

The Esterházy Chamber Choir



The Esterházy Consort
Directed by David Thomas

*The Genius of
Henry Purcell*

St John sub Castro, Lewes
Saturday 17 November 2007, 7.30 pm

The Choir

Sopranos: Sarah Bridgland, Cesca Eaton, Fran du Corbier, Dilys Goggins, Leanne Holmes, Jancis Ham, Alison Jeffery, Judy Mackerras, Lucy Morgan-Jones, Andrea Thomas

Altos: Maria Birch, Claire Champness, Denise Jones, Janet Ormerod, Joyce Phillips, Grainne Sinclair, Karen Zeff

Tenors: Michael Bulman, Robert Carpenter, John Carroll, Thomas Whalley, Tim Wright

Basses: John Astbury, John Burns, Chris Dixon, Derek Froud, Matthew Spencer, Philip Towler

About The Esterházy Chamber Choir

The Esterházy Chamber Choir was founded in 1993 and is based in Lewes, East Sussex. Comprising up to 30 singers from a wide variety of backgrounds, the choir aims to perform to a professional standard whilst remaining firmly rooted in the fine English tradition of amateur music making. The choir's repertoire spans four centuries of sacred and secular music with an emphasis on *a cappella* singing.

New singers (all voices) are welcomed. Entry is by audition, usually held following one of our regular rehearsals on a Wednesday evening.

The Conductor

David Thomas began his musical training as a chorister at Magdalen College, Oxford, under Dr Bernard Rose. At the age of 13 he began organ lessons with Malcolm Archer and in 1983 became Organ Scholar of The Queen's College, Oxford, studying organ with James Dalton and Kimberly Marshall and singing with Margaret Philpot as well as reading for a degree in Music. After appointments at The Leys School, Cambridge, and The King's School, Canterbury, he moved to Edinburgh to become Director of Music at Fettes College. Since 2001 he has been Headmaster of Reigate Grammar School, an independent day school in Surrey.

To contact the Choir

To support the choir, to audition or to enquire about hiring the choir for weddings and other special events, please email choir@esterhazy.org.uk. To prevent your email from being identified as spam, please include the word **choir** in the subject box.

**To join our mailing list, please complete the form on your seat
and hand it in to any member of the choir.**

Programme

O sing unto the Lord (Z74) Henry Purcell (1659-1695)
Soloists: Sarah Bridgland, Maria Birch, Robert Carpenter, Chris Dixon

Jehova, quam multi sunt hostes mei (Z135) Henry Purcell
Soloists: Michael Bulman, Philip Towler

Blow up the trumpet in Sion (Z10) Henry Purcell
Soloists: Andrea Thomas, Cesca Eaton, Grainne Sinclair, Denise Jones,
Robert Carpenter, John Carroll, Chris Dixon

Salvator mundi John Blow (1649-1708)

Membra Jesu nostri: I. Ad pedes Dietrich Buxtehude (c.1637-1707)
Soloists: Leanne Holmes, Philip Towler

INTERVAL

Drinks will be served during the interval

Salve puerule Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704)
Soloists: Fran du Corbier, Thomas Whalley

Hear my prayer, O Lord (Z15) Henry Purcell

Thy word is a lantern (Z61) Henry Purcell
Soloists: Janet Ormerod, Tim Wright, Chris Dixon

Crucifixus (a8) Antonio Lotti (c.1667-1740)

Remember not, Lord, our offences (Z50) Henry Purcell

Ode for St Cecilia's Day, 1683: Henry Purcell

Welcome to all the pleasures (Z339)
Soloists: Leanne Holmes, Lucy Morgan-Jones, Janet Ormerod,
Tim Wright, Philip Towler

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The Esterházy Consort: *Violin 1* Judy Tarling - *Violin 2* Claire Sansom –
Viola James Ellis – *Basse de violon* Anna Holmes – *Organ* Helena Mowat-Brown

Purcell's Church Music

Regarded by many as the finest and most versatile British composer of any age, Henry Purcell was born in 1659 and died at the age of only 36 in 1695. Despite his brief life, he was an astonishingly prolific and wide-ranging composer, including operas, secular odes, instrumental music, keyboard music, large numbers of songs for the stage and a great deal of church music. Amongst his contemporaries he stands out for his harmonic inventiveness and skill in word-setting, matched only in the late Baroque period by J.S. Bach.

