

Monteverdi Choir & Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique

Wednesday, January 14, 8 pm, 2004
Zellerbach Hall

Sir John Eliot Gardiner, conductor and artistic director

PROGRAM

- George Frideric Handel Coronation Anthem No. 1, Zadok the Priest,
for Chorus and Orchestra, HWV 258
Andante maestoso – A tempo ordinario
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Vesperae Solennes de Confessore
for Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass Soloists,
Chorus, and Orchestra, K. 339
Dixit Dominus: Allegro vivace
Confitebor: Allegro
Beatus Vir: Allegro vivace
Laudate Pueri
Laudate Dominum: Andante ma un poco sostenuto
Magnificat: Adagio – Allegro

INTERMISSION

- Joseph Haydn Mass in B-flat Major, Heiligmesse (Holy Mass),
for Two Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Two Bass
Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra, Hob. XXII:10,
Sancti Bernardi de Offida (St. Bernard of Offida)
Kyrie: Adagio – Allegro moderato (Chorus)
Gloria: Vivace (Chorus)
Gratias agimus: Allegretto (Soloists and Chorus)
Qui tollis: Più allegro (Chorus)
Quoniam tu solus sanctus: Vivace (Chorus)
Credo: Allegro (Chorus)
Et incarnatus est: Adagio (Soloists and Chorus)
Et resurrexit: Allegro (Chorus)
Et vitam venturi saeculi: Vivace assai (Chorus)
Sanctus: Adagio (Chorus)
Benedictus: Moderato (Chorus)
Agnus Dei: Adagio (Chorus)
Dona nobis pacem: Allegro (Chorus)

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Coronation Anthem No. 1, Zadok the Priest (HWV 258)
George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

One of the last acts of King George I before his unexpected death on June 11, 1727, during a visit to Germany, was to sign the papers awarding Handel British citizenship. Handel, who wrote music perfectly suited to the King's taste for pomp and grandeur, had risen to fame and fortune after the Hanoverian George ascended the throne in 1714. So well pleased with Handel's music was George

that he awarded him an annual stipend of £200 and, in 1723, named him Honorary Composer of Musick to the Royal Chapel. George II shared his father's taste for both ceremonial splendor and Handel's music (his princess-daughters were students of Handel), and as soon as he was proclaimed King on June 15, 1727, he commissioned Handel to provide music for his coronation ceremonies in October. With the commission came the title of Composer to the Court, which Handel could officially assume having become naturalized, an additional £200 yearly grant, and the undoubted enmity of Maurice Green, the English-born Composer to the Royal Chapel who was passed over for both commission and promotion.

Handel was charged to provide four grand anthems for chorus and orchestra for the coronation service at Westminster Abbey on October 11th. The Bishops of Canterbury and York thought it their duty to advise him on the appropriate Biblical texts, but "at this he murmured, and took offence, as he thought it implied his ignorance of the Holy Scriptures:

'I have read my Bible very well, and shall chuse for myself,'" recounted one contemporary source. He selected four texts, including one, My Heart is Inditing, that had been set by Purcell for the 1685 coronation of James II. Handel assembled a huge performing force for the occasion, probably the largest he ever conducted, from the choirs of the Royal Chapel and Westminster Abbey, the "King's Twenty-Four Violins," an establishment of Royal Trumpeters, and sufficient "supernumeraries," as the payment book called the additional players, to bring the total number of vocalists to nearly 50 and the orchestra to "about 160 Violins, Trumpets, Hautboys [oboes], Kettle-Drums, and Bass's proportionable; besides an Organ, which was erected behind the altar," recorded the Norwich Gazette of October 14th. Special galleries had to be constructed to accommodate the musicians.

