

# The Scottish Chamber Choir

Directed by Michael Harris



## ROMANTIC MUSIC FROM GERMANY AND AUSTRIA

Saturday 16th March 2002

St Giles' Cathedral  
High Street  
Edinburgh

The Scottish Chamber Choir  
Director and organist: Michael Harris

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847) RICHTE MICH, GOTT  
MAGNIFICAT  
SONATA IN F MINOR FOR ORGAN

ANTON BRUCKNER (1824–1896) LOCUS ISTE  
CHRISTUS FACTUS EST  
OS JUSTI

INTERVAL  
of 20 minutes

Wine and soft drinks will be available in the Lower Aisle

ANTON BRUCKNER AVE MARIA

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897) WARUM IST DAS LICHT GEGEBEN  
THREE CHORALE PRELUDES FOR ORGAN OP 122  
THREE MOTETS OP 110  
FEST- UND GEDENKSPRÜCHE OP 109

## PROGRAMME NOTES

### Mendelssohn

*Richte mich, Gott* Op 78 No 2

In 1843, Mendelssohn was asked by Wilhelm IV of Prussia to become head of the new Academy of Arts in Berlin, where his duties included conducting the newly formed Berlin Cathedral Choir. Though his tenure of the post was short-lived, a number of works, including this setting of the words of Psalm 43, date from this period. The setting is in three distinct sections, opening with an imposing lower voice motif, which opens out into a sonorous double choir passage. This is followed by a triple time section, which in turn leads to the final section which is introduced by an imposing theme in the sopranos and altos, accompanied by a chorale-like texture in the lower voices.

*Mein Herz erhebet Gott, den Herrn* Op 69 No 3

In this setting of the Magnificat text for four-part choir *a cappella*, Mendelssohn makes use of alternating tutti and semi-chorus sections, in a youthful and kaleidoscopic variety of styles, for the most part reflecting the spirit of the text. The motet concludes with a long double fugue at *Er gedenket der Barmherzigkeit* (He remembering his mercy), followed by a *Grave* setting of the Gloria doxology, which brings the work to a reflective conclusion.

Sonata in F minor for Organ, Op 65 No 1

Allegro moderato e serio – Adagio – Andante – Allegro assai vivace

Following J.S. Bach's death in 1750 a number of factors contributed to the decline in importance of the organ and organist in North Germany. One of the most significant reasons was the increase in importance of the sermon in Protestant worship, taking the place of much of the music in the liturgy. Mendelssohn's organ works were thus some of the first major organ compositions since the time of Bach. The six Sonatas were composed between 1844 and 1845, and four of them take Lutheran chorale melodies as their compositional basis. In this case Mendelssohn introduces a harmonised version of *Was mein Gott will, das g'scheh' allzeit* into the opening movement. This imposing movement is followed by a lyrical Adagio, which in turn gives way to a recitative-inspired Andante. In this movement the tension is gradually increased in an almost Beethovenian fashion, until it is released in the bravura opening to the final Allegro, now in the tonic major key.

### Anton Bruckner

Three motets: *Locus iste; Christus factus est; Os justi*

These three motets by Anton Bruckner, though often performed as a set, were composed over a period of fifteen years, beginning with *Locus iste* in Linz in 1869. In this, perhaps the most well-known of his motets, Bruckner combines an initial simplicity with a tonality that becomes increasingly remote in the central section. *Christus factus est*, a setting for the Gradual text for Maundy Thursday, is the latest of the three, written in Vienna in 1884, contemporary with his Seventh Symphony and the Te Deum. From the point of view of chromatic intensity it is also the most developed, and uses a wide range of extremes in dynamic levels. *Os justi*, the words of which come from the opening to Psalm 37, is characterised by its use of the Lydian mode, whose scale includes an augmented fourth. It was written for the choir of the monastery of St Florian, situated overlooking the Danube near Linz, where Bruckner grew up and where he is buried.

### Bruckner

*Ave Maria*

Bruckner's seven-voiced setting of Ave Maria, dating from 1861, shows signs of the style of writing to be found in his larger choral works; a haunting opening, harmonically straightforward to begin with, develops into a glorious central section of some textural complexity, before subsiding to a reflective conclusion.

### Brahms

*Warum ist das Licht gegeben* Op 74 No 1

The Op 74 motets were published in 1879, with a dedication to Philip Spitta, the great Bach scholar of the period, perhaps reflecting the fact that nowhere in Brahms' unaccompanied choral writing is Bach's formal influence greater in terms of structures than here. *Warum ist das Licht gegeben* had been composed two years earlier, during a summer holiday when Brahms was completing his Second Symphony.

