



Thomas Tallis Society Choir

ST PAUL'S
SINFONIA



MAGNIFICENT

DIRECTED BY
EAMONN DOUGAN

MAGNIFICATs!

A SUMMER CONCERT

SCHUBERT-
MAGNIFICAT



TAYLOR
SCOTT
DAVIS-
MAGNIFICAT



FAURÉ -
CANTIQUE DE
JEAN RACINE

Tonight's Programme

Magnificat - Schubert

Chor der Engel - Schubert

Abendfeier in Venedig - Clara Schumann

Pavane - Fauré

Cantique de Jean Racine - Fauré

INTERVAL - Drinks served in the church hall
opposite

Magnificat - Taylor Scott Davis

PROGRAMME NOTES

Magnificat D486 in C major (1815)

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Born in a suburb north of Vienna, Franz Peter Schubert showed an unusual gift for music from an early age. Receiving both violin and piano lessons from his immediate family, the young Schubert soon exceeded their abilities and in 1808, at the age of eleven, he became a pupil at the Stadtkonvikt Schule, a former Jesuit boarding school where he became acquainted with the orchestral music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. After he left the school at the end of 1813, he returned home to live with his father and began studying to become a schoolteacher, in addition to continuing his studies in composition with Antonio Salieri. In 1821, Schubert was admitted to the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien* (Society of Friends of Music in Vienna) as a performing member, following which he enjoyed several successful years as an emerging composer. The final two years of his life saw him produce some of his best known works – including the song cycle *Winterreise*, the String Quintet in C major, the piano Impromptus, the *Death and the Maiden* string quartet and his final three piano sonatas – and culminated in a concert of his works in March 1828: it was the only time he did so in his career and was to great critical acclaim. Schubert died eight months later at the age of 31, the cause officially attributed to typhoid fever but believed by some historians to be syphilis.

The Magnificat was written during one of the most active times of Schubert's composing career. Throughout 1815, whilst living with his father and working as a schoolteacher to make ends meet, he composed over 20,000 bars of music including nine Church works, a symphony and about 140 Lieder. In 1816, Schubert was invited to lodge with his affluent friend Schober, which allowed him to concentrate solely on composition; "I compose every morning, and when one piece is done, I begin another."

Written over a period of 10 days when he was just 18 years old, the autograph score of the Magnificat is dated 25 September 1815, and was likely composed for vespers at the Lichtenal Church in Vienna. It is his only setting of the text. Rarely performed, the writing of this miniature sparkles, opening with a forceful and energetic statement of the text sung by the full chorus with powerful instrumental accompaniment. During the middle section, *Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae* and *Ecce enim ex hoc me beatam*, Schubert varies the compositional style by rotating the theme among the different voices and finally returning to the original text and melody. The tender, flowing lines of *Deposuit potentes*, set for solo quartet, are characteristic of the intimate, lyrical Schubert who returns to the structure and emotion of the first movement for the *Gloria Patri* final section. The chorus entrance is vibrant and full, followed by the rotating theme, with more texture given by alternating the full chorus and the solo quartet. The work ends with a series of confident, fervent *Amens*.

Words and translation – see Scott Davis I, IV, V.

Chor der Engel D.440

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Schubert's a cappella sacred anthem *Chor der Engel* (Choir of Angels) was likely written in around 1816 and is based on a text taken from the end of the opening scene of Goethe's *Faust*. Faust has been battling with a sense that his projects can never succeed and is considering suicide but rejects the idea when he hears this chorus announcing the resurrection of Christ. The work is known for its depiction of the joy and celebration associated with Christ's resurrection, using the imagery of angels bringing the hope of salvation.

Christ ist erstanden!
Christ ist erstanden!
Freude dem Sterblichen
den die verderblichen, schleichenden,
erblichen Mängel umwanden.

Christ is arisen!
Christ is arisen!
Joy to all mortals
who from corrupted, insidious,
inherited sin are saved.

Clara Josephine Schumann (née Wieck) was a German pianist, composer, and piano teacher. A child prodigy, she began touring at age eleven, gaining international acclaim by the age of 18. She married the composer Robert Schumann on 12 September 1840, and the couple had eight children together. Her marriage to Robert was unusually happy for the time, and they loved and supported each other for the entirety of their marriage. After his early death, she continued her concert tours in Europe for decades, frequently with the violinist Joseph Joachim and other chamber musicians. Clara died in 1896 in Frankfurt, but is buried in Bonn beside her husband.

Regarded as one of the most distinguished pianists of the Romantic era, she exerted her influence over the course of a 61-year concert career, changing the format and repertoire of the piano recital by lessening the importance of purely virtuosic works. She also composed solo piano pieces, a piano concerto, chamber music, choral pieces, and songs.