Word of Handel's new music aroused such public excitement that the October 4th edition of Parker's Penny Post announced, "The [rehearsal] Time will be kept private lest the Crowd of People should be an Obstruction to the Performers." Still, the curious thronged Westminster Abbey for the run-through, and "both the Musick and the Performers were the Admiration of all the Audience." Things went less well at the service itself, however. The performers were widely distributed in the Abbey, making coordination difficult (impossible, as it proved), and the Archbishop of Canterbury jotted on his Order of Service that one anthem had to be omitted entirely "by the Negligence of the Choir of Westminster," and that the others were "in confusion—all irregular in the Musick." The new anthems made a lasting impression, nevertheless, proving to be among Handel's most popular works. The 1732 advertisements for Esther, his first English-language oratorio produced in a London theater, enticed customers by promising that "the Musick will be disposed after the manner of the Coronation Service." The Daily Post of August 19, 1738, noted that the anthems were given in the outdoor Vauxhall Gardens in south London "to the great pleasure of the company, and amidst a great concourse of people." Handel also re-worked sections from the anthems for use in the Occasional Oratorio and Deborah. Zadok the Priest especially occupies an exalted place in British music, having been performed at every coronation since its composition.

Each of the four anthems filled a particular function in the coronation service. Zadok the Priest was heard during the King's Anointing, My Heart is Inditing was used for the Crowning of Queen Caroline and The King Shall Rejoice for that of George, and Let Thy Hand be Strengthened accompanied the Presentation of the new monarch to the people ("following the sounding of Trumpets and the beating of Drums," noted one chronicler). The music was appropriately stirring and majestic, written "for the entire populace, from King to commoner, so simple—yet grand—that everyone could understand and enjoy it," assessed the composer's 20th-century biographer Paul Henry Lang. To which Basil Lam added, "For public or royal occasions, Handel was the ideal Laureate, perhaps the only great artist to rise unflinchingly to the needs of great events, or rather to rise above them, for the grandeur with which our imaginations invest the English 18th century is largely a consequence of Handel's magnificent tributes to such events as the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle [i.e., the Royal Fireworks Music] or the coronation of George II."

Zadok the Priest opens with an anticipatory introduction that leads irresistibly to the resounding entrance of the chorus. The phrases "God save the King . . . Long live the King" are proclaimed by the voices in music that is both festive and inspiring. Zadok ends, as do three of the four Coronation Anthems, with a jubilant "Alleluja!"

Vesperae Solennes de Confessore, K. 339

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

The time from January 1779, when he returned to Salzburg from his unsuccessful job hunt in Mannheim and Paris, until he left in November of the following year to produce *Idomeneo* in Munich was the least productive period of Mozart's life. He was bored and frustrated in his position as organist to the court of Archbishop Hieronymus von Colloredo, and could raise little enthusiasm to compose during the last months of what he called his "Salzburg captivity." (In his intriguing study of the composer, Wolfgang Hildesheimer noted that there are as many entries in the composer's diary during this time pertaining to playing with Tarot cards, throwing darts, or taking walks as to making music.) Those 20 months saw the creation of just a handful of organ sonatas to accompany the Cathedral services; a pair of Masses in C Major (K. 317 and 337); two settings of the evening Vespers service (K. 321 and K. 339); a small clutch of songs, canons, and tiny piano pieces; incidental music to two plays; and three symphonies. The most significant instrumental works of 1779–1780 are the Concerto for Two Pianos (K. 365) and the lovely *Sinfonia Concertante* for Violin and Viola (K. 364). There are as many fragments and incomplete works from this time as there are finished scores, a circumstance almost unknown for this wondrous creator, who usually completed an entire composition in his head before undertaking the drudgery of writing out the manuscript (which he regarded as little more than a sort of glorified musical dictation). Only when he left Salzburg for good to settle in Vienna was his muse kindled anew.

