

# The Scottish Chamber Choir

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Directed by Michael Harris

# Ancient and Modern Music from Scotland

8.00pm

Saturday 14th November 2009

St Giles' Cathedral, High Street, Edinburgh

## The Scottish Chamber Choir

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Director: Michael Harris

Organist: Peter Backhouse

ROBERT CARVER  
(c.1485 – c.1570)

MISSA L'HOMME ARMÉ

GLORIA

CREDO

SANCTUS–BENEDICTUS

AGNUS DEI

INTERVAL of 15 minutes

ROBIN ORR  
(1909–2006)

SONGS OF ZION, A PSALM SEQUENCE

BE GRACIOUS TO ME, O GOD

SING TO THE LORD A NEW SONG

BLESSED BE THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL

JAMES MACMILLAN  
(b.1959)

DIVO ALOYSIO SACRUM

CANTOS SAGRADOS

IDENTITY

VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE

SUN STONE

## Programme notes

### **Carver:** *Missa L'Homme Armé*

Robert Carver's *Missa L'homme armé* is the only example of a British mass based on the popular French folksong (the Armed Man) of that name; it was the source of inspiration for many late fifteenth and early sixteenth century composers who used the melody as a cantus firmus.

Details of the life of Robert Carver (sometimes Carvor) are somewhat sketchy, but it appears that he may have studied in Leuven in the first years of the sixteenth century, where he would have come into contact with the polyphonic idiom of the Low Countries composers such as Dufay. He took holy orders in 1503 and became a canon of Scone Abbey in 1511. Research also suggests that much of his musical activity took place at the Chapel Royal in Stirling in the years leading up to the Scottish Reformation of 1560.

Although the *Missa L'homme armé* is only written for four voices it is one of Carver's most complex works, mainly due to the rhythmic virtuosity, typical of Netherlands composers of the time, with which Carver imbues his textures. In the manner of the time, there is no setting of the *Kyrie*. There is a clear division between full and solo sections in the polyphony; in the full passages the tenor is allocated to the cantus firmus, whilst the intervening solo passages contain the most complex textures, and are usually reduced to three voices.

### **Orr:** *Songs of Zion*

Robin Orr was born in Brechin, and spent much of the first part of his career in Cambridge, before returning to Scotland as Professor of Music at Glasgow University in 1956. During his time in Scotland he also became the first chairman on Scottish Opera, in 1962.

His *Songs of Zion*, of which three of the four psalm settings will be heard tonight, was written in 1978 for the St Asaph Festival, with the first performance given by the BBC Northern Singers. These are compact and colourful motets which in style owe something to Stravinsky's harmonic language; unexpected modulations and pithy rhythmic moments help to illustrate the texts in an original fashion.

### **Macmillan:** *Divo Aloysio Sacrum* Composer's note

These words are inscribed above the front door of the Jesuit church of St Aloysius in Glasgow where I have attended Mass for a number of years. They are used in the middle section of this short motet which calls for the intercession of St Aloysius, one of the most famous and beloved Jesuit saints.

The outer sections involve a simple falling major scale which receives a constantly shifting re-harmonisation at each occurrence. The middle section is constructed out of a rising scale. The work is dedicated to the choir of the church and their conductor Dan Divers.

[The work was given its premiere in St Giles' Cathedral in 1993 by the RSNO Chorus conducted by Christopher Bell]

### **Macmillan:** *Cantos Sagrados* Composer's note

In writing this work I wanted to compose something which was both timeless and contemporary, both sacred and secular. The title (Sacred Songs) is therefore slightly misleading as the three poems are concerned with political repression in Latin America and are deliberately coupled with traditional religious texts to emphasise a deeper solidarity with the poor of that sub-continent.

It was my interest in Liberation Theology which made me combine the poems of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina with the texts of the Latin mass in *Búsqueda* (an earlier music-theatre work) and has now led me to attempt a similar synthesis of ideas in *Cantos Sagrados*.

