

A CONCERT FOR LENT



Moving, haunting and devotional music for lent

Counter-Tenor – **Colin Wilson**
Strings led by Phil Montgomery-Smith

TRURO CATHEDRAL

Sunday 23rd March 2025 6pm

£10 payable at the door

PROGRAMME

Vater Unser (Lord's Prayer) – Arvo Pärt (born 1935)

Filiae Maestae Jerusalem – Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Stabat Mater – Marco Rosano (born 1964)

A Cantata of Peace – Philip Moore (born 1943)

Counter Tenor: Colin Wilson

Violin 1: Phil Montgomery-Smith

Violin 2: Jake Loewendahl

Viola: Chris Prindl

Cello: Becky McGlade

Double Bass: Zoe Kurnow

Continuo: Michael Hoeg

Grateful thanks to the Dean and Chapter for hosting this concert in Truro Cathedral.

WORDS AND PROGRAMME NOTES

Vater Unser

Vater unser is based on The Lord's Prayer in German and is written in 2005 for a boy soprano or countertenor with piano accompaniment. It was first performed in Austria in 2005. Later, Pärt dedicated the piece to the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI and expanded the accompaniment for string orchestra or string quintet, which premiered on 3rd October 2013 in Wollongong, Australia, performed by the countertenor Andreas Scholl.

The piece is different from Pärt's usual work in both its sound and its structure, having been created as a spontaneous song that was independent of the predetermined system. The simple, curving melody line and the harmony of the piano part highlight the idea in the text of "forgive us our sins ... as we forgive ...". It is perhaps the perfect piece of music for these worrying times, and the perfect antidote to the stresses and strains of life in our world today.

Vater unser im Himmel,
geheiligt werde Dein Name.
Dein Reich komme.
Dein Wille geschehe,
wie im Himmel so auf Erden.
Unser tägliches Brot gib uns heute.
Und vergib uns unsere Schuld,
wie auch wir vergeben unseren
Schuldigern.
Und führe uns nicht in Versuchung,
sondern erlöse uns von dem Bösen.

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against
us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Matthew 6:9-13

Filiae Maestae Jerusalem RV638

Composed about 1715, *Filiae maestae Jerusalem* is the first of two introductory motets written for solo voice to come before a setting of the *Miserere*, a psalm sung during Holy Week which itself is unfortunately presumed to be lost. It unusually consists of two recitatives around a single aria. This text concerns sad daughters of Jerusalem after the death of Jesus and the mourning of nature itself. It has a central aria flanked by two recitatives. The first recitative is expressively accented over long, solemn, movingly held chords suggesting the weeping of the daughters of Jerusalem and of all creation at the memory of Christ's suffering. The text of the following aria is saturated with Arcadian imagery—wafting breezes, rippling brooks and so forth. Even though the poetic sense is that these rustic delights have to be foregone in the week of the Passion.

Filiae maestae Jerusalem, en Rex universorum,
Rex vester vulneratus et spinis coronatus
ut maculas detergat peccatorum factus est Rex
dolorum. Ecce moritur vita in durissima cruce;
ecce videte et non eam sed nos potius lugete;
at nequis reprobare vestros fletus immo
lugeant vobiscum omnia insensata, plorent
plorent cuncta creata.

Sileant zephyr rigeant prata
frondes, flores non satientur.
Mortuo flumine, proprio lumine
luna et sol etiam priventur.

Sed tenebris diffuses obscuratus est sol,
scinditur quoque velum, ipsa saxa franguntur
et cor nostrum non frangit vis doloris?
At dum satis non possumus dolere
tu nostri bone Jesu, miserere.

Sileant zephyr rigeant prata
frondes, flores non satientur.
Mortuo flumine, proprio lumine
luna et sol etiam priventur.