Since there is no information concerning the composition or the occasion for which the *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore* (K. 339) was written, the confessor-saint mentioned in the title is unknown. The work dates from sometime in 1780 (for which year there is less extant documentation than any other in Mozart's mature life), and it was probably intended for use at the Salzburg Cathedral. It was, at any rate, the last sacred piece that he wrote for his home city before bolting from the Archbishop's service the following spring. Though the *Vespers* shows the wide ranging key scheme and strong contrast of styles between movements that came to mark Mozart's later music, it exhibits many of the stylistic traits peculiar to the liturgical music favored by Colloredo for his Salzburg services—little elaborate polyphony or overlapping in different voices of successive text phrases, no more than one solo aria, and—above all—brevity. (Empress Maria Theresia also favored short services at her court in Vienna.) Though Colloredo liked compact musical settings of the sacred texts, he had no objection to continuing the Salzburg tradition of employing a large orchestra, chorus, and group of soloists to make a grand show of his ecclesiastical rites. Wrote musicologist Eric Blom, "[Music] sung at high festivals, at an installation or some ceremony, was as dressy and flashy at Salzburg as the production of a new opera in Vienna. At the Cathedral the archbishop's bodyguard attended with helmets and halberds, the vestments of clergy and choir were as splendid as the dresses of the fashionable ladies in the congregation, and the music was as ostentatious as was compatible with devotion—in fact, according to the ideas of other times, a good deal more so. The chancel was packed with singers, including the court soloists, and on four galleries that circled half-way around the pillars supporting the dome were perched the orchestral musicians." Especially prominent in the orchestral complement for these lavish Salzburg services were the brass instruments; pairs of trumpets and three trombones are called for in the *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore*. Curiously, violas were not used for the Salzburg services of the time for some now-forgotten dogmatic or practical reason, so there are string parts in this work only for two violins and cello/bass.

Since the early Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic liturgy has included eight daily services known as "Offices," celebrations largely observed only by priests. (The Mass, whose primary functions are teaching and the serving of Communion, is a public rite.) The Office at sunset is called *Vespers*, which comprises five Psalms, each framed by a short Antiphon (whose music and non-Biblical text complement its Psalm), and the Magnificat, the hymn to the Virgin from the first chapter of St. Luke. (*Vespers* is of great historical significance in that it was the first daily service to admit polyphonic music, sometime in the 11th or 12th century.) Mozart's *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore* uses Psalms Nos. 110–113 and No. 117 and the Magnificat. It is largely jubilant in nature, with brief episodes for the solo quartet complementing the joyous choral shouts. Only in the vigorous fugal working-out of the *Laudate Pueri* and the single movement for solo soprano—the

rapturous *Laudate Dominum*, which John N. Burk judged to be “worthy of the finest melodist that has graced our world”—is the mood more solemn. This *Vespers* was a brilliant farewell to Salzburg, evidence that Mozart had outgrown the provincial town and was ready to move on to Vienna to compete with the finest musicians of his age.

Mass in B-flat Major, *Heiligmesse*
(Holy Mass), Hob. XXII:10,
Missa Sancti Bernardi de Offida
(St. Bernard of Offida Mass)

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Joseph Haydn’s personality traits read like a list of the seven virtues: honest, industrious, cheerful, thrifty, neat, practical, religious. His only blemish came in his middle years, when he fell into an affair with one of the singers from his opera company at Esterháza. Even this escapade is understandable, however, given the consistent reports characterizing his wife as a wildly untamed shrew and a pestering nag. In sum, Haydn was one of the happiest and most well-adjusted of all composers, and you would have enjoyed his company. His healthy outlook on life is reflected in his music, and his practicality and belief in God are demonstrated by his Masses.

Haydn’s 14 Masses fall into two groups, and for the most practical of reasons. He had composed a half-dozen such works by 1783, when Emperor Joseph II brought Austria into line with the papal decrees banning the use of instruments in church, thereby putting Haydn out of business as a composer of Masses. But austerity in music is not a Viennese penchant, and Emperor Francis II repealed the earlier order in the mid-1790s, thereby reinstating the glorious musical pageants of which the Austrians are so fond. (The tradition continues today with the sumptuous Mass-concerts given by the Vienna Choir Boys as part of their regular duties at the Hofburg Chapel.) Haydn responded to the lifting of the ban by composing six masterful liturgical works between 1796 and 1802: the Masses titled *St. Bernardi*, *Kettledrum*, *Lord Nelson*, *Theresa*, *Creation*, and *Harmonie*. They were written for the annual celebrations in Eisenstadt surrounding the nameday (September 8th) of Princess Marie Hermenegild Esterházy, one of the recent additions to the family that had employed Haydn for nearly a half-century. In an age in which all music was written for specific occasions—art on demand—Haydn was the most practical and professional of composers.