The voices in Ariel Dorfman's poems belong to those who suffer a particular type of political repression: the "disappearance" of political prisoners. Ana Maria Mendoza's poem about the Virgin of Guadalupe tackles the same problem by asking a more fundamental cultural and historical question.

[*Cantos Sagrados* was commissioned by the Scottish Chamber Choir with subsidy from the Scottish Arts Council. The first performance took place on 10 February 1990 in Old St Paul's Church, Edinburgh, with the Scottish Chamber Choir conducted by Colin Tipple.]

Programme notes by James Macmillan and Michael Harris

## Acknowledgement

This concert is subsidised by Making Music, the National Federation of Music Societies, with funds provided by the Scottish Arts Council.



The Scottish Chamber Choir is registered with OSCR, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, as Scottish Charity No. SC013058 (details at <http://www.oscr.org.uk/>)

## Texts and translations

CARVER: *MISSA L'HOMME ARMÉ*

### Gloria

*[Gloria in excelsis Deo] et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.*

*Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam, Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.*

*Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe, Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris,*

*qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis; qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram;*

*qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis. Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe, cum sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.*

### Credo

*[Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium, et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula:*

*Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero, genitum non factum, consubstantialem Patri, per quem omnia facta sunt.*

*Qui propter nos homines et nostram salutem, descendit de coelis;*

*et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto, ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est; crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die secundum scripturas; et ascendit in coelum; sedet ad dexteram Patris;*

[Glory be to God in the highest,] and on earth peace to men of good will.

We praise thee, we bless thee, we adore thee, we glorify thee. We give thee thanks for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father almighty.

O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ: O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,

that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.

Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us. For thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord, thou only art the most high, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Ghost, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

[I believe in one God,] the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible: and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds:

God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made:

Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven,

and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the scriptures, and ascended into heaven,

*et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos; cujus regni non erit finis.*

*Et in Spiritum Sanctum Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patri Filioque procedit, qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur.*

*Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.*

### Sanctus–Benedictus

*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth.*

*Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.*

*Osanna in excelsis.*

*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.*

*Osanna in excelsis.*

### Agnus Dei

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.*

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.*

And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead: whose kingdom shall have no end.

And (I believe) in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified.

And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts.

Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

ORR: *SONGS OF ZION*

**Be gracious to me, O God**

Be gracious to me, O God, in thy true love;  
in the fullness of thy mercy blot out my misdeeds.  
Wash away all my guilt and cleanse me from my sin.  
Take marjoram and sprinkle me, that I may be clean;  
create a pure heart in me, O God,  
and give me a new and steadfast spirit.

**Sing to the Lord a new song**

Sing to the Lord a new song,  
O praise God in his holy place,  
praise him in the vault of heav'n,  
praise him for his mighty works.

Praise him with fanfares on the trumpet,  
praise him upon lute and harp;  
praise him with tambourine and dancing,  
praise him with flute and strings;  
praise him with clash of cymbals;  
praise him with triumphant cymbals;  
let ev'rything that hath breath praise the Lord.

**Blessed be the Lord God of Israel**

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
who alone does marvellous things;  
blessed be his glorious name for ever,  
and may his glory fill all the earth. Amen.

MACMILLAN: *DIVO ALOYSIO SANCTO*

Saint Aloysius pray for us

*Divo Aloysio sacrum*

Text from an inscription on a church wall

MACMILLAN: *CANTOS SAGRADOS* (Sacred Songs)

**I IDENTITY**

Texts: Ariel Dorfman (trans. Edie Grossman)

*Libera animas omnium* (from the Requiem Mass)

What did you say? – They found another one –  
This morning? – I can't hear you –  
another one floating in the river.  
Talk louder – so you didn't even dare –  
I can't hear you – no-one can identify him.

The police said not even his mother,  
not even the mother who bore him,  
not even she could – they said that?

The other women already tried – I can't understand what you're saying –  
they turned him over and looked at his face, his hands, they looked at –  
right! right!