This programme seeks to demonstrate just a few examples of Purcell's genius, drawn entirely from his choral and church music, as well as placing him in his European context.

Purcell spent most of his working life at Westminster Abbey. He joined as a boy chorister, probably at around the age of eight, and, when his voice broke at the age of fourteen, was apprenticed to John Hingeston, repairer and tuner of the royal musical instruments. Purcell also studied composition with the abbey organist, John Blow, and when in 1679 Blow resigned, Purcell succeeded him as Organist of the abbey, at the age of only twenty.

Purcell's earliest surviving compositions date from around 1676, and by 1679 he had at least eight significant works to his name. These included **Blow up the trumpet in Sion**, a magnificent work for eight voices composed when he was about eighteen. All the elements of the composer's mature style are present: the opening trumpet fanfares, later repeated by the chorus, are contrasted with chromatic harmonies expressing the Lenten text (note especially the expressive writing at 'let them weep' and 'spare thy people, O Lord'); upper voice textures are contrasted with lower voices, chordal sections sit next to polyphonic ones, and the dextrous changes of key belie the composer's comparative youth.

In 1680, Purcell married Frances Peters, and their first son was born in 1681. In 1682, Purcell was appointed one of the organists of the Chapel Royal, in addition to his post at the abbey. Not surprisingly, church music formed a large part of his output during these years, with a mixture of four different styles of anthem: the full anthem, usually in five or more parts; the 'full anthem with verses', containing several short ensemble or solo sections; the verse anthem, in which the role of the chorus is reduced; and the symphony anthem (see below).

Three of tonight's works date from around this period: **Hear my prayer, O Lord** is a full anthem for eight unaccompanied voices, and sets the shortest and most melancholy of texts as a vocal crescendo which builds inexorably from the simplest of opening lines to a massive discord, before finally dying away. The chromatic harmonies give the work a power out of all proportion to its length. **Remember not, Lord, our offences** is also a full anthem and a penitential work, with a text taken from the Book of Common Prayer. Again, it is Purcell's chromatic harmonies which amaze, combined with subtle counterpoint and the controlled



creation and release of tension. *Jehova, quam multi sunt hostes mei* is one of only two settings by Purcell of sacred Latin texts, and may have been composed for the Catholic chapel of Queen Catherine. It shares many of the characteristics of the two works mentioned above, but is longer and in several sections, two of which are for tenor and bass soloists respectively. Particularly effective is the section beginning ‘Ego cubui et dormivi’, and the dramatic bass solo ‘Non timebo’.

Thy word is a lantern is an example of the true verse anthem, with almost all the interest given to three soloists (alto, tenor and bass), with only two brief sections for the chorus. Although its date is unknown, it shares many characteristics with the so-called ‘Bell Anthem’ (Rejoice in the Lord alway, Z49), despite being scored without strings. The recitative section for alto starting ‘The ungodly have laid a snare for me’ is typical of Purcell’s expressive writing for the alto voice.

Music for Charles II’s Chapel Royal was expected to include strings, and Purcell was more than willing to oblige. From 1682 onwards, he produced a series of anthems with strings (often called symphony anthems), for which a group of string players would be placed in the gallery of the chapel at Whitehall. These works were typically in several sections articulated by frequent changes of time, and mixing solos, ensembles, largely homophonic vocal sections, and dance-like instrumental passages (presumably to give the royal foot something to tap to).

O sing unto the Lord is a relatively late example of the genre, and features an extensive bass solo, probably written for the bass virtuoso John Gostling.

