



César Franck - Mass in A Major

Matthew Greenway - Agnus Dei

Gabriel Fauré - Requiem

Soprano: Tamsin Raitt

Tenor: Stephen Brown

Bass: Fionn Ó hAlmhain

Cellist: Shabnam Gould

Organist: Paul Ayres

Conductor: Jack Apperley

Saturday 18th March, 2023

St Mary's Church, Twickenham, TW1 3NJ

Registered Charity No 1112448

Mass in A Major

César Franck (1822 – 1890)

The Messe Solennelle op.12 dates from 1860, two years before Franck was appointed to the post of organist at Sainte-Clotilde. Premiered in this parish in 1861, the mass was subsequently revised. The *Credo* and the *Agnus Dei* underwent substantial changes and the initial *O Salutaris* was replaced by a *Panis Angelicus*. This final version was performed in 1878 (again at Sainte-Clotilde). The organ, which was the composer's instrument of choice, is responsible both for supporting the voices and adding contrapuntal polyphony.

After a long introduction, the writing of the *Kyrie* recalls the "florid" style of chorale. The evocation of Christ in the second verse is in sharp contrast, with its minor keys, imitative writing and short homophonic motifs.

The *Gloria* begins with harp-like arpeggios whose rhythmic values create an unusual texture. The work continues with a melodic statement before the entry of the tenor solo. The movement ends with a return to the mood of the start.

Building from the entry of the solo bass, a slow tempo and an undulating counterpoint in C minor, the *Credo* ends triumphantly in C major in a blaze of modal colours. The *Sanctus* sets up a determined and "majestic" mood with more rhythmical themes, while its introspective counterpart, the *Panis Angelicus*, is set apart by the presence of the harp-like accompaniment and a counterpoint ornamented with chromatic shifts.

Finally, the *Agnus Dei* provides a showcase for the solo voices before the entry of the chorus. The work ends with the chorus alone, singing the phrase "dona nobis pacem" homorhythmically and ppp.

Agnus Dei

Matthew Greenway (b.2005)

"When I was assigned my final music A level composition, writing a choral piece for Concordia Voices immediately sprang to mind despite the challenges of writing such a complex style of music, and that choral music is very different from my normal compositions. The humanistic sound of voices in harmony means this style feels so personal to me and so to try and do it justice has been very difficult.

Having been inspired by some of my favourite choral composers from Whitacre and Gjeilo to Brahms and Bruckner, like them I wanted to strike a delicate balance

between the complexity of choral music but also its serenity. It has been a pleasure to hear Concordia sing this piece as well as seeing Jack's interpretation and I want to thank the choir for sticking through the unusual 8-part harmonies and for giving me the opportunity to have my piece debuted on my 18th birthday."

Matthew Greenway

Interval

Requiem

Gabriel Fauré (1845 – 1924)

Fauré had an intense dislike of the large-scale effects and lack of religious feeling in Berlioz's Requiem. His own setting avoided the dramatic *Dies irae*, which so dominates the Requiems of Mozart, Berlioz and Verdi. For Fauré a *Requiem* is a preparation for eternal rest, rather than for eternal torment. So there is no daunting *Dies irae* or menacing *Tuba mirum* in the work. Instead we have a reserved delicacy and refinement. It was even smaller in scale, with only five movements when it was first performed at the Madeleine in Paris in 1888. The occasion was the funeral of a member of the congregation, but the impetus for the work had been the death of Fauré's mother on the last day of the previous year. This performance lacked the *Offertoire*, which was not composed until 1889. It was included in a performance in 1893, along with a setting of *Libera me* which had been written as an independent piece in 1877. Both new movements included sections for a baritone solo: the original five movements were for choir only, except for a boy singing the solo *Pie Jesu*.

Fauré is generous with his melodies. It's not just the sopranos who get the good tunes; the tenors, in particular, do really well. After the chant-like opening, the *Introit and Kyrie* gives them the main theme, to which the sopranos reply with *Te decet hymnus*. A brief *Kyrie* uses the same melody before subsiding gently into silence.

The *Offertory* starts with an eerily soft canon between altos and tenors. A baritone soloist, accompanied by mildly syncopated rocking figures, takes over with *Hostias et preces*. The three lower voices repeat the opening section and, after "Save them, Lord, from the darkness of hell", a distant, but typically graceful, key change shines a redemptive light on the final *Amen*.

