

St. Andrews Church, Bedford

A performance of ROSSINI's

# PETITE MESSE SOLENNELLE

Will be given by

**BIGGLESWADE & DISTRICT CHORAL SOCIETY**

and

**WENDOVER CHORAL SOCIETY**

on

**Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm**

with

*Rebecca Bottone*  
*Elinor Carter*  
*Peter Wilman*  
*Norman Welsby*

*soprano*  
*contralto*  
*tenor*  
*bass*

*piano:*

**Barry Bygraves**

*harmonium:*

**William Soames**

Conductor

## **Howard Parkhouse**

Programme 50p

## Petite Messe Solennelle

Kyrie .....	Chorus and Soloists
Gloria.....	Chorus and Soloists
Gratias.....	Mezzo Soprano, Tenor and Bass
Domine Deus.....	Tenor
Qui Tollis.....	Soprano and Mezzo Soprano
Quoniam.....	Bass
Cum Sancto Spiritu.....	Chorus

### Interval

Credo.....	Chorus and Soloists
Crucifixus.....	Soprano
Et Resurrexit.....	Chorus and Soloists
Preludio Religioso.....	Piano
Sanctus.....	Chorus and Soloists
O Salutaris.....	Soprano
Agnus Dei.....	Mezzo Soprano and Chorus

## Gioacchino Rossini 1792 – 1868

Rossini is chiefly remembered today as a composer of operas, some of them of enormous length and equal difficulty, but many people do not realise that by no means all of his life was spent in this capacity. It is true that for the first twenty years of his working life he wrote little else, building an unparalleled reputation as a composer for the theatre and a considerable fortune to match, but during the 1830s he became increasingly disillusioned with the bickering and bartering involved with this way of life and, after finishing his lengthiest and most problematical opera, *William Tell*, he

vowed he would write no more works in this medium. He was as good as his word and during the remaining twenty-five years of his life he devoted himself almost exclusively to writing chamber music and works of a religious nature, and never again wrote anything of any size for the opera house. In spite of this, however, he could never totally eradicate the spirit of the theatre from his blood and when, near the end of his life, he conceived the idea of writing a Mass, he found at the end of the day that he had composed a work endowed as much with the smell of grease-paint as with that of incense. It was as if in recognition of this fact that he wrote a little postscript on the autographed score in the form of an apologetic letter to God: "*Good God, there we have it, complete, this poor little Mass. Is it really sacred music that I have made, or is it abominable music? I was born for opera buffa, as Thou well knowest. Little skill, a little heart, and that is all. So be Thou blessed and admit me to Paradise. G. Rossini, Passy, 1863.*"

As if to emphasise the unusual nature of the work, Rossini scored the accompaniment for the extraordinary combination of piano and harmonium; and the first performance, a private one, was given in the house of the Contesse Louise Pillet-Will (to whom the work was dedicated) on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1864. It was received with great enthusiasm, and although Rossini, after much persuasion, did rearrange the mass for full orchestra, it is generally recognised that this original version is superior to it.

The work was given the title *Petite Messe Solennelle* and it is one which must have caused some surprise amongst the audience at that first performance for it is not particularly small; it is, in fact, a typical example of Rossini's playful wit, for which he was well renowned throughout his life. The Mass itself, however, he treated seriously – far more seriously than one might think – and although the only musical language he really knew was that of the opera-house, this in no way detracts from the sincerity of the piece. He had always possessed a profound religious conviction and this was borne out at the very end of his life. When he was asked by his priest how deep his belief in God was, Rossini replied with great firmness: "*Would I have been able to write the Stabat Mater and the Mass if I had not been faithful?*"

**REBECCA BOTTONE** is a student at the Royal College of Music, London, and is studying singing with Margaret Kingsley. Originally from Bedford, Rebecca has sung leading roles with the Bedfordshire Youth Opera and has given recitals in St. Paul's Church, Bedford, and for the Anglo-Italian Society which has also taken her to Arezzo in Italy. Rebecca has participated in masterclasses with Ian Partridge as well as college opera productions in London and Paris. She recently sang the soprano solos in Handel's *Messiah* in Bedford and is a member of the St. Albans church choir, Holborn.