Purcell’s Contemporaries

The composers of the early Baroque period are often over-shadowed by later, more famous names, such as Bach, Handel and Vivaldi. But the end of the 17th century saw many first-rate composers working across Europe, although their music has been frequently neglected by modern performers. Tonight’s programme includes by music by four such composers, one each from England, France, Northern Germany and Italy, all of whom were working during Purcell’s lifetime.

As already mentioned, John Blow was Purcell’s predecessor as organist at Westminster Abbey, as well as his teacher. He was also Purcell’s successor, resuming his responsibilities on the younger man’s death in 1695. His best works demonstrate a skill in word-setting just as expressive as his more illustrious pupil, and *Salvator mundi* is one of the finest examples. One of nine anthems composed in the 1670s to Latin texts, and presumably written for the private chapel of a Catholic noble, the handling of the bold dissonances and expressive chromaticism could easily be mistaken for Purcell’s.

In terms of his reputation today, Dietrich Buxtehude has been largely relegated to the position of (inferior) predecessor of J.S. Bach who composed mostly organ music of unimpeachable rectitude and not a little dullness. However, this is entirely undeserved: his surviving output includes some 130 sacred works, songs, and sonatas for strings, in addition to his organ music. At the pinnacle of this body of work stands *Membra Jesu nostri* (BuxWV75), a cycle of seven cantatas composed in 1680 meditating on the body of Christ on the cross. It is one of the earliest cantatas, a genre which Buxtehude (along with Carissimi in Italy) did much to foster, and consists of an instrumental sonata followed by several movements, some for chorus, some solo. It reveals Buxtehude as a composer of both skill

and imagination, able to blend German and Italian styles with ease. The cantata performed tonight is the first of the set, *Ad pedes* ('At the feet').

Marc-Antoine Charpentier can be compared closely with Purcell, sharing with his English contemporary a wide-ranging output encompassing church music, cantatas, incidental music, operas and instrumental music. However, unlike Purcell, he never held a post at court and was overshadowed by Louis XIV's favourite, Lully. His best-known works are his *Te Deum* and the delightful *Messe de Minuit*. *Salve puerule* is the last movement of a Christmas cantata *In nativitatem Domini nostri Jesu Christi canticum* (H.414), written in around 1683.

Antonio Lotti was the foremost Venetian composer of the century following the death of Monteverdi in 1643. Lotti joined the choir of St. Mark's in 1689 and rose through the ranks, eventually becoming *maestro di cappella* in 1736. As well as a prolific composer of sacred music, he was equally successful as an opera composer and an influential teacher. He wrote several settings of the text *Crucifixus*, of which this eight-part version is justifiably the most famous.

Purcell's Odes

Henry Purcell's Odes and Welcome Songs cover almost his entire active life as a composer, beginning with *Welcome, vicegerent of the mighty king* in 1680 and ending with *Who can from you refrain?* in 1695, the year of his death. Purcell composed these occasional pieces (of which 24 survive) mainly to honour members of the royal family on their birthdays, weddings or on their return to the capital after a visit elsewhere, but other works exist for non-royal events or important days in the calendar, of which the most popular was 22nd November – the feast of St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music.

All the odes follow a similar pattern: an overture or symphony, followed by a succession of solos, duets, trios and choruses in the manner of a cantata. Many of the earlier works are scored only for strings and continuo, but some have recorders or oboes added and the last few also add trumpets and drums.

The final work in tonight's concert was one of several composed at the request of the Musical Society of London to celebrate St. Cecilia's Day. **Welcome to all the pleasures** dates from 1683 when Purcell was just twenty-four and is scored for strings and continuo only. The text is by Christopher Fishburn and the first performance (which included a banquet) was a great success, its lightness of touch suiting the celebratory mood. The strings play an important role, and are frequently given elaborate *ritornelli* at the end of the vocal sections, a technique which Purcell was to employ again in his opera *Dido and Aeneas*. The work also includes a ground bass song 'Here the Deities approve', which became very popular and was later published in a keyboard transcription. Instead of the customary triumphant ending, Purcell unusually concludes the ode with a final chorus which fades away to nothing.



