

**Minehead Choral Society**  
**Spring Concert 25<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Program Notes**

I am delighted to welcome back the wonderful Taunton Sinfonietta, led by Mary Eade. I am also very pleased that we are joined again by our talented contralto soloist, Helena Payne. Tonight we present the highly emotive and beautiful “Stabat Mater” by Karl Jenkins, which we first performed 13 years ago, premiering the reduced score. Our second half combines some of our favourite choruses with the orchestra playing the first movement, “*Allegretto*”, of Karl Jenkins’ Concerto Grosso for string Orchestra “Palladio”. Helena will sing a couple of her favourite French songs and we hope you enjoy the mix of styles, familiar and more challenging.

*Marcus Capel*  
*March 2023*

**Programme:**

Karl Jenkins	Stabat Mater	
1.	Cantus lacrimosus	Chorus
2.	Incantation	Solo
3.	Vidit Jesum in tormentis	Chorus
4.	Lament	Solo
5.	Sancta Mater	Chorus
6.	Now my life is only weeping	Solo + Chorus
7.	And the Mother did weep	Chorus
8.	Virgo virginium	Chorus
9.	Are you lost out in darkness?	Solo + Chorus
10.	Ave verum	Solo + Chorus
11.	Fac, ut portem Christi mortem	Chorus
12.	Paradisi gloria	Chorus

INTERVAL

1. God So Loved the World	Stainer	
2. Sanctus (from the German Mass)	Schubert	
3. Ave Verum	Mozart	
4. Palladio - 1 <sup>st</sup> Movement, Allegretto	Jenkins	Orchestra
5. Panis Angelicus	Franck	
6. Cantique de Jean Racine	Fauré	
7. How lovely are thy dwellings	Brahms	
8. “Au Pays ou se fait la guerre”	Henri Duparc	Soloist
9. “Mon Coeur s’ouvre a ta voix”	Saint Saens	
10. Locus Iste	Bruckner	
11. Zadok the Priest	Handel	

## **Karl Jenkins Stabat Mater**

This work is based on a medieval poem from the 13<sup>th</sup> century “Stabat Mater Dolorosa” (the sorrowful mother was standing.) which meditates on the suffering of Mary, Jesus Christ’s mother, during his crucifixion. Stabat Mater has been set to music by composers from Haydn to Dvorak to Verdi, in his version, Karl Jenkins adds six further pieces to complement the original poem. Helena, our soloist will face the challenge of modifying her voice to embrace the contrast of ancient and modern texts.

It begins with the chorus singing **Cantus lacrimosus**, a description of how Mary wept as her son writhed in agony on the cross. This is followed by the haunting **Incantation**, a semi-improvised prayer in Arabic. The choir then re-join us with **Videt Jesum in tormentis** which asks what mother would not weep to see her only child tortured and flogged, and then by abandoned by his father as he died. The arrangement is rich and smooth with soaring chords and broad orchestration lending a more familiar, British classical sound contrasting with the sections either side.

The **Lament** was composed by Carol Barratt especially for this work, the beautiful words expressing the fear of parents that the shadow of death will cast shadows over their children, however such sorrows must surely end as our tears wash away the sins of the world. The choir return with the powerful **Sancta Mater**, the insistent rhythm combined with the soaring melodies painting a graphic picture as the Holy Mother is implored to share her pain and sorrow. **Now my life is only weeping** is by Jalal al-Din Rumi, the 13th-century Persian mystic poet, for whom grief was a central fact of his personal history. The poem is sung in English and Aramaic (an ancient Middle-eastern language).

**And the Mother did weep** is of deep personal significance to me, the stunningly beautiful melody and counter melodies forming a sublime combination. The piece is deceptively simple as, although there is only the one repeated phrase, the middle section has four languages singing at once: Hebrew by the sopranos, Latin by the altos, Aramaic for the tenors, then Greek for the basses, before coming together again. I am unapologetic about the emotion created by this piece but you may need some tissues.

