

# Oxford Youth Choirs

directed by Richard Vendome and Penelope Martin Smith



## A Baroque Concert

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2003, 4pm  
Mansfield College Chapel

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### Oxford Baroque Ensemble

violin 1: Simon Kodurand, Huw Daniel  
violin 2: Katarina Bengston, Emma Parker  
viola 1: Jim O'Toole  
viola 2: Felix Tanner  
cello 1: Caroline Ritchie  
cello 2: Judith Dallosso  
organ: Peter Lynan  
harpsichord: Richard Vendome

### male voices

tenor: Alan Armitage, Hugo Tucker, John Tucker, Paul Mylrea  
bass: Michael Bourdeaux, Robert Gullifer, Peter Kent, Paul Lindsell, Michael Stinton, Benjamin Thompson

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### William Hayes (1708-1777) – music from the masque “Circe”

1. Overture
2. Behold in me what all pursue (“Pleasure”)
3. Shepherd, they who know me (“Virtue”)
4. All who can with judgement see (“Attendants on Virtue”)
5. I the lover’s pain assuage (“Pleasure”)
6. Joys eternal (“Attendants on Pleasure”)

Penelope Martin Smith (Pleasure), Hetty Gullifer (Virtue), Oxford Girls' Junior Choir (Attendants)

William Hayes was born in Gloucester, where he was a chorister at the cathedral. He became Organist at Worcester Cathedral and then at Magdalen College, Oxford, from 1734. His "Overture and Songs in the Masque of Circe" dates from 1742, the year in which he was elected Professor of Music at Oxford. It was dedicated to the Viscount Quarendon, parliamentary representative for the county of Oxford, and "Sold by the AUTHOR, at his House near Hertford College, Price Fifteen Shillings". Hayes supervised the music for the opening of the Holywell Music Room in 1748, and the following year conducted the first Oxford performance of Handel's *Messiah*, to mark the completion of the Radcliffe Library. In his "Remarks on Mr Avison's Essay on Musical Expression" he proposed the formation of a school for gifted young musicians from the age of seven or eight.

### **G.F. Handel (1685-1759) – Concerto Grosso in C**

Allegro – Adagio – Allegro – Gavotte

The best of Handel's Concerti Grossi must surely rank with Bach's Brandenburg set as sublime examples of the baroque ensemble concerto. Nevertheless, most of his "orchestral" music is a by-product of his work for the theatre. This work dates from 1736, when Italianate opera was fading from the London scene, and was originally performed with the oratorio *Alexander's Feast* (to a text by Dryden).

### **Joseph Corfe (1741-1820) – two anthems for high voices**

1. Hosanna to the Son of David
2. I will magnify thee

(sung by Oxford Boys' Choir and Oxford Girls' Junior Choir)

The Corfe family were prominent singers and organists from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, mainly at the cathedrals of Winchester and Salisbury. Joseph (ii) was successively chorister, lay vicar and organist of Salisbury, as well as Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. He was conductor of Salisbury's Musical Society, an eminent singing teacher (his pupils included the famous Nancy Storace), and tenor soloist at the Handel Commemoration in London in 1784. He published *A Treatise on Singing* in 1799. His son Arthur Thomas Corfe succeeded him at Salisbury, and his grandson John Davies Corfe was organist of Christ Church, Oxford from 1846-82. Joseph Corfe wrote several pieces for high voices, probably for the children of the Salisbury Infirmary, two of which we hear today.

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### **G.F. Handel – Dixit Dominus**

1. Dixit Dominus (Alicia Clarke, soprano; Rosie Dilnot, alto; Hugo Tucker, tenor)
2. Virgam virtutis (Sophie Kent, alto)
3. Tecum principium (Daisy Venables, soprano)
4. Juravit Dominus
5. Secundum ordinem Melchisedech
6. Dominus a dextris tuis (Sasha Brown, Emily Moughton, sopranos; Jessica Butcher, alto; Hugo Tucker, tenor; Benjamin Thompson, bass)
7. Judicabit in nationibus – Conquassabit
8. De torrente in via (Gaia Marcus, Elena Marcus, sopranos)
9. Gloria Patri – Et in saecula saeculorum (Alicia Clarke, Amy Charles, sopranos; Hugo Tucker, tenor)

**1** Dixit Dominus Domino meo sede a dextris meis donec ponam inimicos tuos scabillum pedum tuorum

**2** Virgam virtutis tuae emittet Dominus ex Sion dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum

**3** Tecum principium in die virtutis tuae in splendoribus sanctorum ex utero ante luciferum genui te

**4** Juravit Dominus et non paenitebit eum tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech

**5** Dominus a dextris tuis confregit in die irae suae reges

**6** Judicabit in nationibus implebit cadavera conquassabit capita in terra multorum

**7** De torrente in via bibet propterea exaltabit caput

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

**1** The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand: until I make thy enemies thy footstool.

**2** The Lord will send forth the sceptre of thy power out of Sion: rule thou in the midst of thy enemies.

**3** With thee is the principality in the day of thy strength: in the brightness of the saints: from the womb before the daystar I begot thee.

**4** The Lord hath sworn, and he will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech.

**5** The Lord at thy right hand hath broken kings in the day of his wrath.

**6** He shall judge among nations, he shall fill ruins: he shall crush the heads in the land of the many.

**7** He shall drink of the torrent in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.

It seems hard to grasp that Handel completed this *tour de force* of pyrotechnic counterpoint in April 1707, when Bach (born in the same year, 1685) had yet to produce anything remotely comparable. Handel had left his native Germany for Italy the previous year, attracted by the world of opera, and *Dixit Dominus* shows us the extent to which he had already absorbed the Italian style. We probably owe this youthful sacred masterpiece to the fact that opera itself was banned in Rome under a papal interdict at the time. This setting of Psalm 109 (110 in Protestant usage) is scored for five-part voices (SSATB) and five-part strings (2 violins, 2 violas and basso continuo). The singing parts are more instrumental than vocal in idiom, with strings sometimes doubling the voices, sometimes in dialogue with them. In 1707 Handel also wrote settings of the psalms *Laudate pueri* and *Nisi Dominus*; the three works together may have formed a 'Carmelite Vespers' (i.e. were composed for the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel – 16 July). There is no evidence of a contemporary performance either in Italy or in England, which he visited for the first time later that year. However, some of the music reappears, in true Handelian style, in the *Utrecht Te Deum*, the Chandos Anthem no.10 and the oratorio *Deborah*.