In the *Sanctus*, after a tentative entrance, the sopranos and tenors gradually gain confidence leading up to a full-blooded *Hosanna in excelsis*. The organ provides a

serene ending. This tranquillity is maintained in the familiar *Pie Jesu*, in which an angelic soprano line only rises up occasionally to *mezzoforte* in the repeated supplications of *Dona eis requiem* ("grant them rest").

The tenors return to centre stage again in the *Agnus Dei*, interrupted halfway by beguiling harmonies in all four voices. Via a sustained *Lux* in the sopranos, Fauré then takes us on a sinuous journey back through the more subdued keys of the previous two movements in preparation for one of the few loud passages in the work, "with all thy saints in endless glory for thy mercy's sake". The masterly chromatic voyage ends up in a triumphant A major. This heralds a return to the opening *Requiem aeternum*. The optimistic D major of the organ *coda* suggests that Fauré has faith in a merciful God.

Libera me begins with a plaintive baritone solo. The choir responds very timidly at first but becomes alarmed and fearful in the work's only direct reference to the Day of Judgement, *Dies illa, dies irae*. But the music gradually climbs out of this tense darkness into a sharper, brighter key for *Lux perpetua* ("eternal light"), Fauré once again expressing optimism in the face of death. The *Libera me* plea is repeated and the movement ends quietly with widely-spread chords.

In paradisum gives the sopranos the last word. This delightful movement acts as an epilogue, summing up the work's reassuring message. There is delicacy and refinement throughout. While a 'chorus of angels' 'sings us to our rest', the other voices merely provide harmonic support at the 'semi-colons' during the movement and at the final cadential 'full-stop'. For the most part, the tone of this timeless piece is elegiac and calm, and the key word is requiem, 'rest': the work begins and ends with it.

Fauré programme note provided by Clifford Bartlett and Thomas McCahill

Tamsin Raitt (Soprano)

Tamsin started her musical studies at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland as a junior student where she was supported by the Rachel Barry Bursary awarded for 'The Most Promising Young Singer' at the North East of Scotland Music Festival.

She went on to study at the Royal Academy of Music under the tutelage of Kathleen Livingstone and Iain Ledingham, and received a Bachelor of Music with First Class Honours. Tamsin enjoyed her time at the Academy where she was a

chorus member for the Kohn Foundation Bach Cantata Series and the proud receiver of the 2017 Arthur Burcher Memorial Prize for the highest mark in her third year recital.

Tamsin is currently a Fellow of St Martin's Voices at St Martin-in-the-Fields where she performs regularly. Her next performance with the Fellowship is Bach's St John's Passion.

Tamsin performs regularly for oratorio works and has performed in venues such as Cadogan Hall and De Montfort Hall. Upcoming engagements include Bach's Magnificat, Vivaldi's Magnificat, Cecilia McDowall's Da Vinci Requiem and Brahms' Requiem.

When not performing, Tamsin runs the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust which exists to bring chamber music to young people.

Stephen Brown (Tenor)

Stephen Brown is a young London-based Jugendlicher Heldentenor and recent graduate of the MMus programme at Trinity Laban. A Kathleen Creed scholar, Stephen has performed across the UK and Ireland with a current particular focus on English repertoire and Benjamin Britten. A few of his recent musical engagements include "Fredric" in *Pirates of Penzance* for Cardiff Opera, "Don Basilio/Don Curzio" in *The Marriage of Figaro* for Puzzle Piece Opera and "Joseph" in Oxfordshire Contemporary Opera's upcoming new opera *Fame & Envy*.

Stephen is also a keen improv artist, co-running the operatic improv group "Improvesarios", and spends what little time he has left sketching portraits for and of friends and family.

Fionn Ó hAlmhain (Bass)

Fionn Ó hAlmhain is a German-born bass who grew up in Ireland and is now based in London. He completed a BMus at the TU Dublin Conservatoire and studied singing with Dr Robert Alderson.

He has performed across Ireland and the UK, including work with Irish National Opera, Opera Collective Ireland, the Blackwater Valley Opera Festival, the Salford Choral Society and Piccadilly Symphony Orchestra. He was a member of the Lassus Scholars in Dublin and also sang as a deputy in other church choirs there.

Fionn is now undertaking an MA at the Royal Academy of Music under Professor Mark Wildmann and is a recipient of the Elton John Scholarship.

Since moving to London he has performed both as an ensemble member and student soloist with the Philharmonia Chorus and has appeared as a soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with the Market Drayton Choral Society as well as performing regularly in performances of the Royal Academy. He is an alumnus of the Glyndebourne Academy where he was nominated for the Gus Christie Award.