Mournful daughters of Jerusalem, behold the King of
all, your King wounded and crowned with thorns;
to clear the stains of sin he was made the King of
sorrows. Behold he loses his life On the harsh cross;
behold, see, and grieve not for the cross, but rather for
us; let no one blame your tears, no, let all irrational
beings grieve with you and all creation mourn.

Let the winds be hushed, let the fields freeze,
the flowers and leaves will not be drenched with the
water they love. With the river dead even the moon
and the sun will be deprived of their own light.

But with shadows spread the sun is darkened,
and the veil is torn, the very rocks are broken,
and does not the force of grief break our hearts?
But while we cannot grieve enough,
you, good Jesus, have mercy on us.

Let the winds be hushed, let the fields freeze,
the flowers and leaves will not be drenched with the
water they love. With the river dead even the moon
and the sun will be deprived of their own light.

Anonymous

Stabat Mater

This modern Stabat Mater was composed by the Italian composer Marco Rosano for voice and strings. It stands in the Baroque tradition of basso continuo and was composed especially for the countertenor Andreas Scholl with first performance in 2008. It focuses on Mary, the mother of Jesus, standing as witness to the crucifixion, choosing not to shut her eyes or flee from the torture and murder of her son. It is an excruciating event to reflect on as Christians remember through this season of lent leading up to Good Friday in a couple of weeks' time. Rosano's Stabat Mater is serene and meditative, focusing more closely on the spiritual weight of the moment than the drama of human tragedy. The music is full of grief, but is ultimately more transcendent than tragic, suffused, for all its dark clouds, with the light of redemption. Rosano's writing I believe is perfectly written for the counter tenor's warm and expressive middle register, uncovering a depth of earthy expression which belies the notion of the countertenor voice as exclusively highly placed and ethereal. The piece is no mere singer's showcase – the voice is incorporated into an eerie and inventive orchestral texture. The setting of the second and third movements is particularly effective, the short, insistent phrases of "Cuius animam gementem" giving way in "O quam tristis" to extraordinary and hypnotic melismas."

Stabat Mater dolorosa iuxta crucem
lacrimosa dum pendebat Filius.
Cuius animam gementem contristatam et
dolentem pertransivit gladius

The grieving Mother stood weeping beside the
cross where her Son was hanging.
Through her weeping soul, compassionate and
grieving, a sword passed.

O quam tristis et afflicta fuit illa benedicta
Mater Unigeniti.
Quae moerebat et dolebat et tremebat cum
videbat nati poenas incliti

O how sad and afflicted was that blessed Mother
of the Only-begotten!
Who mourned and grieved and trembled looking
at the torment of her glorious Child.

Quis est homo qui non fleret Matri Christi si
videret in tanto supplicio?
Quis non posset contristari Matrem Christi
contemplari dolentum cum filio?

Who is the person who would not weep seeing
the Mother of Christ in such agony?
Who would not be able to feel compassion on
beholding Christ's Mother suffering with her
Son?

Pro peccatis suae gentis vidit Iesum in
tormentis et flagellis subditum.
Vidit suum dulcem natum moriendo
desolatum dum emisit spiritum.

For the sins of his people she saw Jesus in
torment and subjected to the scourge.
She saw her sweet offspring dying, forsaken,
while He gave up his spirit.

Eia Mater, fons amoris, me sentire vim
doloris fac ut tecum lugeam.
Fac ut ardeat cor meum in amando Christum
Deum ut sibi complaceam

O Mother, fountain of love, make me feel the
power of sorrow, that I may grieve with you.
Grant that my heart may burn in the love of
Christ my Lord, that I may greatly please Him.

Sancta Mater, istud agas, crucifixi fige plagas
cordi meo valide.
Tui nati vulnerati tam dignati pro me pati
poenas mecum divide.

Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the
Crucified drive deep into my heart.
That of your wounded Son, who so deigned to
suffer for me, I may share the pain.