They're all waiting together, silent and mourning, on the riverbank.

They took him out of the water, silent,  
he's naked as the day he was born.

There's a police captain –  
and they won't leave until I get there?

He doesn't belong to anybody,  
you say he doesn't belong to anybody?

If the captain's the same one as last time  
he knows what will happen:

that body will have my name –  
my son's, my husband's, my father's name.

I'll sign the papers, tell them, tell them I'm on my way;  
wait for me, and don't let that captain touch him  
don't let that captain take one step closer to him.

Tell them not to worry:  
I can bury my own dead.

Latin text and translation

*Libera animas omnium fidelium  
defunctorum de poenis inferni,  
et de profundo lacu:  
libera eas de ore leonis ne  
absorbeat eas tartarus,  
ne cadant in obscurum.*

Deliver the souls of all the faithful departed  
from the pains of hell  
and from the depths of the pit:  
deliver them from the lion's mouth, that hell  
devour them not,  
that they fall not into darkness.

## II VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE

Texts: Ana Mari Mendoza (trans. Gilbert Markus o.p.)  
*Salve Mater, coeli parta* (trad.)

Sweet Virgin of Guadalupe, oh virgin of the gentle eyes,  
dark-eyed virgin, good lady, my love,  
painted by God's own hand on the cloak of the Indian Juan Diego,  
Sweet Virgin, my love,  
who commanded the bishop to build you a shrine there,  
where my brothers the Indians lived  
in Tapeyepac in Mexico, outside the city.

Flogged and burned were those poor little ones,  
despised, deceived and mocked, my brothers the Indians;  
a thousand times mistreated, a thousand thousand killed.

What did you say to the bishop?

"You will build me a house outside the city, where I will wait,  
where I can hear the cries, the pleas of my Indian children."

Sweet Virgin of Guadalupe, oh virgin of the gentle eyes,  
dark-eyed virgin, my girl, my love,  
I want to ask you this question, dear mother:

Why is it that in Spain,  
on the far side of our hills and valleys, across the sea,  
why is there another Virgin of Guadalupe,  
Patron Saint of the Conquerors,  
men with great beards, men on horses,  
men with swords and fire, who crush and burn our homes,  
and the Indians, your children, still inside?

Sweet Virgin of Guadalupe, oh virgin of the gentle eyes,  
dark-eyed virgin, my girl, my love,  
I want to ask you this question, dear mother:

Why is it, sweet virgin, sweet mother,  
why is there another Virgin of Guadalupe,  
"Patroness of the Conquerors"?

Latin text and translation

*Salve Mater coeli porta  
Virga florens et exorta  
David ex prosapia*

Hail Mother, gate of heaven,  
flowering Virgin,  
sprung from the line of David.

## III SUN STONE

Texts: Ariel Dorfman (trans. Edie Grossman)  
*Et incarnatus est* (from the *Credo* of the Mass)

They put the prisoner  
against the wall.  
A soldier ties his hands.  
His fingers touch him – strong,  
gentle, saying goodbye.  
– Forgive me, companero –  
says the voice in a whisper.  
The echo of his voice  
and of  
those fingers on his arm  
fills his body with light  
I tell you his body fills with light  
and he almost does not hear  
the sound of the shots.  
[Forgive me, companero]

Latin text and translation

*Et incarnatus est de spiritu sancto  
ex Maria Virgine,  
et homo factus est.*

He became incarnate of the  
Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit,  
and was made man.

*Crucifixus etiam pro nobis.*

For our sake he was crucified.

Keep in touch with the Scottish Chamber Choir – visit our  
web site at:

**[www.scottishchamberchoir.org.uk](http://www.scottishchamberchoir.org.uk)**

You will find there our plans for the season, details of  
forthcoming concerts and useful links, plus an archive of  
our programmes back to 1993.