Abendfeier in Venedig (Evening Celebration in Venice) is taken from *Three Mixed Voice Choruses* which Clara wrote as a surprise gift for her husband Robert's birthday in 1848. It is one of many pieces that were given as a gift from one Schumann to the other, likely due to them often lacking sufficient funds to purchase gifts.

The lyrics, by the German poet Emmanuel Geibel, describe a scene of prayer and praise of the Virgin Mary, in which all the angels of heaven and all the forces of nature on Earth pay deference to the Mother of God. The music shows Clara's extensive capabilities in part writing and counterpoint through its subtlety. The voices often enter individually, move polyphonically, but yet always come together to deliver important lines of text. Clara's treatment of text is representative of the larger compositional shift towards storytelling and emotion in song, a compositional style that would be adopted by Clara's close friend Johannes Brahms and her many students.

*Ave Maria! Meer und Himmel ruh'n,
Von allen Türmen hallt der Glocken Ton.
Ave Maria! Laßt vom ird'schen Tun,
Zur Jungfrau betet, zu der Jungfrau Sohn!
Des Himmels Scharen selber knieen nun
Mit Lilienstäben vor des Vaters Thron,
Und durch die Rosenwolken wehn die Lieder
Der sel'gen Geister feierlich hernieder.*

Hail Mary! Sea and sky are at rest,
The sound of bells echoes from all the towers.
Hail Mary! Let go of earthly actions
Pray to the Virgin, to the Virgin's Son.
Heaven's multitudes themselves kneel now
with lilies before the Father's throne
and blow through the roseate clouds the songs
of the blessed spirits solemnly float down.

*O heil'ge Andacht, welche jedes Herz mit leisen
Schauern wunderbar durchdringt!
O sel'ger Glaube, der sich himmelwärts auf des
Gebetes weißem Fittich schwingt!
In milde Tränen löst sich da der Schmerz, indes der
Freude Jubel sanfter klingt.
Ave Maria! Erd und Himmel scheinen bei diesem Laut
sich liebend zu vereinen.*

Oh holy devotion, which each shudder quietly taps
each heart!
Oh blessed faith that goes heavenward sing on the
white wing of prayer!
The pain dissolves in mild tears, while the joy of
cheering sounds softer.
Hail Mary! Earth and sky shine to unite lovingly at
this sound.

Fauré was born in the south of France in 1845, the youngest child of a schoolmaster and member of the minor nobility. Displaying exceptional musical talent as a young boy, Fauré was sent to the École Niedermeyer de Paris at the age of nine and remained there until he was 20, eventually receiving instruction from Camille Saint-Saëns; they were to remain friends until the latter's death some 60 years later. Following the Franco-Prussian War Fauré returned to Paris, where he was appointed the choirmaster at the Église Saint-Sulpice in 1871 (under the composer and organist Charles-Marie Widor), before moving to the Église de la Madeleine in 1874. Eventually rising to the Head of the Paris Conservatoire in 1905, he courted controversy as he modernised and broadened the range of music taught there; nevertheless he remained in post until 1920, retiring at the age of 75.

Fauré's music has been described as linking the end of Romanticism with the modernism of the second quarter of the 20th century; when he was born, Chopin was still composing, and by the time of his death, jazz and the atonal music of the Second Viennese School were being heard.

The *Pavane*, composed in 1887, proved to be one of Fauré's most popular and enduring works. At the time, he was already a well-known musician in Parisian circles, but far from the fame of his contemporaries such as Saint-Saëns. The title refers to an ancient Italian dance, which Fauré transforms into an elegant reverie; a piece intended to be performed outdoors in summer gardens. Originally composed for piano, then orchestrated, Fauré's patron Countess Greffulhe suggested adding a chorus. Although unconvinced for the need to add text, Fauré accepted the suggestion and asked his friend (and cousin of the Countess), the decadent poet Robert de Montesquiou to write the lyrics.

The result is a sung, slightly mocking version about frivolous love affairs and salon sighs, very much in the spirit of *fin-de-siècle* aristocracy. Over time, however, it was the purely instrumental version that reached the widest audience. This seemingly simple music conceals great sophistication. The melody floats gently, the harmonies follow one another naturally, as if the music itself were tiptoeing along. Its melancholy sweetness, languid rhythm and subtle harmonies make it universally popular. Fauré, for his part, never considered this Pavane to be a major work – for him, it was almost a salon piece – yet it is this work that has survived the centuries with the greatest ease.