**ELINOR CARTER** was born in York and read French and German at Clare College, Cambridge, where she was a choral scholar under Tim Brown. Upon graduation she took up a place at the Royal College of Music to study singing with Neil Mackie. During her two years there she was awarded a Senior Exhibition and won prizes for her performances of Bach, Handel and English song. Elinor now lives and teaches in the Wallingford area and is a regular member of the Monteverdi Choir. Under the direction of Sir John Eliot Gardiner she has performed as a soloist in major European and American venues and on a recording of Vivaldi's *Gloria*. Other recent solo engagements have included Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in York Minster, the Berlioz *Les Nuits d'Été* with the Northern Sinfonia in Durham Cathedral and a third recital tour of Burgundy. Elinor currently studies with Jim Morgan.

**PETER WILMAN** was born in England and began his education at King's College, Gloucester. From there he studied at Christchurch College, Canterbury, where he gained a BA(Hons) Music and an MA (Performance Piano). He is currently studying for a Postgraduate Diploma (Singing) at Trinity College of Music. He has a wide experience of oratorio, having sung in the Bach *B Minor Mass*, Handel's *Messiah*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* and Mozart's *Requiem*. In May he will sing in *The Creation* (Haydn) in Oxfordshire. Peter has appeared in opera production directed by Benjamin Luxon – *The Gondoliers* (Sullivan), *The Rape of Lucretia* and *Peter Grimes* (Britten) and *Magic Flute* (Mozart). His teachers have included Sheila Luxon, Jim Morgan and Wendy Eathorne. He has attended masterclasses in Italy, and New York at the Mannes School of Music with Antonia Lavanne. Future engagements include work with the BBC Singers, and Sextus in Handel's *Julius Caesar*.

**NORMAN WELSBY** was born in Warrington and studied singing at the Royal Manchester College of Music with Gwylim Jones and Freddie Cox from 1964 to 1968 where he gained his ARMCM (Distinction) and was awarded the Imperial League of Opera Prize, the Ricordi prize and the Curtis Gold Medal. In the summer of 1965 and 1966 he performed with the Glyndebourne Opera Company. In 1967 he was a prizewinner in the BBC Radio North Opera competition, resulting in regular broadcasts of opera, recitals, oratorio, leader and concerts. During his time at RMCM he sang numerous operatic roles including Hans Sachs in Wagner's *Mastersingers of Nuremberg*, a role which later led to his being offered a contract to join the Sadlers Wells Opera Company (later the English National Opera) in 1968 as principal baritone. In 1976 Norman made his debut with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where he created the central character of the General in the world première of Henze's *We Come to the River*. As with the ENO, Norman performed numerous roles including Prince Ottokar (*Der Freischütz*), Ned Keene (*Peter Grimes*), Mr. Redburn (*Billy Budd*). He has also performed in oratorio, opera and concerts throughout the UK and Europe. He has made numerous recordings for both radio and television including four world premières.

**BARRY BYGRAVES** was born in Bedford and received his musical training at the Royal Academy of Music, London, studying with Alex Kelly, Francis Cameron, Joan Bonner and Ivor Foster. He is currently employed at De Montfort University as a senior lecturer, composer and performer. His music has been broadcast on ITV and BBC Radio; he has also composed the signature tune for BBC's 'Comedy Playhouse'. His career has led to a great interest in synthesized sound, coupled with sound recording.

**WILLIAM SOAMES** was educated at Simon Langton Grammar School in Canterbury, took his first organ post at the age of 11, and played for French Huguenot services weekly in Canterbury Cathedral. He studied music and music teaching under Watkins Shaw at Worcester, and then taught music in Northampton, Grimsby and Bedford, joining Biggleswade and District Choral Society as accompanist and deputy conductor in 1981.