The four-voiced opening chorus is austere and intense in its chromatic counterpoint, but the tension built up through this sometimes almost Mahlerian harmonic development is relieved by the ensuing six-voiced F major canonic *Lasset uns*. This material is reprised at the end of the following section, and the motet concludes with a Dorian mode chorale setting, the Lutheran version of the Nunc Dimittis, *Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin*.

Three Chorale Preludes for Organ Op 122

*Herzlich thut mich verlangen* Op 122 No 9

*O wie selig seid ihr doch, ihr Frommen* Op 122 No 6

*O Welt, ich muss dich lassen* Op 122 No 11

Brahms Op 122 set of Eleven Chorale Preludes were written in the last year of his life, and published posthumously. In these highly personal final compositions Brahms was paying homage to the music of J.S. Bach, whose contrapuntal works had so fascinated him throughout his career. In *Herzlich thut mich verlangen*, the first of two settings of this melody in the collection, he weaves a chromatic harmonisation under a decorated version of the chorale. *O wie selig seid ihr doch, ihr Frommen* has a simpler texture with the melody in the highest voice, whilst *O Welt, ich muss dich lassen* uses echo passages at the end of each line of the chorale, finally fading away to a pianissimo ending.

Three Motets Op 110 for mixed choir a cappella

*Ich aber bin elend*

*Ach, arme Welt, du trügest mich*

*Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein*

These three motets are the final works that Brahms wrote for unaccompanied voices, receiving their premiere in March 1889 in Köln. All three are dark and even pessimistic in outlook, and this is immediately apparent in the opening of *Ich aber bin elend* where the dissonant accompaniment of the lower voices to the opening soprano chorale sets the scene for a motet that is a heartfelt cry for assistance. The central passage of this eight-voiced motet looks back to the early Baroque antiphony of Schütz for its inspiration, and Brahms was one of the first composers to have a real interest in music of earlier eras.

The strophic four-part setting of *Ach, arme Welt, du trügest mich*, a setting of an anonymous text, is more compact, but no less heartfelt in its use of colour. In the last of the settings Brahms returns to eight voices, and alternates counterpoint and a more homophonic style for the four verses. This follows the sentiment of the sixteenth century text of Paul Eber, where the element of hope in the even numbered verses is reflected by the more positive triple time character of the music.

## Brahms

*Fest- und Gedenksprüche* (Festival and Commemoration Sentences)  
for unaccompanied double choir Op 109

*Unsere Väter hofften auf dich  
Wenn ein starker Gewappneter  
Wo ist ein so herrlich Volk*

These three motets were written between 1886 and 1888, and received their first performance on the occasion of the granting of the Freedom of the City of Hamburg to Brahms in 1889. In style they are different from the contrapuntally involved idiom heard in Op 74 or Op 110, making more use of a Venetian antiphonal idiom of the late sixteenth century, and the texts are taken from a variety of biblical verses. The Gabrielian idiom is immediately obvious in the way that the opening material of the first motet is treated, where the bold descending arpeggio motif of the second chorus is decorated antiphonally by the first choir. All three motets follow a ternary structure, with the central section here contrasting the outer passages in a change of metre and the use of the lower voices. A particular feature of *Wenn ein starker Gewappneter* is the dramatic, and rhythmically chaotic central section, a colourful setting of the text. Antiphonal writing is again to the fore in the final motet, *Wo ist ein so herrlich Volk*, with the central section making especially effective use of passing the material between the choirs.

Programme notes by Michael Harris

## TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

### MENDELSSOHN: RICHTE MICH, GOTT

*Richte mich, Gott, und führe meine Sache  
wider das unheilige Volk und errette mich  
von den alschen und bösen Leuten.*

*Denn du bist der Gott meiner Stärke;  
Warum verstössest du mich?  
Warum lässest du mich so traurig geh'n,  
wenn mein Feind mich drängt?*

*Sende dein Licht und deine Wahrheit, dass  
sie mich leiten zu deinem heiligen Berge, und  
zu deiner Wohnung.*

*Dass ich hineingehe zum Altar Gottes, zu  
dem Gott, der meine Freude und Wonne ist,  
und dir, Gott, auf der Harfe danke, mein  
Gott.*

*Was breübst du dich, meine Seele, und bist  
so unruhig in mir?*

*Harre auf Gott! Denn ich werde ihm noch  
danken, Dass er meines Angesichts Hilfe,  
und mein Gott ist.*

Give sentence with me, O God, and defend  
my cause against the ungodly people:  
O deliver me from the deceitful and wicked  
man.