*C'est Lindor, c'est Tircis et c'est tous nos vainqueurs!
C'est Myrtille, c'est Lydé! Les reines de nos coeurs!
Comme ils sont provocants! Comme ils sont fiers toujours!
Comme on ose régner sur nos sorts et nos jours!*

*Faites attention! Observez la mesure!
Ô la mortelle injure!
La cadence est moins lente!
Et la chute plus sûre!*

*Nous rabattons bien leur caquets!
Nous serons bientôt leurs laquais!
Qu'ils sont laids! Chers minois!
Qu'ils sont fols! (Airs coquets!)*

*Et c'est toujours de même, et c'est ainsi toujours!
On s'adore! On se hait!
On maudit ses amours!
Adieu Myrtille, Eglé, Chloé, démons moqueurs!
Adieu donc et bons jours aux tyrans de nos coeurs!*

It's Lindor! it's Tircis! and all our conquerors!
It's Myrtil! it's Lydé! the queens of our hearts!
How provocative they are, how proud they are always!
How they dare reign over our fates and our days!

Pay attention! Observe the measure!
O the deadly insult!
The pace is less slow!
And the fall more certain!

We'll tone down their chatter!
Soon we'll be their lackeys!
How ugly they are! Sweet faces!
How crazy they are! Coquettish airs!

And it's always the same! And will be so always!
They love one another! They hate one another!
They curse their loves!
Farewell, Myrtil! Eglé! Chloe! Mocking demons!
Farewell and good days to the tyrants of our hearts!

Cantique de Jean Racine (1865)

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Cantique de Jean Racine (Canticle of Jean Racine) was written by Fauré as his entry to a composition competition at the École Niedermeyer de Paris when he was 19 years old, for which he won the first prize. It received its first performance the following year, in 1866, at the dedication of a new organ at the Abbey of Montivilliers in Normandy.

The text is a setting of a Latin hymn from the breviary for matins, *Consors paterni luminis*, paraphrased in French by the dramatist Jean Racine (1639-99). Matins was sung, at least in strict monasteries, during the night and the words refer to “breaking the night's silence with praise to God, putting to flight dark's evil spirits and driving away sloth”.

Beginning with an extended instrumental introduction playing a series of triplet arpeggios, the voices enter in turn, starting with the basses and the first exposition of the main melodic material. Following this, the other voices enter one after the other in order, each presenting half a line of text, while the underlying parts accompany in homophony. Published in 1876, it was dedicated to another of Fauré's mentors, César Franck.

*Verbe égal au Très-Haut, notre unique espérance,
Jour éternel de la terre et des cieux,
De la paisible nuit nous rompons le silence:
Divin Sauveur, jette sur nous les yeux.*

*Répands sur nous le feu de Ta grâce puissante;
Que tout l'enfer fuie au son de Ta voix;
Dissipe le sommeil d'une âme languissante
Qui la conduit à l'oubli de Tes lois!*

*Ô Christ! sois favorable à ce peuple fidèle,
Pour Te bénir maintenant rassemblé;
Reçois les chants qu'il offre à Ta gloire immortelle,
Et de Tes dons qu'il retourne comblé.*

Word of the Highest, our only hope,
Eternal day of earth and the heavens,
We break the silence of the peaceful night;
Saviour Divine, cast your eyes upon us!

Pour on us the fire of your powerful grace,
That all hell may flee at the sound of your voice;
Banish the slumber of a weary soul,
That brings forgetfulness of your laws!

O Christ, look with favour upon your faithful people
Now gathered here to praise you;
Receive their hymns offered to your immortal glory;
May they go forth filled with your gifts.

Programme notes by Caroline Molloy

INTERVAL – Drinks served in the church hall opposite

Magnificat (2020)

Taylor Scott Davis (b. 1980)

Programme note from Taylor Scott Davis

The Magnificat text is rich and historic, and though it's an unwritten rule, it seems each composer gets one chance to declare what they believe the text means to them. Is it possible to capture the sound of Mary going from typical teenage child to God's chosen one? Is it feasible to spend five movements cycling through all of the emotions the story elicits? What helps narrate and what seems overly dramatic? As I approached the text, the following became my interpretation:

Magnificat anima mea - Joy, honour, and bewilderment.

A child-like exclamation at the beginning yields to a warm melody by measure 28, where the men begin singing of God's regard for Mary's lowly status. A murky section afterward leans on the word *anima*, which is feminine and means 'breath', 'air', or 'life force'. Before returning to joy, we have incredibly stately chords as the choir sings about what mighty work God has done through Mary.

Shall I Rejoice

To add a modern voice, I asked Dr. Terry York to write a new text, and his words connected with me deeply. There is a musical simplicity to this movement, but the piece builds around Dr. York's text as he very uniquely channels Mary's intuition to foreshadow the trouble ahead for her son. That uncertainty peaks as the words 'joy and agony' sound like they unravel. Still, every phrase ends with release and determination.

Deposuit

A solo violin becomes Mary's character, and you can hear the uncertainty in her voice. The violin is minor, it's questioning, it's fearful. And the text from the choir is about fearing God, who will show strength, and scatter the proud and arrogant. The movement ends with an unexpected peace, as the violin represents Mary's understanding of what this means.

