
RICHARD  
THOMAS



Richard Thomas was appointed organist and choirmaster of St Matthew's Church in 2005 after 15 years' service in the choir. He is also the founder and musical director of Tredici chamber choir and is a former member of the Philharmonia Chorus, where as Chairman (1999-2002) he led the choir on international tours. In his day job he works in the Fundraising and Supporter Marketing department at Cancer Research UK.

SOPRANO  
LURELLE  
ALEFOUNDER



New Zealander Lurelle Alefounder studied at Wellington Conservatorium, Royal Northern College of Music and Guildhall School of Music. She has sung with the Welsh National Opera, British Youth Opera and Covent Garden Festival, in roles including Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Papagena (*Die Zauberflöte*), Violetta (*La Traviata*), Musetta (*La Bohème*), Antonia (*Tales of Hoffmann*), as well as Lucia (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) for English National Opera.

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ALTO  
LYDIA  
MARCHIONE



Lydia Marchione studied singing at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and has since been an opera soloist in the UK and overseas. She has sung with the English Touring Opera, the European Chamber Opera and the English National Opera.

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TENOR  
RICHARD  
BARROWCLOUGH



Richard Barrowclough was born in Mirfield, West Yorkshire and studied at the Royal College of Music. He has sung Mozart *Mass in C minor* (London Mozart Players), Mozart *Requiem* (The London Sinfonia), Haydn *Stabat Mater* (The London Sinfonia) and Handel *Messiah* (New London Baroque Sinfonia). Operatic roles include Gaston in *La Traviata* for Pimlico Opera, Normanno in *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Pavilion Opera and Cavaradossi in *Tosca* for Opus 1 Opera.

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BASS  
MATTHEW  
WALDREN



Singer and conductor Matthew Waldren trained at the Royal College of Music, Cambridge University, and Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He has performed for Grange Park Opera, Raymond Gubbay, Carl Rosa Opera, Opera de Baugé, and the G&S Opera Company. Roles include the Tall Englishman (*The Gambler*), Cénotibe (*Thais*), Dick Deadeye and the Carpenter (*HMS Pinafore*), and Zuniga (*Carmen*). Forthcoming is a Prom of *Fidelio* under Barenboim.

## THE MOVEMENTS

KYRIE ELEISON	<i>Choir</i>
GLORIA IN EXCELSIS	<i>Choir</i>
LAUDAMUS TE	<i>Quartet &amp; Choir</i>
GRATIAS	<i>Alto, Tenor &amp; Bass Trio</i>
DOMINE DEUS	<i>Tenor Solo</i>
QUI TOLLIS	<i>Soprano &amp; Alto Duet</i>
QUONIAM	<i>Bass Solo</i>
CUM SANCTO SPIRITU	<i>Choir</i>
CREDO IN	
UNUM DEUM	<i>Quartet &amp; Choir</i>
CRUCIFIXUS	<i>Soprano Solo</i>
ET RESURREXIT	<i>Quartet &amp; Choir</i>
ET VITAM VENTURI	<i>Quartet &amp; Choir</i>
PRÉLUDE RELIGIEUX	<i>Organ, Piano, Organ</i>
RITORNELLE	<i>Organ</i>
SANCTUS &	
BENEDICTUS	<i>Quartet &amp; Choir</i>
O SALUTARIS	<i>Soprano Solo</i>
AGNUS DEI	<i>Alto Solo &amp; Choir</i>

## ABOUT ST MATTHEW'S CHOIR

St Matthew's Church has an enviable reputation for the excellence of its music, both in concert and in the services. The concert choir's recent performances include Vaughan Williams' *Mass in G Minor*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, and Rachmaninov's *Vespers*. The choir regularly collaborates with West London Sinfonia, and has performed Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, Verdi's *Requiem*, and Mahler's *Second Symphony* with them. Forthcoming concerts this year include Brahms *Requiem* in June, on the 125th anniversary of the church's consecration, and Karl Jenkins' *Armed Man* in November. Since 2003, St Matthew's Choir concerts have been projected on a big screen above the performers, meaning the audience is able to watch the normally unseen parts of the performance, such as pianists' or organists' fingers, and the conductor's face. The choir enjoys high musical standards and a full diary, and is always delighted to hear from anyone interested in joining.

## WITH THANKS

Treasurer and librarian	<i>Karen Benny</i>
Choir manager	<i>Alison Dalal</i>
Rehearsal pianist	<i>Ken Williams</i>
Rehearsal refreshments	<i>Diana Duff-Miller</i>
Box office	<i>Molly Thomas</i>
Front of house	<i>Beryl Bevan</i>
Staging	<i>Members of the choir</i>
Technical director	<i>David Benny</i>
Video director	<i>Stephanie King</i>
Video mixer	<i>Nick King</i>
Cameras	<i>Peter Cocup, Di Benny</i>
Poster and programme	<i>Alison Stawarz</i>
Licensing	<i>Jane Salisbury</i>
Vocal scores	<i>Ealing Music Library</i>

...and to the Vicar and congregation of St Matthew's Church for their continued support.

Coming next

**BRAHMS**  
REQUIEM

SUNDAY 14TH JUNE 7.30 PM

First Brahms Rehearsal: Thursday 16th April 2009  
7.30 pm–9.30 pm St. Matthew's Church

NEW MEMBERS WITH SOME SINGING EXPERIENCE  
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