Saint Cecilia (Guido Reni, 1606)

Texts and Translations

O sing unto the Lord

1. Bass solo & chorus

O sing unto the Lord a new song. Alleluia.
Sing unto the Lord, all the whole earth. Alleluia.

2. Quartet

Sing unto the Lord and praise his name :
be telling of his salvation from day to day.

3. Bass solo & chorus

Declare his honour unto the heathen :
and his wonders unto all people.
Glory and worship are before him :
power and honour are in his sanctuary.

4. Soprano & Alto duet

The Lord is great, and cannot worthily be praised :
he is more to be feared than all gods.
As for the gods of the heathen, they are but idols :
but it is the Lord that made the heavens.

5. Quartet & chorus

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness :
let the whole earth stand in awe of him.

6. Bass solo & chorus

Tell it out among the heathen that the Lord is King :
and that it is he who hath made the round world so fast that it cannot be moved;
and how that he shall judge the people righteously.
Alleluia.

Psalm 96 vv. 1-6, 9-10

Jehova, quam multi sunt hostes mei

1. Chorus

Jehova, quam multi sunt hostes mei!
Quam multi insurgunt contra me.
Quam multi dicunt de anima mea
Non est ulla salus isti in Deo plane.

Lord, how are they increased that trouble me!
Many are they that rise up against me.
Many there be which say of my soul,
“There is no help for him in God”.

2. Tenor solo

At tu, Jehova, clypeus es circa me.
Gloria mea, et extollens caput meum.

But thou, O lord, art a shield for me;
my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

3. Chorus

Voce mea ad Jehovam clamanti, respondit
mihi e monte sanctitatis suæ maximæ.
Ego cubui et dormivi; ego expergefeci me;
et dormivi, qui a Jehova sustentat me.

I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard
me out of his holy hill.
I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the Lord
sustained me.

4. Bass solo

Non timebo, a myriadibus populi, quas
circum disposuerint metatores contra me.
Surge Jehova, fac salvum me Deus mi.
qui percussisti omnes inimicos meos
maxilliam, dentes improborum confregisti.

I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people,
that have set themselves against me.
Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God: for thou hast
smitten all mine enemies upon the cheekbone;
thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

5. Chorus

Jehova est salus, super populum tuum,
sit benedictio tua maxime.

Salvation belongeth unto the Lord,
thy blessing is upon thy people.

Psalm 3

Blow up the trumpet in Sion

Blow up the trumpet in Sion;
sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the people and sanctify the congregation.
Assemble the elders, gather the children and those that suck the breasts.
Let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.
Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar,
and let them say: spare thy people, O Lord.
And give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them.
Spare thy people, O Lord.
Wherefore should they say among the people: where is their God?

Joel 2, vv15-17

Salvator mundi

Salvator mundi salva nos, qui per
crucem et sanguinem redimisti nos:
Auxiliare nobis, te deprecamur
Deus noster.

O Saviour of the world, who by your cross
and blood has redeemed us:
Help and save us, we humbly beseech you,
O Lord.

Antiphon at the Adoration of the Cross, Good Friday

Membra Jesu nostri: I. Ad pedes (To the feet)

1. Sonata

2. Chorus

Ecce super montes
pedes evangelizantis
et annunciantis pacem

Behold upon the mountains
the feet of one who brings good tidings,
who speaks of peace.

3. Chorus

Salve mundi salutare,
salve Jesu care!
Cruci tuae me aptare
vellem vere, tu scis quare,
da mihi tui copiam

I greet you, saviour of the world,
I greet you, dearest Jesu.
I would take up your cross
Truly, you know why,
Give me your mighty help.

4. Soprano solo

Clavos pedum, plagas duras,
et tam graves impressuras
circumplector cum affectu,
tuo pavens in aspectu,
tuorum memor vulnerum

5. Bass solo

Dulcis Jesu, pie Deus,
Ad te clamo licet reus,
praebe mihi te benignum,
ne repellas me indignum
de tuis sanctis pedibus

6. Chorus

Ecce super montes
pedes evangelizantis
et annunciantis pacem

The nails in your feet, the hard blows
and so grievous marks
I embrace with love,
Fearful at the sight of you,
Mindful of your wounds.