Et misericordia

Movements three and four are very much linked. The sixteenth notes remain, but their hurried sound turns major as the choir sings about God exalting the humble and feeding the hungry, leaving behind the fearful nature of the previous movement.

Gloria Patri

The final movement begins with jubilation *Gloria Patri* the choir sings, as the accompaniment swells. 'As it was in the beginning' is the translation, as the choir then sings a gentle, simple melody. The Latin word *semper* seems to go in circles about halfway through, as it means 'always'. A slowed down version of the opening melody is sung by a soloist or small group in an ethereal way, before the choir energetically closes by singing about what this means for 'generations of generations'.

*I. Magnificat anima mea Dominum.
Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae:
ecce enim ex hoc
beatam me dicent omnes generationes.
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est:
et sanctum nomen ejus.*

II. Shall I rejoice for Christ in me,
the first of such to say?
All that this child shall ever say or be
now lives and grows in me.
Shall I rejoice for Christ in me,
his name forever mine?
I yield to him my life's identity;
Christ lives and grows in me.

*III. Et misericordia ejus a progenie
in progenies timentibus eum.
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo;
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.*

*IV. Deposuit potentes de sede,
et exaltavit humiles.
Esurientes implevit bonis:
et divites dimisit inanes.
Suscepit Israel puerum suum,
recordatus misericordiae suae.
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,
Abraham et semini ejus in saecula.*

*V. Gloria Patri, et Filio,
et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen!*

My soul magnifies the Lord.
And my spirit has rejoiced in God my saviour.
For he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden:
for behold, henceforth all generations
shall call me blessed.
For he who is mighty has done great things to me;
and holy is his name.

Shall I rejoice for Christ in me,
both glory and disgrace?
My song shall be both joy and agony;
Christ lives and grows in me.
Shall I rejoice for Christ in me,
as clouds and shadows rise?
I ponder scenes that I don't want to see.
Christ lives and grows in me.

And his mercy is on them
who fear him from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud, even the arrogant of heart.

He has deposed the mighty from their seats,
and exalted the humble.
The hungry he has filled with good things,
and the rich he has sent empty away.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy.
As it was spoken to our fathers,
to Abraham and his seed forever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and every shall be,
world without end. Amen!

EAMONN DOUGAN



Eamonn Dougan is an inspirational conductor and renowned vocal coach and baritone. He is Associate Conductor of The Sixteen, founding Director of Britten Sinfonia Voices, Music Director of the Thomas Tallis Society, and Chief Conductor for Jersey Chamber Orchestra and Ryedale Festival Opera.

Recent conducting debuts include Handel's *Semele* at Sibelius Summer Academy and Haydn's *Seven Last Words of our Saviour on the Cross* with the English National Opera. Forthcoming conducting engagements include performances as part of the Royal Academy of Music's Bach the European series, concerts with Chorwerk Ruhr, celebrating Byrd's 400th anniversary, a Christmas tour with Ars Nova, Copenhagen and Messiah with Chamber Choir Ireland and the Seville Baroque Orchestra. His third recording with De Profundis was released in 2024.

Eamonn is vocal consultant for the ongoing Bach series at the Royal Academy of Music, where he also gives conducting masterclasses. He is a Visiting Professor to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, where he teaches ensemble singing and directs the Guildhall Consort. Eamonn read music at New College, Oxford, before continuing his vocal and conducting studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Eamonn Dougan is managed worldwide by Percius.

www.percius.co.uk.

THOMAS TALLIS SOCIETY CHOIR

With around 60 auditioned voices TTS presents four or five concerts a year in the beautiful setting of St Alfege Church. Although many of the choir members live locally in Greenwich, TTS attracts musicians from all over London owing to the high standards it maintains. All singers are required to have very good sight-reading abilities as the choir works on a few concentrated rehearsals before each concert.

We are always keen to recruit new voices. If you are interested, please contact our membership secretary Kathryn Strachan strac157@ntlworld.com.

Sopranos Phoebe Clapham, Alana Clark, Claire Jones, Philippa Kent, Melanie McCabe, Caroline Molloy, Naomi Quant, Anastasia Shupyk, Kathryn Strachan, **Emma Wilkins**

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Check out our website www.stpaulssinfonia.com for further details and future concerts.

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Christian Halstead
David Wallace
Elona Laurie

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Victoria Marsh
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SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday 1st November – TTS's 60th anniversary concert

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We are very grateful to our faithful group of Patrons and Friends that have been loyally supporting us for a number of years. Their generosity and support have really helped the Society to keep going. A reliable yearly income is a huge benefit in planning programmes and means we can budget more accurately.

We are very keen to increase the number of Patrons and Friends to help us go forward in a sustainable manner and we would love your support as either a Patron or Friend.

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And look out for updates on our website www.thomas-tallis-society.org.uk.