After the emotion of the preceding work, **In Virgo Virginum** continues the request of the choir to share in the divine grief of Mary. The orchestra set aside their bows to pluck their strings, underpinned by the percussion to provide a contrast to the smooth choral melodies. **Are you lost out in darkness?** comes from the Epic of Gilgamesh, the world’s oldest story and recorded on clay tablets in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. The story is about the hero Gilgamesh and his exploits, the central focus is the death of his friend and companion, Enkidu. This section is where Gilgamesh laments bitterly his friend before going in search, unsuccessfully, for immortality and is sung in English and Aramaic.

This lovely arrangement of the **Ave Verum** for soloist and choir for was originally composed for Bryn Terfel and allows us to reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus dying on the cross. It forms a beautiful bridge between the ancient story and the return of the words of the Stabat Mater with the penultimate piece **Fac ut portem Christi mortem**. This reflective section builds up gradually before quietly ending and leading us into the conclusion of the work: **Paradise Gloria** builds inexorably to the soul being granted the glory of Paradise, Amen. The orchestra and choir combine in a thrilling climax, working together frantically to the end.

Interval

1. God So Loved the World - John Stainer (1840 -1901)

When Sir John Stainer composed *The Crucifixion* in the late 1880s, he followed Bach's example by incorporating into his *Meditation on the Sacred Passion of the Holy Redeemer* congregational hymns, with the intention – as Bach's had been with his many chorales in the St Matthew and St John's Passions – that all the people should be involved with the story. But he also wrote some fine set pieces for the choir to sing, of which *God So loved the World* is the most profoundly moving – an effect achieved by the divine simplicity of its word setting.

2. Sanctus (from the German Mass) – Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828)

Composed in 1827, the *Deutsche Messe* is based on a sequence of poems written by Johann Philipp Neuman who commissioned the work. Designed to appeal to the widest possible congregation, this simple mass was scored by Schubert in a block – chordal, homophonic style suitable for congregational singing. The stunningly simple and beautiful *Zum Sanctus Sehr Langsam* is the fifth of nine movements and provides a reflective and quiet complement to our opening number and the larger Brahms work that follows.

3. Ave Verum - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-91)

This concise choral gem was composed right at the end of Mozart's short life, but unlike the famously unfinished Requiem, it is absolutely complete and says everything it needs to say in the shortest possible span. Its apparent simplicity belies the perfection of its shape and substance, with astonishing subtlety of modulation, a glorious arch-like shape and vocal lines which lie in the most comfortable part of all four voices.

4. Karl Jenkins – Palladio

Written in 1996, this concerto grosso for strings was inspired by the Venetian architect Andrea Palladio (1508 – 1580). It is in a retro-Baroque style, adding to the eclectic mix of styles used in the following choral works. Tonight we will be performing just the first of the three movements, the *Allegretto*.

5. Panis Angelicus – César Franck (1822-90)

The mystery of God made man, who became the bread of life in the sacrament is the subject of this communion motet and the setting by Franck of one of his best-known works. It was originally written for tenor solo and male chorus and was later incorporated into his *Mass for three Voices*. It retains its simplicity in this arrangement by Kenneth Downing.

6. Cantique de Jean Racine – Gabriel Fauré(1845 – 1924)

The text, "Verbe égal au Très-Haut" ("Word, one with the Highest"), is a French paraphrase by Jean Racine of a Latin hymn from the breviary for matins, *Consors paterni luminis*. The nineteen-year-old composer set the text in 1864–65 for a composition competition at the École Niedermeyer de Paris, and it won him the first prize. The work was first performed the following year on 4 August 1866 in a version with accompaniment of strings and organ. This beautiful simple melody allows all the parts of the choir to enjoy themselves.

7. How lovely are thy dwellings – Johannes Brahms (1833-97)

Brahms wrote his German Requiem in the late 1860s, being concerned not so much with the peace for the souls of the departed as with comfort for the bereaved. He selected his own texts from the scriptures, underlining his belief that when the trumpets sound for us on the other side, they are not there to summon us to the Day of Judgement, but rather to underline the hope of reunion and resurrection after death. With that in mind, he chose words for this

central movement which express joy in the certainty of our eventually reaching the “blest courts of the Lord”.