For thou art the God of my strength: why  
hast thou put me from thee?  
and why go I so heavily, while the enemy  
oppresseth me?

O send out thy light and thy truth, that they  
may lead me and bring me unto thy holy  
hill, and to thy dwelling.

And that I may go unto the altar of God,  
even unto the God of my joy and gladness:  
and upon the harp will I give thanks unto  
thee, O God, my God.

Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? and why  
art thou so disquieted within me?

O put thy trust in God: for I will yet give  
him thanks, which is the help of my  
countenance, and my God.

*Psalm 43*

### MENDELSSOHN: MEIN HERZ ERHEBET GOTT, DEN HERRN

*Mein Herz erhebet Gott, den Herrn, und es  
freuet sich mein Geist Gottes, meines Hei-  
lands; Denn er hat die Niedrigkeit seiner  
Magd freundlich angesehen.*

*Sieh, mich preisen selig alle Kindeskinde  
von nun an; Denn er, der da mächtig ist, deß  
Name heilig ist, hat großes an mir getan.*

*Und Barmherzigkeit erzeugt der Herr an  
allen, die ihn fürchten.*

*Mit der Gewalt seines Arms hat er alle zer-  
streut, die im Herzen hoffärtig sind: von  
ihren Stühle stößt er die Gewaltigen von  
ihrem Stuble stößt er sie und richtet auf die  
elend und niedrig sind. Er erfüllet die Hung-  
rigen alle mit Gütern, und die Reichen gehn  
leer von ihm hinweg.*

*Er gedenket der Barmherzigkeit und hilft  
seinem Diener Israel auf, wie er zugesagt mit  
seinem Worte, Abraham und seinem Samen  
ewiglich. Amen.*

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my  
spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour.  
For he hath regarded the lowliness of his  
hand-maiden.

For behold, from henceforth all generations  
shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty  
hath magnified me, and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him  
throughout all generations.

He hath shewed strength with his arm: he  
hath scattered the proud in the imagination  
of their hearts. He hath put down the  
mighty from their seat and hath exalted the  
humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry  
with good things, and the rich he hath sent  
empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his  
servant Israel, as he promised to our  
forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.  
Amen.

*Luke 1: 46-55*

BRUCKNER: THREE MOTETS

**Locus iste**

*Locus iste a Deo factus est, inaestimabile sacramentum, irreprehensibilis est.*

This place was made by God a priceless mystery; it is without reproof.

Gradual for the dedication of a church

**Christus factus est**

*Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem autem crucis.*

Christ was born for us and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

*Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum et dedit illi nomen quod est super omne nomen.*

Therefore God has exalted him and given him the name which is above every name.

Gradual for Maundy Thursday  
*Philippians 2:8,9*

**Os justi**

*Os justi meditabitur sapientiam, et lingua ejus loquentur iudicium.*

The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice.

*Lex Dei ejus in corde ipsius: et non supplantabuntur gressus ejus. Allelujah.*

The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip. Hallelujah!

Gradual at Mass for Doctors  
*Psalms 37:30-1*

BRUCKNER: AVE MARIA

*Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum. Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.*

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

*Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc, et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.*

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and in the hour of our death. Amen.

BRAHMS: WARUM IST DAS LICHT GEGEBEN

*Warum? Warum ist das Licht gegeben dem Mühseligen, und das Leben den betrübten Herzen? Warum?*

Why is light given to him that is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul? O why?

*Die des Todes warten und kommt nicht, und grüben ihn wohl aus dem Verborgenen; die sich fast freuen und sind fröhlich, daß sie das Grab bekommen. Warum?*

To them who long for death, but it comes not, and dig for it more than for hid treasures; who rejoice exceedingly, and are glad when they find the grave. O why?

*Und dem Manne, deß Weg verborgen ist, und Gott vor ihm den selben bedeckt. Warum?*

Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, whom God has hedged in? O why?

*Job 3:20-23*

BRAHMS: THREE MOTETS OP 110

**Ich aber bin elend**

Ich aber bin elend, und mir ist wehe.

But I am afflicted and in misery.

Herr, Herr, Gott, barmherzig und gnädig und geduldig und von großer Gnade und Treue, der du beweisest Gnade in tausend Glied, und vergibst Missetat, Übertretung und Sünde, und vor welchem niemand unschuldig ist.

Lord, Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty;

Herr, Herr Gott, deine Hilfe schutze mich!

