

# London Concord Singers

Conductor Malcolm Cottle

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2002

St. James's Church, Piccadilly

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Villette - O Magnum Mysterium

Villette - Three Motets

O Quam Amabilis Est

Jesu, dulcis Memoria

Panis Angelicus

Poulenc - Mass in G

Moeran - Songs of Springtime

Kodály - Öregek

Kodály - Este

Kodály - Liszt Ferenchez

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PIERRE VILLETTE (1926 – 1998)

O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM

THREE MOTETS

O Quam Amabilis Est  
Jesu, Dulcis Memoria  
Panis Angelicus

Born in Northern France, Pierre Villette won the 2<sup>nd</sup> prize in the 1949 Prix de Rome. In 1957 he was named Director of the Conservatoire in Besançon. In 1967 health considerations forced him to move to the South of France where he became Director of the Aix-en-Provence Conservatoire. He might be considered a part-time composer, as most of his life was spent in music education, but he found time to write much chamber music and a succession of sensuous motets which set Latin texts familiar from the Catholic liturgy. The majority of his published work dates from the later period of his life, after his retirement. During his lifetime, his music was often more frequently performed abroad than in France, with a number of significant premieres in England.

O Magnum Mysterium was written in Aix in 1983 and is a fine example of his very personal synthesis of the Catholic choral tradition and the harmonies of jazz. O Quam Amabilis Est was written in 1992, Jesu, Dulcis Memoria in 1994 and Panis Angelicus in 1995 and was performed by the choir of New College, Oxford at the Spitalfields Festival in 1999.

O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM

O magnum mysterium  
Et admirabile sacramentum  
Ut animalia viderent Dominum natum  
jacentem in praesepio.  
Beata Virgo Maria Cujus viscera meruerunt  
Portare Dominum Christum  
Ave Maria Gratia plena Dominus tecum.  
Amen.

O great mystery  
and wondrous thing that  
the animals behold the newborn Lord  
lying in a manger.  
O Blessed Virgin, whose womb was worth  
to bear the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Hail Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee.  
Amen.

O QUAM AMABILIS

O Quam amabilis es, bone Jesu  
O dulcis Jesu quem delectabilis es,  
O cordis jubulum, mentis solatium  
O bone Jesu  
O quam admirabilis es, bone Jesu,  
honorabilis es, quam venerabilis es  
bone Jesu, dulcis Jesu, semper laudabilis  
es, Bone Jeus, Dulcis Jesu, Pie Jesu.

Oh how amiable are you, good Jesus,  
sweet Jesus, how wonderful are you,  
Joy for the heart, consolation for the mind,  
good Jesus.  
How admirable are you, good Jesus  
how worthy of honour.  
How praiseworthy are you.

JESU DULCIS MEMORIA

Jesu, dulcis memoria,  
Dans vera cordi gaudia  
Sed supermel et omnia,  
Ejus dulcis praesentia,  
Nil canitur suavius,  
Nil auditur jucundius,  
Nil cogitatur dulcius quam  
Jesu Dei Filius.  
Sis Jesu nostrum gaudium,  
qui es futurus praemium,  
sit nostra in te Gloria,  
per cuncta semper saecula.

Jesu, the very thought of Thee,  
With sweetness fills the breast;  
But sweeter far Thy face to see,  
And in Thy presence rest.  
Nor Voice can sing  
Nor heart can frame,  
Nor can the memory find  
A sweeter sound than Jesus' Name  
The Saviour of Mankind.  
Jesu our only Joy be Thou,  
As Thou our prize wilt be!  
Jesu, be Thou our glory now,  
And through eternity.

PANIS ANGELICUS

Panis angèlicus fit panis hominum;  
Dat panis coelicus figuris terminum:  
O res mirabilis: manducat Dominum  
pauperservus, et humilis.  
Te trina Deitas unaque poscimus sic nos tu  
visita sicut te colimus sic nos tu visita  
Per tuas semitas duc nos quo tendimus:  
Ad lucem quam in habitas.

Farewell to type! Henceforth  
We feed on Angel's food:  
The slave, – O wonder! – eats the Flesh  
of his Incarnate God.  
O blessed Three in One!  
Visit our hearts, we pray,  
And lead us on through Thine own paths  
To Thine eternal day.



## FRANCIS POULENC (1899 – 1963)

The French composer Francis Poulenc only undertook formal musical training with Charles Koechlin in 1921, by which time he had already become identified with Les Six, the six French composers of the circle of Jean Cocteau, including Honegger, Auric and Milhaud. He was the most famous of Les Six, and the one who found it easiest to stick to Jean Cocteau's ideals of simplicity. He came from the same family that started the French agrochemical giant Rhône-Poulenc. In his earlier musical life Poulenc was something of a dandy and an aesthete and his music rather reflects this.