Haydn’s other endearing trait displayed in the Masses is his simple and profound love of God. More than once accused of putting too happy a face on his church compositions, he responded, “I write according to the thoughts I feel. When I think upon my God, my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance and leap from my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be pardoned me that I serve him with a cheerful spirit.” Side by side with the passing acknowledgment of the old fugues and stock formulas that were traditional in the Mass settings of that time are movements that show Haydn’s long experience as an operatic and symphonic composer. Much of the fast music seems to dance; the slower portions have a loving, often even a sensual quality. Haydn’s late Masses, composed in the years after he had retired from the symphonic genre, speak not only of the mastery of his craft, but also of the fullness of his heart.

Haydn began the first of his Masses celebrating the nameday of Princess Marie, the *Missa Sancti Bernardi de Offida*, in Vienna around Easter 1796 and completed it at Eisenstadt in time for the performance at the Bergkirche on (probably) September 13th. Haydn’s title for the Mass honored Saint Bernard of Offida, a lay brother (a man who has taken holy vows but does not participate fully in the liturgical program) of the Capuchins, a branch of the Franciscans dedicated to simple monastic life and service to the poor and the sick. (Cappuccino coffee got its name for its supposed resemblance to the brown color of the Capuchins’ traditional robes.) Bernard, born in 1604 into a devout peasant family in Appignano, east of Rome on the opposite side of the Italian boot, worshipped at the nearby Capuchin monastery at Offida, where the brothers were deeply impressed by his religious devotion and his eagerness for hard manual labor in the service of the order. He was accepted by the Capuchins as a lay brother at age 22, and thereafter came to be revered for his wisdom, charity, humility, and knowledge of the sacred writings. He received the Stigmata when he was 72, and was credited with raising four children from the dead and with the miraculous appearance of food at the monastery during a life-threatening cold spell. He died in 1694

and was canonized by Pope Pius VI on May 19, 1795. Bernard, a man of faith, humility and hard work, appealed strongly to Haydn, who himself had risen from a humble background to international prominence. The newly minted saint was very much in the composer's thoughts when he undertook the first of his birthday Masses for Princess Marie since Vienna's Capuchin monastery, where the beatification ceremonies were observed locally, fronted on the same square as the composer's residence. The other subtitle of the Mass—Heilig (Holy)—derives from Haydn's weaving of the old German chorale Heilig, Heilig, Heilig into the inner voices of the Sanctus ("Holy," in Latin).

Haydn had not written a Mass for 13 years when he took up the *Missa Sancti Bernardi* in 1796, and the work's fervent expression and polished form testify to his enthusiasm at being able to return to the genre. A majestic slow introduction provides the gateway to the *Missa Sancti Bernardi*, a technique that Haydn had used to open most of his late symphonies to focus the mood and provide a sense of grandeur at the outset. The buoyant Kyrie follows a compressed sonata form also based on the symphonic model, with the "exposition" launched by a new, fast tempo, the "development," a passage of tight thematic manipulations and restless key changes, initiated with the *Christe* text, and the "recapitulation" marked by a pause and a held chord for the returning words of the Kyrie. The *Gloria* comprises four sections: a brilliant opening chorus; an expressive passage for the solo quartet ("*Gratias agimus*"); a gently flowing episode in imitative texture for the chorus ("*Qui tollis*"); and an exultant choral song of praise ("*Quoniam tu solus sanctus*"). The opening portion of the long *Credo* text is set in sturdy chords for the chorus, a sort of communal affirmation of unified faith. A tender stanza for the soloists, a lullaby except for some moments of more intense sentiment, wraps the words of the "*Et incarnatus est.*" The "*Et resurrexit,*" with its surprising harmonic peregrinations and dark tone, is given an anxious setting, but the "*Et vitam venturi seculi,*" a fugue on two subjects, expresses a joyous confidence in Christian eternity. The *Sanctus* is a compact movement in two parts (*Adagio – Allegro*); the concluding "*Osanna in excelsis*" rises from the basses through the full chorus. The *Benedictus* is thoughtful and luminous. An eloquent supplication for forgiveness is embodied in the music of the *Agnus Dei* before this splendid testament to the powers of faith and music closes with the optimistic prayer for peace of the "*Dona nobis pacem.*"