Fac me vere tecum flere crucifixo condolere
donec ego vixero
Juxta crucem tecum stare te libenter sociare
in planctu desidero

Let me sincerely weep with you, bemoan the
Crucified, for as long as I live
To stand beside the cross with you, and gladly
share the weeping, this I desire

Virgo virginum praeclara mihi jam non sis
amara; Fac me tecum plangere.
Fac ut portem Christi mortem passionis fac
consortem et plagas recolorere.

Chosen Virgin of all virgins be not bitter with me,
let me weep with thee.
Grant that I may bear the death of Christ, the fate
of his Passion, and commemorate His wounds.

Fac me plagis vulnerary cruce hac inebriari
ob amorem filii
Inflammatum et accensus, per te, Virgo, sim
defensus in die iudicii

Let me be wounded with His wounds, inebriated
by the cross because of love for the Son.
Inflame and set on fire, may I be defended by
you, Virgin, on the day of judgement.

Fac me cruce custodiri morte Christi
praemunire confoveri gratia
Quando corpus morietur fa cut animae
donetur paradisi gloria. Amen

Let me be guarded by the cross, armed by
Christ's death and His grace cherish me
When my body dies, grant that to my soul is
given the glory of paradise. Amen

A Cantata of Peace

A Cantata of Peace was written in 2002 by the contemporary composer and organist Philip Moore, formerly organist of Canterbury and Guildford Cathedral and then York Minster. It is one of his few works for voice and solo strings.

It was written for the counter tenor James Bowman who sadly died 2 years ago next week. The words are taken from the Latin Mass and poems by D H Lawrence, Henry Vaughan and Bertrand Russell.

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi
Miserere nobis
Dona nobis pacem

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world
Have mercy upon us
Grant us peace

Ordinary of the Mass

All that matters is to be at one with the living God
to be a creature in the house of the God of life.
Like a cat asleep on a chair at peace,
in peace and at one with the master of the house,
with the mistress, at home, at home in the house of the living,
sleeping on the hearth, and yawning before the fire.
Sleeping on the hearth of the living world
yawning at home before the fire of life
feeling the presence of the living God like a great reassurance
a deep calm in the heart a presence as of a master
sitting at the board in his own and greater being, in house of life.

Pax – D H Lawrence

My soul there is a country far beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged sentry All skilful in the wars:
There above noise and danger, sweet peace sits crown'd with smiles,
And One born in a manger commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious friend and – O my soul awake! -
Did in pure love descend to die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither, there grows the flower of Peace,
The Rose that cannot wither, Thy fortress and thy ease.
Leave then thy foolish ranges; for none can thee secure
But one who never changes – Thy God, thy life, thy cure.

Peace – Henry Vaughan

Through the long years I sought peace, I found ecstasy, I found anguish, I found madness, I found
loneliness, I found the solitary pain that gnaws the heart. But peace I did not find.
Now old and near my end, I have known you, And, knowing you,
I have found both ecstasy and peace, I know rest, After so many lonely years.
I know what life and love may be, Now, if I sleep, I shall sleep fulfilled.

To Edith – Bertrand Russell

COLIN WILSON: COUNTER-TENOR

I currently sing solo recitals in West Cornwall and am employed as an alto Lay Vicar in Truro Cathedral Choir. I also work as a therapist, supervisor and trainer in private practice in Truro and Penzance. I have been singing for the past 50 years initially as a Chorister and then Choral Scholar at Magdalen College Oxford and Songman at York Minster. At Magdalen I was head chorister for 2 years under Dr Bernard Rose singing solos and making several records. As a counter-tenor I have performed solo recitals in Oxford, York and more recently Truro and Penzance, as well as singing daily services at the Cathedral. Notable performances include singing all the solo alto Bach cantatas both in Truro Cathedral and St Marys Penzance and A Celebration of Handel last September. The next concert will be A Celebration of Vivaldi on Saturday 20th September 2025 in Truro Cathedral.

Programme notes by Colin Wilson