Lord, Lord God, protect me with your help!

*Ps. 69:29a; Exodus 34:6b-7a; Ps. 69:29b*

**Ach, arme Welt**

Ach, arme Welt, du trügest mich, Ja, das bekenn ich eigentlich, Und kann dich doch nicht meiden.

Oh, wretched world, you deceived me, Yes, I acknowledge it truly, And cannot flee from you.

Du falsche Welt, du bist nicht wahr, Dein Schein vergeht, das weiß ich zwar, Mit Weh und großem Leiden.

You, false world, are not sincere, Your light is fading, I know for sure, With grief and great sorrow.

Dein Ehr, dein Gut, du arme Welt, Im Tod, in rechten Nöten fehlt, Dein Schatz ist eitel falsches Geld Dess hilf mir, Herr, zum Frieden!

Your honour, your blessing, you wretched world, In death will be missing. Your treasure is nothing but false money, So help me Lord towards peace.

(unknown author)

**Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein**

Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein Und wissen nicht, wo aus noch ein, Und finden weder Hilf noch Rat, Ob wir gleich sorgen früh und spat: So ist das unser Trost allein, Daß wir zusammen ingemein Dich rufen an, o treuer Gott, Um Rettung aus der Angst und Not.

When in the hour of utmost need We know not where to look for aid; When days and nights of anxious thought Nor help nor counsel yet have brought, Then this our comfort is alone, That we may meet before Thy throne And cry, O faithful God, to Thee For rescue from our misery.

Sieh nicht an unser Sünden groß, Sprich uns derselb'n aus Gnaden los, Steh uns in unserm Elend bei, Mach uns von aller Trübsal frei; Auf daß von Herzen können wir Nachmals mit Freuden danken dir, Gehorsam sein nach deinem Wort, Dich allzeit preisen hier und dort.

Ah! hide not for our sins Thy face, Absolve us through Thy boundless grace, Be with us in our anguish still, Free us at last from every ill. That so with all our hearts we may To Thee our glad thanksgiving pay, Then walk obedient to Thy Word And now and ever praise Thee, Lord.

Paul Eber (1511-1569)

## The Scottish Chamber Choir

### BRAHMS: FEST- UND GEDENKSPRUCHE OP 109

#### Unsere Väter

Unsere Väter hofften auf dich; und da sie hofften, halfst du ihnen aus.

Zu dir schrien sie und wurden errettet; sie hofften auf dich und wurden nicht zu Schanden.

Der Herr wird seinem Volk Kraft geben, der Herr wird sein Volk segnen mit Frieden.

In thee our fathers trusted; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

To thee they cried, and were saved; in thee they trusted, and were not disappointed.

The Lord will give strength to his people, the Lord will bless his people with peace.

*Psalm 22:4–5; Psalm 29:11*

#### Wenn ein starker Gewappneter

Wenn ein starker Gewappneter seinen Palast bewahret, so bleibet das Seine mit Frieden.

Aber, ein jeglich Reich, so es mit sich selbst uneins wird, das wird wüste, und ein Haus fällt über das andere.

When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace;

But, every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and house falls upon house.

*Luke 11:21; 17*

#### Wo ist ein so herrlich Volk

Wo ist ein so herrlich Volk, zu dem Götter also nahe sich tun als der Herr, unser Gott, so oft wir ihn anrufen?

Hüte dich nur und bewahre deine Seele wohl, daß Du nicht vergessest der Geschichte, die deine Augen gesehen haben, und daß sie nicht aus deinem Herzen komme alle dein Leben lang.

Und sollst deinen Kindern und Kindeskindern kund tun. Amen.

For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him?

Only take heed, and keep your souls diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life;

Make them known to your children and to your children's children. Amen

*Deuteronomy 4:7; 9*

Since its formation in 1968, the **Scottish Chamber Choir** has performed throughout Scotland and Northern England to great acclaim. Each season the choir presents four concerts in Edinburgh, climaxing with an appearance at the Festival Fringe. These are usually supplemented by a Christmas concert and guest appearances at local Music Societies and Festivals throughout the year, keeping members quite busy!

The choir sings both shorter items from the chamber choir repertoire and more extended works, such as the Bach B minor Mass at our recent Festival Fringe concert. Whilst some concerts are given *a cappella*, at others we are joined by a variety of instrumental forces, making possible an exceptional freedom of programming and great interest for both participants and audience.