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The Monteverdi Choir is one of Britain's most prestigious choirs and was founded at Cambridge in 1964 by John Eliot Gardiner, then an undergraduate, for a performance of Monteverdi's *Vespers* (1610) in King's College Chapel. The aim of that performance was to introduce the colors and passion of Italian music to audiences reared on the English choral tradition. From its Wigmore Hall debut in London in 1966, the Monteverdi Choir grew into a virtuoso ensemble committed to exploring the repertoire fanning out from the Baroque. It soon became famous for its passionate, committed singing, underpinned by a strong rhythmic vitality and the ability to switch between composers, languages, and idioms with stylistic conviction.

At the forefront of the early music revival in Europe, the Monteverdi Choir has brought life and public awareness to a whole range of magnificent but forgotten music by composers such as Gabrieli, Gesualdo, Campra, and Leclair. It has also brought new insights to the performances of accepted masterpieces by Handel, Bach, and Mozart, and more recently to the work of great 19th-century composers, including Beethoven, Berlioz, and Verdi.

The Choir has undertaken numerous trail-blazing foreign tours. It was resident for 10 consecutive years at the International Handel Festival in Göttingen and at the Internationale Bachakademie in Stuttgart (1988 and 1991). The Monteverdi Choir celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1989 with a world tour, accompanied by the English Baroque Soloists. The 30th anniversary in 1994 was marked with two concerts at the Guildhall in London, which were recorded live. The greatest touring and musical achievement however, was undertaken in 2000—the *Bach Cantata Pilgrimage*. The biggest Baroque project ever undertaken, the Choir, together with the English Baroque Soloists directed by John Eliot Gardiner, performed all 198 of J.S. Bach's sacred cantatas in 63 churches throughout Europe, commemorating the 250th anniversary of the composer's death.

As an opera chorus, the Monteverdi Choir has performed in the theaters of La Scala in Milan as well as those of Zurich, Paris, Lyon, and Strasbourg. January 1994 saw the Choir's first collaboration with the Vienna Philharmonic for a DG recording of Lehár's operetta *The Merry Widow*.

A European tour of *Die Zauberflöte* in 1995 saw the completion of John Eliot Gardiner's six-year project to perform and record the seven great Mozart operas, for which the Monteverdi Choir formed the chorus.

In the 1995 Holland Festival, the Choir gave the world premiere of *Songs of Despair and Sorrow* by György Kurtág at the Concertgebouw. In 1998, the Choir, with the ORR under John Elliot Gardiner, gave critically acclaimed performances of Verdi's *Falstaff* at the BBC Proms and Verdi's *Requiem* at St. Paul's Cathedral as part of the City of London Festival, following a tour of Germany and Italy and a recording of *Falstaff* for Philips Classics.

The Monteverdi Choir has more than 100 recordings to its name (on DG Archiv, Philips, Erato, Decca, and EMI). These include all the major choral works of Bach, several Handel oratorios and odes (including, most recently, Handel's *Dixit Dominus*), most of Purcell's "semi-operas," Mozart's *Requiem* and *Mass in C Minor*, Haydn's *Die Jahreszeiten*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, and Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*.