8. “Au Pays ou se fait la guerre” - Henri Duparc (1848 – 1933)

This haunting and moving song is one of a series by Duparc written for voice and piano. This iconic and emotive work features the protagonist abandoned by her lover as it grows steadily in intensity towards a climax before it dies away to nothing.

9. “Mon Coeur s’ouvre a ta voix” - Saint Saens (1835 – 1921)

This popular aria is from the opera “Samson and Delilah” , sung in act 2 as Delilah attempts to seduce Samson into revealing the secret of his strength.

10. Locus Iste – Anton Bruckner (1824-96)

Locus Iste (“*This place*”) is a sacred motet composed by Bruckner in 1869. The text is the Latin gradual for the annual celebration of a church’s dedication. The incipit “Locus iste a Deo factus est” translates to “This place was made by God”. Bruckner set it for four unaccompanied voices, intended for the dedication of the Votivkapelle (votive chapel) at the New Cathedral in Linz, Austria, where Bruckner had been the cathedral organist. It was the first motet that Bruckner composed in Vienna.

11. Zadok the Priest

Handel (1685-1759)

Of Handel’s Coronation anthems, this is justifiably the most famous. AS we look forward to the coronation of King George III in May, this piece is most fitting as it was composed for the anointing of King George II in 1727 and sung at every coronation since. The gradual build up of the orchestra leads to a glorious and dramatic burst of sound from the chorus. The excitement is maintained right through ot the final Alleluia and Amen making a fitting end to tonight’s programme.

Marcus Capel

March 2023

### **Stabat Mater Dolorosa**

Stabat Mater dolorosa  
iuxta crucem lacrimosa,  
dum pendebat Filius.  
Cuius animam gementem,  
contristatam et dolentem  
pertransiuit gladius.  
Quam tristis et afflicta  
fuit illa benedicta  
Mater Unigeniti!  
Quae mœrebat et dolébat,  
pia Mater, dum videbat  
nati pœnas inclyti.  
Quis est homo, qui non fletet,  
Christi Matrem si videret  
in tanto supplicio?  
Vidit suum dulcem natum  
morientem desolatam,  
dum emisit spiritum.  
Eia, Mater, fons amoris,  
me sentire vim doloris  
fac, ut tecum lugeam.  
Fac, ut ardeat cor meum  
in amando Christum Deum,  
ut sibi complacem.  
Sancta Mater, istud agas,  
crucifixi fige plagas  
cordi meo valide.  
Fac, ut portem Christi mortem,  
passionis fac consortem  
et plagas recollere.  
Fac me plagis vulnerari,  
cruce hac inebriari  
et crude Filii.  
Flammis ne urar ne succensus,  
per te, Virgo, sim defensus  
in die iudicii.  
Quando corpus morietur,  
fac, ut animæ donetur  
paradisi gloria.  
Amen.

### **Stood the Mother of Sorrows**

Stood the Mother of Sorrows  
in tears at the Cross  
on which the Son hung.  
A sword pierced.  
his groaning, grieved  
and sore soul.  
O how sad and afflicted  
was that holy Mother  
of the Only Begotten Son!  
How saddened and hurt  
the pious Mother  
seeing the pains of the glorious Son.  
Who is the man, who would not weep,  
whelmed in miseries so deep,  
Christ's dear Mother to behold?  
She saw her tender Child,  
hang in desolation,  
till His spirit forth sent.  
O Mother! fount of love!  
let me feel the strength of your pain,  
so I can cry with you.  
Make my heart blaze  
in the loving of Christ, the Lord,  
so that I may please Him.  
Holy Mother, do it,  
the crucified Christ's sores  
hard print in my hearth  
Make me bear the death of Christ,  
Make me share His Passion,  
and His wounds remember.  
Make me be afflicted with those wounds  
And intoxicated with this Cross  
and blood of Your Son.  
That I am not burned by the flames,  
that I am, O Virgin, defended by you  
in the Judgment Day.  
When body will die,  
may the soul get  
the Paradise's glory.  
Amen