A highly complex man, Poulenc first suffered serious bouts of depression in the late 1920's, at about the same time as he became aware of his homosexuality. He was permanently affected by the death in 1930 of Raymonde Linossier, the only woman he ever wanted to marry. His letters testify to the complexity of his emotional life, which was bound up with his creativity. Subject to manic depression, Poulenc always rebounded from depression into phases of enthusiasm.

In 1935 he suffered a stunning loss: an automobile accident killed Pierre-Octave Ferroud, friend, colleague, and musical advocate. This event brought a new depth to his work. A pilgrimage to the shrine of the Black Virgin of Rocamadour in 1936 revived the Catholic faith of his childhood. The first work that he wrote after these events was the 'Litanies to the Black Virgin' and the 'sober and romanesque' Mass in G was written shortly afterwards in 1937.

### KYRIE

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy  
Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.

## MASS IN G

Kyrie

Gloria

Sanctus

Benedictus

Agnus Dei

### GLORIA

Glory 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.

## ÖREGEK

Oly árvák ők mind, az öregek,  
Az ablakból néha elnézem őket,  
Hogy vacogó szélben, gallyal hátukon  
Mint cipekednek hazafelé,  
Vagy tikkadt nyárban a ház előtt  
Hogy üldögélnek a napsugárban,  
Vagy téli estén kályha mellett  
Hogyan alusznak jóízűen.  
Nyújtott tenyérrrel templom előtt  
Úgy állnak búsan, csüggeteg,  
Mint hervadt őszi levelek  
A sárga porban.

És ha az utcán bottal bandukolnak,  
Idegenül néz a napsugár is,  
S oly furcsán mondja minden ember:  
Jó napot bácsi!  
A nyári nap,  
A téli hó,  
Őszi levél,  
Tavaszi friss virág  
Mind azt dalolja fülükbe:

"Élet-katlanban régi étek,  
Élet-szekéren régi szalma,  
Élet-gyertyán lefolyt viasz,  
Téged megettek,  
Téged leszórtak,  
te már elégtél,  
Mehetsz aludni..."

És néha, hogyha agg kezük  
Játszik egy szőke gyermekfejen,  
Fáj tán, ha érzik,  
Hogy e kézre,  
Dolgos kezükre,  
Áldó kezükre  
Senkinek sincsen szüksége többé.

## THE AGED

So forlorn are the old.  
I sometimes watch them from the window,  
Watch how they trudge home  
In the shivering wind with twigs on their backs,  
Or sit in the sweltering summer  
In the sun before the house,  
Or sleep on a winter's evening  
Soundly beside the stove.  
With palm outstretched they stand  
Before the church  
Sadly, despondently,  
Like withered autumn leaves.

And when they trudge down the street with a  
stick, even the sunshine looks ill at ease,  
And so strangely everyone says,  
Good day to you, old man!  
The summer sun,  
The winter's snow,  
The autumn leaves,  
the spring's fresh flowers,  
all sing in their ears:

"Old food in the kettle of life,  
old straw in the cart of life,  
wax run down the candle of life,  
you have been eaten,  
you have been strewn,  
you have been burned,  
you may fall asleep..."

And sometimes, when their old hands  
Fondle a fair child's head,  
It may be with pain that they feel  
Those hands,  
Those hard-working hands  
Those hands of blessing  
Are of use to no one any more.



És rabok ők már,  
Egykedvű, álmos, leláncolt rabok,  
Hetven nehéz év a békó karjukon,  
Hetven év bűne, baja, bánata,  
Hetven nehéz évtől leláncolva várják  
Egy jóságos kéz,  
Rettenetes kéz,  
Ellentmondást nem tűrő kéz  
Parancs szavát:  
"No gyere, tedd le."

And they are captives now,  
Listless, dozing captives chained,  
Their chains are seventy hard years,  
The crimes, troubles, sorrow of seventy years,  
In chains of seventy hard years they await  
A charitable hand's,  
A dreadful hand's,  
An undisobeyable hand's  
Word of command:  
"Come, lay it down."

Rough translation by Mária Steiner

#### ESTE

Enyhe szellő suttog halkkal,  
Már homálylik az esthajnal,  
Esti csillag halvány sugára  
Már mosolyog le a világra.  
Majd felkél a telő hold,  
Fényes, fényes lesz a mennybolt.  
Elnémul a föld lármája,  
Megzendül a menny harmóniája.