Sweet Jesu, merciful God,
I call to you, out of my sins
Show me your grace,
Turn me not unworthy away
From your sacred feet.

Behold upon the mountains
the feet of one who brings good tidings,
who speaks of peace.

Anon.

Salve puerule

Salve, puerule, salve, tenellule,
O nate parvule, quam bonus es!
Tu coelum deseris, tu solo nasceris,
Nobis te ut miseris assimiles.

O summa bonitas, excelsa deitas
Vilis humanitas fit hodie.
Aeternus nascitur, immensus capitur,
Et rei tegitur, sub specie.

Virgo puerpera, beata viscera,
Dei cum opera, dant filium.
Gaude flos virginum,
gaude spes hominum,
Fons lavans criminum proluvium.

Hail, little boy, hail, tender little one,
O tiny baby, how good you are!
You have left heaven, you are born on the earth,
To make yourself the same as wretched us.

O greatest good, highest deity
Has become today common humanity.
The eternal is born, the immense is encompassed,
And is concealed in the cloak of matter.

Virgin child-bearer, blessed womb,
Through the work of God they give a son.
Rejoice, flower of virgins,
rejoice, hope of mankind,
Fountain washing the slurry of sin.

Hear my prayer, O Lord

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my crying come unto Thee.

Psalm 102, v.1

Thy word is a lantern

Thy word is a lantern unto my feet: and a light unto my paths.
I have sworn and am steadfastly purposed to keep thy righteous judgements.
I am troubled above measure: quicken me, O Lord, according to thy word.
The ungodly have laid a snare for me: but yet I swerved not from thy commandments.
Thy testimonies have I claimed as mine heritage for ever:
and why? they are the very joy of my heart.
Hallelujah

Psalm 119: 105-108, 110, 111

Crucifixus

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis
sub Pontio Pilato:
passus et sepultus est.

[He was] crucified also for us
under Pontius Pilate:
[he] suffered and was buried.

Nicene Creed

Remember not, Lord our offences

Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers;
neither take thou vengeance of our sins:
spare us, good Lord, spare thy people,
whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood,
and be not angry with us for ever.
Spare us, good Lord.

The Litany

Welcome to all the pleasures

1. Symphony

2. Alto, tenor and bass - Chorus

Welcome to all the pleasures that delight
Of every sense the grateful appetite,
Hail, great assembly of Apollo's race.
Hail to this happy place, this musical assembly
That seems to be the arc of universal harmony.

3. Alto

Here the Deities approve
The God of Music and of Love;
All the talents they have lent you,
All the blessings they have sent you,
Pleased to see what they bestow,
Live and thrive so well below.

4. Two sopranos and bass

While joys celestial their bright souls invade
To find what great improvement you have made.

5. Alto, tenor and bass - Chorus

Then lift up your voices, those organs of nature,
Those charms to the troubled and amorous creature.
The power shall divert us a pleasanter way,
For sorrow and grief find from music relief,
And love its soft charms must obey.
Then lift up your voices, those organs of nature,
Those charms to the troubled and amorous creature.

6. Tenor

Beauty, thou scene of love,
And virtue, thou innocent fire,
Made by the powers above
To temper the heat of desire,
Music that fancy employs
In rapture of innocent flame,
We offer with lute and with voice
To Cecilia, Cecilia's bright name.

7. Tenor - Chorus

In a consort of voices while instruments play
With music we celebrate this holy day;
Iô Cecilia.



A page from an autograph collection of Purcell's songs.

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Saturday 15th December 2007, 6:30pm, Westgate Chapel, Lewes

VISIONS OF HEAVEN

including music by Victoria, Stainer, Taverner, Finzi and Parry
Saturday 8th March 2008, 7:30pm, St. Michael's, Lewes

BACH – ST JOHN PASSION

directed by Nigel Perrin, with period instruments
Saturday 26th April 2008, 7:30pm, St John sub Castro, Lewes