## The Scottish Chamber Choir

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 St John Passion at our Festival Fringe concert in 2004. 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, 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. Our 40th Anniversary season was marked by the commission of a new work *Father and Son* by Kenneth Dempster, which was supported by an award of a £5,000 lottery grant from the Scottish Arts Council via Awards for All, and received its first performance at our concert last November.

From time to time, vacancies occur in all sections of the choir. Any singer interested in obtaining further details should contact Michael Harris, our Musical Director, by phone on 0131 556 1759 or by email at [info@scottishchamberchoir.org.uk](mailto:info@scottishchamberchoir.org.uk). Rehearsals are held on Monday evenings in the Ian Tomlin Academy of Music at Edinburgh 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.

Michael 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 Academy of Music in Edinburgh Napier University. Prior to moving to Edinburgh he held posts as Sub-Organist of Leeds Parish Church and Assistant Organist of Canterbury Cathedral.

As Organist of St Giles' Cathedral he hosts many organ concerts on the famous Rieger organ (built in 1992) and his work has involved him in numerous recordings and broadcasts, both for television and radio. Under his direction the Cathedral Choir has visited the USA, France and Greece, and in July 2009 they toured Canada for the first time, with concerts and services in Ontario.

His solo recordings include *The Organ at St Giles'*, and he has directed the Cathedral Choir in a number of CD recordings, including *An Edinburgh Celebration* to mark their first tour of the USA in Autumn 2004, and *I was glad*, released in 2008.

Michael has given recitals at many venues in Germany, Belgium, Italy, Poland, the USA, Australia and New Zealand, as well as in the UK, where he has played in many of the major venues. He has been Musical Director of the Scottish Chamber Choir since 1998.

He is also much involved in organ and choral education. He has led a number of study tours to Germany, with a special interest in the organs of Thüringen and Saxony. His Edinburgh Napier University duties include supervision of final-year performance students, and directing the University Chamber Choir.

## The Scottish Chamber Choir

**Peter Backhouse** began his musical training as a chorister in the choir of York Minster. Later he studied music at Edinburgh University where he graduated BMus (Hons), having won the 3rd Year Class Medal as well as the Tovey Memorial Prize for his organ playing. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists and holder of their Choir Training Diploma, as well as an Associate of the Royal College of Music. In 1977 he was appointed Assistant Organist at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral. This post, with its daily accompaniment of services, as well as many concerts, recitals, broadcasts and recordings, kept him busy for over 20 years.

In 2000 he was appointed Assistant Organist at St Giles' Cathedral, and now combines this post with teaching music at The Edinburgh Academy, St Mary's Music School, and Edinburgh University. He has served on the Council of The Edinburgh Society of Organists for many years, including two as President. He supports the work of the Royal School of Church Music and was for a number of years an organ adviser in the Edinburgh area for the Scottish Federation of Organists.

He has played for services and given recitals in many cathedrals, including Westminster Abbey, Canterbury, Durham, Ripon and St Albans Cathedrals, St George's Chapel Windsor, King's College Cambridge, the Temple Church London and recently at York Minster. As a continuo player he has played with all the major professional ensembles in Scotland.

Railways have interested him all his life, and he is a qualified signaller on the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway. His photographs, principally of organs, churches and walking holidays, continue to be published, and he tries to find time to enjoy cricket and walking.

Sopranos	Harriet Atkinson	Jenny Mackenzie	Sasha Salinasova
	Rachel Bucknall	Pauline McClellan	Adriana Skaraas*
	Adrienne Burgess	Julie Morrice	Milda Zinkus*
	Lorraine Fraser		
Contraltos	Anne Barker*	Myra Brown	Alison McCleery
	Bridget Beagan	Guen Innes	Susan White*
	Jean Brodie	Marjory Lobban	
Tenors	John Hailes	Michael Towers	
	Andrew Polson*	James Verge*	
Basses	Mike Arthur*	Roger Harris	Martin Tarr
	George Burgess*	James McDonald	

The members marked \* sing in the semi-chorus throughout the Carver Mass