Plans for the current year include a fourth annual residency at the Châtelet in Paris with the ORR, with performances of Berlioz's *Les Troyens*, and performances of Bach's *St. John Passion* throughout Germany.

The Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique (ORR) was established in 1990 by Sir John Eliot Gardiner, and has since made a major impact on the international music scene, attaining a world standing with performances in London; throughout Europe; in Tokyo and Osaka, where Gardiner conducted the complete Beethoven symphony cycle; and in New York, where the orchestra took part in the inaugural Lincoln Center Festival. This rapid success owes much to the ensemble's shared heritage with the English Baroque Soloists, formed by Gardiner in 1978. The ORR extends the range of period-instrument performance to repertoire of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

One of the orchestra's outstanding successes to date has been the series of performances of music by Berlioz. This series began with the *Symphonie Fantastique*, performed and filmed in the former Conservatoire de Musique in Paris, where the very first performance took place in December 1830. The resulting video, laserdisc, and CD were released by Philips Classics to great critical acclaim. Of the Paris performance, David Cairns of *The Sunday Times* wrote: "In the hands of Gardiner and the ORR, the *Fantastic Symphony* acquired a third dimension. The music was as though lit from within."

In October 1993, the ORR joined the Monteverdi Choir under John Eliot Gardiner to give the first performances since 1827 of Berlioz's *Messe Solennelle*. After touring the work in Europe, the UK premiere at Westminster Cathedral was broadcast live on BBC2. This performance was also released by Philips Classics on CD and video in 1994.

A subsequent set of recordings by the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique for DG Archiv of the complete Beethoven symphonies under John Eliot Gardiner received worldwide praise and was named Record of the Year by *Classic CD* magazine. Viewed by many as the most important Beethoven recordings since the arrival of CD technology, this set has been widely recognized as setting a new standard in the performance of the Beethoven symphonies on period instruments and as recovering the original spirit of Beethoven's works with a unique force.

Following a critically acclaimed recording of the complete Schumann symphonies for Deutsche Grammophon, the ORR performed Verdi's *Falstaff* in Italy and Germany in July 1998. The group returned to give a semi-staged performance of *Falstaff* with the Monteverdi Choir at a Royal Albert Hall Prom, before recording the work for Philips Classics. This production was revived in 2001 for performances at the Châtelet in Paris.

In 1999, the ORR performed the complete cycle of Beethoven symphonies in Vienna and Los Angeles. Following a Schumann festival in New York, the orchestra joined the Monteverdi Choir for performances in Lucerne and for a BBC Prom at the Royal Albert Hall in August. In October, the ORR and Monteverdi Choir gave staged performances of Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice* at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris.

In 2002, the orchestra returned to the Châtelet for its third annual residence with performances of Weber's *Oberon*, with a concluding performance at the Barbican Centre in London. This was followed by a recording for Philips of the Beethoven and Mendelssohn violin concertos. In

September of that year, the ORR toured Europe with acclaimed performances of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*.

During 2003, the ORR appeared at the BBC Proms with the Monteverdi Choir, performing Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ*. This was followed in October by six performances of Berlioz's epic opera *Les Troyens* at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris.

Sir John Eliot Gardiner, founder and artistic director of the Monteverdi Choir, the English Baroque Soloists, and the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, appears regularly in the most prestigious international concert halls and opera houses, both with his own ensembles and as guest conductor with major symphony orchestras.

Highlights of 2003 have included Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; a European tour of Bach's *St. John Passion* with the Monteverdi Choir and the EBS (March and April); and a new production of Berlioz's *Les Troyens* with the ORR at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris (October). He has just returned from touring two programs of Beethoven and Walton with the London Symphony Orchestra.

Over the years, John Eliot Gardiner's many recordings have won a host of international awards (he has received more Gramophone Awards than any other living artist). Recent recordings included Haydn's last six Masses for Philips Classics. The last double-CD set (*Heiligmesse* and *Paukenmesse*) and his recording with the ORR and Viktoria Mullova of the Beethoven and Mendelssohn violin concertos were released in the spring.