Shabnam Gould

Shabnam Gould is a British-Iranian cellist, and teacher working in London, UK. She graduated with a Postgraduate Diploma from Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in 2017 where she studied classical cello performance. Working as a freelance session musician, Shabnam has played at various UK venues including The Barbican, The Royal Albert Hall, Birmingham Symphony Hall, Cadogan Hall, Union Chapel and The Southbank Centre. Her touring work has taken her across Europe several times, playing at venues that include Paradiso NL, Olympia Theatre IE, Ancienne Belgique BE, Radar Festival ZH and The National Concert Hall IE.

Paul Ayres

Paul Ayres was born and bred in the suburbs of London, studied music at Oxford University, and now works freelance as a composer & arranger, choral conductor & musical director, and organist & accompanist. His works have been awarded prizes in composition competitions in Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, New Zealand, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, the UK and the USA, and he has received over one hundred commissions from musical groups of all shapes and sizes.

Most of Paul's output is choral, vocal, small-scale instrumental, and music for theatre. He genuinely finds as much joy in writing a very simple arrangement of, say, a nursery rhyme for beginner violinists as in constructing a large-scale score for professional performers. A particular creative interest of Paul's is exploring the interplay between popular styles and baroque/classical forms, and his works frequently use cross-reference, numerical patterns, and humour.

Paul conducts City Chorus and Questors Choir, accompanies Concordia Voices and Harrow Choral Society, and is a frequent deputy with many other choral ensembles in the London area. He enjoys leading music workshops with children,

playing keyboards for improvised comedy shows, and devising cryptic crosswords. Please visit www.paulayres.co.uk to find out more.

A CD of Paul's music, recorded by the chapel choir of Selwyn College Cambridge, has recently been released on the Regent label. The disc contains 21 compositions and arrangements, including "Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs" which we commissioned for Neil Ferris's final concert as conductor of Concordia Voices. Copies are on sale tonight.

Jack Apperley

Jack is the Music Director of Goldsmiths Choral Union, the Imperial College Chamber Choir and Concordia Voices. He is also the conductor of University Upper Voices at the University of Birmingham.

Jack is an Assistant Chorus Master of the London Symphony Chorus. This role has seen Jack prepare the chorus for performances of Liszt's *Faust Symphony*, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and Britten's *Spring Symphony*, Mahler's *Eighth Symphony*, Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Luther Adams' *In the Name of the Earth*. In Spring 2019 Jack conducted the London Symphony Orchestra Community Choir in David Lang's *The Public Domain* in the Barbican Centre.

Jack is in increasing demand as a conductor and Chorus Master both in the UK and across Europe. Recently, Jack has been engaged by the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra and Chorus as well as the Gothenburg Symphony Vocal Ensemble. Jack has also been contracted by the Choeur de Radio France and following a successful masterclass with the Hungarian National Choir, Jack has been invited to conduct the ensemble in their 2022-2023 Season in Budapest.

Concordia Voices

Concordia Voices is a well-established chamber choir of about 30 mixed voices and is directed by Jack Apperley. Our regular accompanist is the composer and arranger Paul Ayres.

The choir performs regularly in south-west London where it is based. We have also toured abroad and to other locations in the UK as well as taking part in local musical events. Concordia Voices enjoy performing music from a wide repertoire

ranging over 4 centuries and we have a keen interest in performing the work of contemporary composers.

Concordia Voices rehearse on Sunday evenings from 6.45pm to 9pm in Hampton Hill. We are a small, friendly choir and new singers are warmly welcome. If you are interested in joining us please contact our secretary for more information at, secretary@concordiavoices.org or visit our web site for information on how to join the choir. www.concordiavoices.com

<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Bass</i>
Jackie Allen	Lindsey Baldwin	Barry Fisher	Alan Baldwin
Lynda Beament	Rebecca Bevan	Colin Flood	Philip Congdon
Viviane Hardy	Clare Brown	Clive Hall	Jo Foley
Julia Lavery	Julie Hall	David Wilson	Matt Greenway
Margaret Lord	Peggy Hannington		Christopher Johnson
Ruth Parker	Jane Newman		
Fiona Rowett	Barbara Orr		
Helen Sugiyama	Jane Purser		
	Anne Rowett		
	Janet Taylor		

Concordia Voices Future Concerts

24th June 2023, St Mary with St Alban, Teddington TW11 9NN

MacMillan - In splendoribus sanctorum

Rutter - Sprig of Thyme

A selection of folk song settings interspersed with sacred piece by various composers arranged by the saxophonist Christian Forshaw. The original music is paired with saxophone improvisations.

2nd December 2023

Christmas music with Surrey Brass