**HOWARD PARKHOUSE** received his musical training at Trinity College of Music, London, studying with Irene Kohler, Geoffrey Hanson and Charles Proctor. In 1967 he played the organ continuo in this country in the first performance of Telemann's *St. Matthew Passion* which was given as part of the Camden Festival. He has given numerous organ recitals throughout the United Kingdom, Germany and New Zealand and has broadcast on TV and radio. Howard has lived and worked in Bedfordshire since 1969, teaching, advising, adjudicating, examining, performing and conducting. In addition to having conducted combined Bedfordshire Choirs in performances of Handel's *Messiah* and Verdi's *Requiem*, he is also Director of Music at St. Andrew's Parish Church.

\*\*\*\*\*

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE USE OF TAPE AND VIDEO RECORDERS IS *NOT ALLOWED***

\*\*\*\*\*

The Biggleswade and District Choral Society is a member of the National Federation of Music Societies.

\*\*\*\*\*

Registered Charity No. 29982581

\*\*\*\*\*

We would like to take this opportunity to thank **Mr. William Soames** and **Mrs. Anne Wright** who have accompanied the rehearsals, and the **Ladies from St. Andrews** for their help with interval refreshments.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Biggleswade and District Choral Society

### Sopranos

Pamela Blythe-Brooke  
Christine Brunt  
Sheila Cooke  
Enid Desert  
Barbara Eames  
Margaret Fitch  
Maira Fuller  
Jan Geeves  
Doreen Gibbons  
Janet Humphries  
Elsie Lane  
Jean Le Warne  
Clare Neville  
Beurrean Richards  
Vivian Stallan  
Evelyn Wilding  
Anne Wright

### Altos

Cynthia Dent  
Judith Emmerson  
Joyce Hall  
Valerie Heaps  
Betty King  
Alex McAlpine  
Pauline Russell  
Jill Shayler

### Tenors

Mike Bradley  
John Lane  
Joe Pateman  
Alan Smith

### Basses

Denis Desert  
Roy Gibbons  
Brian Hall  
Gordon Horner  
Leslie King  
Geoff Pickering  
Colin Rowlands  
Archie Russell  
Barry Thompson  
John Warren

## Wendover Choral Society

### Sopranos

Anne Berry  
Jane Cromarty  
Patricia Davies  
Sheila King  
Dawn Scott  
Karen Walters  
Lorna Wilson  
Angela Worth

### Altos

Pat Cashmore  
Angela Granville  
Jennifer King  
Sylvia Levitt  
Jill Richards  
Mandy Smith  
Denise Summers

### Tenors

Bob Graham  
John Harris  
Albert Heal  
Chas Martin

### Basses

John King  
Ken Perrin  
Robbie Robinson

Mr. & Mrs. F.G. Ball  
Mrs. V. Brown  
Mrs. M. Colbert  
Miss K. Dilley  
Mrs. O.M. Drake  
Mr. & Mrs. I. Gosling  
Mrs. M.R. Hardy  
Mr. & Mrs. S.E. Haylock  
Mr. J. Heaps  
Mr. & Mrs. G.H.B. Horner  
Mrs. M. Humphris

Rev'd. & Mrs. J. Lane  
Mr. J.K. Lee  
Mr. & Mrs. K. Marsom  
Mr. J.L. Myers  
Mr. & Mrs. M. Pickles  
Mr. A. Russell  
Mr. & Mrs. S.A. Russell  
Mr. & Mrs. R. Smith  
Mrs. S.I. Smith  
Mrs. J. Thompson  
Mr. & Mrs. M. Turner

*If you would like information about becoming a 'Friend'  
please contact: Mrs. M. Fitch (Tel: 01767 - 315318).*

\* \* \* \* \*

The Choral Society always welcomes new members.  
It rehearses on Tuesday evenings at St. Andrew's Church,  
Biggleswade at 8.00 p.m.

*If you would like to join us, please come along to a rehearsal  
or contact: Mrs. M.V. Heaps (Tel: 01462 - 700462).*

\* \* \* \* \*

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2000 - 7.30 p.m.**

Trinity Methodist Church, Biggleswade

Bring and Sing '*Crucifixion*'

**Saturday, 13th May, 2000 - 7.30 p.m.**

*'Musical Soirée'* – Trinity Methodist Church, Biggleswade.

\* \* \* \* \*