The choir's hallmark has always been its breadth of repertoire, encompassing a wide range of music from the 16th century to the present day, with music by living composers featuring in programmes during most seasons. Often there is a thread linking a series of concerts, encouraging regular attendance. The highly successful and critically praised Silver Jubilee season in 1993–4, for example, concentrated on 20th century British music, and was recognised by an Enterprise Award from the Performing Rights Society – one of only three such awards in Scotland.

From time to time, vacancies occur in all sections of the choir, and any singer interested in obtaining further details should contact Bill Wood, the President, on 0131 339 7663. Rehearsals are held on Monday evenings in the Ian Tomlin School of Music at Napier University's Craighouse campus.

**Michael Harris** received his earliest musical education as a chorister of Gloucester Cathedral. He was Organ Scholar of St Peter's College, Oxford, and continued his studies at the Royal College of Music. He studied organ with Nicholas Danby, and has taken part in Masterclasses given by, among others, Nicolas Kynaston, Daniel Roth and Piet Kee.

He has been Organist and Master of the Music of St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, since November 1996; he is also a Lecturer at the Ian Tomlin School of Music in Napier University, Edinburgh. Prior to moving to Edinburgh he held posts as Sub-Organist of Leeds Parish Church and, from 1986, Assistant Organist of Canterbury Cathedral.

His work has involved him in numerous recordings and broadcasts, both for television and radio. As Organist of St Giles' Cathedral he hosts many organ concerts on the famous Rieger organ (built 1992) and has made a number of CD recordings with the instrument.

Elsewhere he has given recitals at St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, Canterbury Cathedral, Winchester Cathedral, Ripon Cathedral and Leeds Town Hall. He has given many recitals in Germany, including on the historic Silbermann organs in Freiberg (Dom) and Dresden (Hofkirche) and in 1999 was a member of the Jury for the International Gottfried Silbermann Organ Competition in Freiberg.

Since 1998 he has been Musical Director of the Scottish Chamber Choir. He is also much involved in the work of organ education in Scotland and is Director of the Edinburgh Organ Academy, an annual springtime course founded in 1998.

## The Scottish Chamber Choir

Sopranos	Alison Bishop	Pauline McCl
	Alison Crichton	Rebecca Norr
	Susie Flett	Sasha Salinas
	Lorraine Fraser	Erica Schwarz
	Jenny Mackenzie	Adriana Skar
	Anne McAlister	Milda Zinkus
Contraltos	Fiona Akers	Heather MacI
	Jean Brodie	Deirdre Mart
	Myra Brown	Susan Oliver
	Becky Hirst	Sheila Robert
Tenors	Michael Lucas	James Verge
	Andrew Morley	Bill Wood
	Andrew Polson	
Basses	Roddy Bryce	Hamish Mart
	Adrian Coppola	Martin Tarr
	Frank Lucas	

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The work of the choir is subsidised by Making Music from funds supplied by the Scottish Arts Council. Making Music, founded in 1935 as the National Federation of Music Societies, represents the interests of around 1800 societies throughout the United Kingdom, providing them with a range of services and training as well as acting as the leading voice for amateur music. The Duchess of Kent is Patron of Making Music, and its current President is Sir Peter Maxwell Davies.



THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL



## Edinburgh Bach Choir

### Future Concerts

#### 7:30pm Saturday 23rd March 2002

Greyfriars Kirk, Greyfriars Place

Durufié *Requiem*

Poulenc *Gloria*

Fauré *Cantique de Jean Racine*  
*Pélleas et Mélisande*

Michael Lester-Cribb *Jubilee Nocturne* (first performance)

#### 7:30pm Saturday 25th May 2002

Greyfriars Kirk, Greyfriars Place

J.S. Bach *Magnificat*  
*Easter Oratorio*  
*Mass in F*

Tickets £12 (concessions £9) available from:

Queen's Hall, Clerk Street, Edinburgh (0131 668 2019)

Usher Hall, Lothian Road (0131 228 1155)

Assembly Rooms, George Street (0131 220 4349)

from members of the Choir, or at the door

These concerts are subsidised by Making Music, the National Federation of Music Societies, with funds provided by the Scottish Arts Council

THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL



We hope that you have enjoyed the concert and will wish to hear the choir in our next Edinburgh concerts

8:00pm

**Saturday 8th June 2002**

**St Giles' Cathedral**

A European Tour:

Mediterranean Baroque Music

by Monteverdi, Valls and Vivaldi

**Sunday 11th August 2002**

**St Mary's Cathedral**

Festival Fringe concert

Handel *Coronation Anthems*

Details from choir members or from the President,  
Bill Wood, on 0131 339 7663