#### EVENING

A mild breeze whispers softly,  
The evening twilight is falling,  
The faint light of the evening star  
Is smiling down upon the world.  
The waxing moon rises,  
Bright, bright become the skies,  
The world's bustle dies away,  
And the harmony of Heaven resounds.

A lélek hallja,  
Lassan lágyan elringatják  
Édes álom karjai.

The soul hears it,  
Slowly, softly it is lulled  
In the arms of a sweet dream.

Rough translation by Mária Steiner

#### LISZT FERENCHEZ

Hírhedett zenésze a világnak,  
Bárhová juss, mindig hű rokon!  
Van-e hangod e beteg hazának  
A velőket rázó húrokon?  
Van-e hangod, szív háborgatója,  
Van-e hangod, bánat altatója?  
Sors és bűneink a százados baj,  
Melynek elzsibbasztó súlya nyom;  
Ennek láncain élt a csüggedett faj  
S üdve lőn a tétlen nyugalom.  
És ha néha felforrt vérpapája,  
Láz betegnek volt hiú csatája.

#### TO FERENC LISZT

Renowned musician, freeman of the world,  
And yet our kinsman everywhere you go,  
Have you a cadence for the ailing land  
To set to strings that play in the marrow?  
Have you a cadence, shaker of great hearts?  
Have you a cadence that no grief defeats?  
Centuries old, life-loads of fate and sin  
Have paralysed and overborne us;  
Dispirited, the race lived on the chain,  
Saving itself by acting spineless.  
And if sometimes it boiled to a release  
It was the struggle of a fever case.

Jobb korunk jött. Újra visszaszállnak,  
Rég óhajtott hajnal keletén,  
Édes kínja közt a gyógyulásnak,  
A kihalt vágy s elpártolt remény:  
Újra égünk őseink honáért,  
Újra készek adni életet s vért.

Zengj nekünk dalt; hangok nagy  
tanárja,  
És ha zengesz a múlt napiról,  
Legyen hangod a vész zongorája,  
Melyben a harc mennydörgése szól,  
S árja közben a szilaj zenének  
Riadozzon diadalmi ének.

Zengj nekünk dalt, hogy mély  
sírjaikban  
Őseink is megmozduljanak,  
És az unokákba halhatatlan  
Lelkeikkel visszaszálljanak.  
És a gyenge és erős serényen  
Tenni tűrni egyesüljenek;  
És a nemzet, mint egy férfi, álljon  
Érckarokkal győzni a viszályon.

És ha hallod, zengő húrjaiddal  
Mint riad föl e hon a dalon,  
Melyet a nép millió ajakkal  
Zeng utánad bátor hangokon,  
Állj közénk és mondjuk: hála égnek!  
Van még lelke Árpád nemzetének.

Then came a finer age and the return  
Of hope, dawn lit by our longing,  
Recovery, sweet torments in the brain,  
New life for dead desires, sick yearning.  
We are aflame again to claim the land;  
We are once more prepared to shed our blood.

Great Universal Master, make for us  
Another song about days gone by,  
Destiny in the keyboard of our voice  
Through battle's thunder forcing its cry,  
And on the flood of the earth-shattering sound  
Let trumpet-blasts triumphantly resound.

Sing out a song so in their deepest graves  
Our ancestors are compelled to stir,  
So each immortal soul awaking proves  
New life to descendants, made aware  
Of blessings in their Magyar fatherland.  
And our great sons should diligently see  
That weak and strong must move united,  
And like one man the enduring nation stand  
With arms of bronze to hold the strife-torn land.

And if you hear through your resounding strain  
The Fatherland awaken to your theme,  
Which all the people with their teeming tongues  
Sing with you when their courage grows extreme,  
Join with us all and let us say: Thank God  
This nation keeps the soul of great Árpád.

Translation by Alan Dixon

London Concord Singers are an award-winning chamber choir of about 30 mixed voices, based in central London, with a broad-ranging repertoire. The conductor, Malcolm Cottle, established the choir in 1966 and he has remained the Musical Director. The choir became a registered charity in 1996.

London Concord Singers have given a number of world, UK and London premieres of works by composers such as John Rutter, Andrzej Panufnik, Richard Rodney Bennett, John McCabe, Kenneth Leighton and Michael Ball, as well as pieces specially written for the choir.

The choir has also given performances of major contemporary pieces such as Alfred Schnittke's Choral Concerto and Malcolm Williamson's Requiem for a Tribe Brother. In its 30-year history the choir has performed all of the unaccompanied choral music of Francis Poulenc.