

Hyfrydol



No. 122

St Swithun's Choir e-newsletter

July 2024

This month

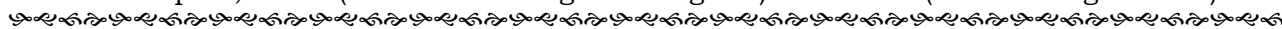
Our contribution this month is confined to weekly services at 9 am on Sundays. That is not to say that rehearsals for some special occasions in the months ahead will be taking a back seat.

- We shall be “Celebrating Psalms” in August at what is becoming an annual occasion;
- Rehearsals for our October Haydn Mass presentation will continue;
- Rehearsals for Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* highlights which will constitute the second half of the Haydn presentation will begin in earnest.
- We have two Evensong services coming up as well, one at home and one at St James’ King Street, Sydney.



June

- Rehearsals for Haydn’s Mass continued this month with a couple of extra rehearsals on Saturdays, led by Peter Gilkes. It is coming along quite nicely.
- A cohort of choristers (just four of us), with Peter Hamilton on the organ, supported the congregational singing at the funeral of Pat Knispel at Swiz early in the month.
- A larger cohort (thirteen of us) sang for Alan Winterbotham’s memorial service. Don Mayes provided the organic backing.
- The full choir sang at the annual Huguenot Heritage Church Service. For some years now, we have sung a verse and chorus of *La Cévenole*, the so-called Huguenot national anthem, as an introit, in French. A group of choir members, with the appropriate linguistic ability, sang verses of psalm 137 and a verse of the hymn *Thine be the glory* in French. The high point was singing Ralph Vaughan Williams setting of Psalm 100, along with three trumpets played by Phil Linquist, Anika (Jim Wiseman’s granddaughter) and Oliver (the Kaan’s grandson).



Haydn’s Mass in G minor – the Nelson Mass

(text, translations, and notes from the Orange County Women’s Chorus website)

In the 18th century as today, a musician’s fondest wish was often a regular salary. Then, unlike now, many composers worked as elevated servants in the employment of wealthy nobility—an arrangement broadly known as the patronage system. Writing music at the direction of a non-artistic boss could bring creative limitations along with the financial stability, of course, but Franz Joseph Haydn found ways to thrive and flourish within the bounds of his job.

Haydn wrote his Lord Nelson Mass during a prosperous time in his own career, but a tempestuous one in Europe and a lean one in the court of his Austro-Hungarian employers, the Esterházy. Napoleon’s armies had thrown Austria and most of the rest of the continent into turmoil, and dire political and economic straits had caused Haydn’s patron to reduce his staff of paid musicians. Gone were the flutists and oboists; remaining were the strings and trumpets. Fortunately, Haydn was a lifelong master of cheerfully mining virtue from necessity, and he used his scaled-back orchestral forces to create one of his greatest masterworks.

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison

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

The martial blare of the trumpets and timpani and the severe descending D-minor triad of the strings open the mass with an angry flourish, to which the chorus adds its furious cries of “Kyrie eleison!”

This movement also introduces the soprano soloist and the fiery role she'll play for the duration of the piece—initially in a more hopeful role with the text “Christe eleison,” but later in full musical mania with the return of the “Kyrie eleison” text at the end of the movement.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Et in terra pax
Hominibus bonæ voluntatis.
Laudamus te; benedicimus te;
adoramus te; glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi
propter magnam gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,
Filius Patris.

Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris
miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus
tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu
in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

Glory be to God in the highest.
And in earth peace
to men of good will.
We praise Thee; we bless Thee;
we worship Thee; we glorify Thee.
We give thanks to Thee
for Thy great glory.
O Lord God, Heavenly King,
God the Father Almighty.
O Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son.
Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father.

Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy upon us.

For thou only art holy,
thou only art the Lord,
thou only art the most high, Jesus Christ.
Together with the Holy Ghost
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Haydn makes a sandwich out of the Gloria section of the mass. The contemplative “Qui tollis” is the filling, and the perky “Gloria” and “Quoniam” are the bread. After the “Storm and stress” of the “Kyrie,” the D-Major opening of this section is like sun after a tornado (a common occurrence in Haydn’s music—he simply never stays angry for very long). Listen for the soprano’s entrance in the slow section (“suscipe”), which floats downward like a blessing; for the ingenious fugue on the text “in Gloria Dei patris” in the third section; and for the exciting ending of the sequence, which makes full use of the timpanist Haydn’s boss hadn’t yet laid off!

Credo in unum Deum;
Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem coeli et terrae,
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia sæcula.
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero,
Genitum non factum,
consubstantialem Patri:
per quem omnia facta sunt.
Qui propter nos homines,
et propter nostram salutem
descendit de coelis.

I believe in one God;
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.
And begotten of the Father before all worlds;
God of God, light of light,
true God of true God,
begotten not made;
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made.
Who for us men
and for our salvation
descended from heaven.

This movement represents Haydn at his most ingeniously crafty: the entire movement is a double canon, in which the sopranos and tenors begin each melody and the altos and basses answer one bar (two beats) later and five pitches lower. Not until the last line—in the interest of ending together—does he alter the structure. As is true of the best artists, though, he works within his self-imposed rules without calling undue attention to them; the prevailing mood here is one of bustling joy, not rigid compliance!

Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
ex Maria virgine et homo factus est.
Crucifixus est pro nobis
sub Pontio Pilato,
passus et sepultus est.

And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost,
of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.
He was crucified also for us,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
and was buried.

Haydn doesn't get as much credit for his melodies as his fellow Classical-era Austrian, Mozart. But this movement demonstrates that he was more than capable of writing ravishingly beautiful music. The lushness of the opening turns to wounded indignation when the chorus sings "Crucifixus est pro nobis," and then time and breath seem to stop at the moment of Christ's burial.

Et resurrexit tertia die
secundum Scripturas.
Et ascendit in coelum:
sedet ad dexteram Patris.
Et iterum venturus est cum gloria,
judicare vivos et mortuos:
cujus regni non erit finis.
Et in Spiritum Sanctum,
Dominum, et vivificantem:
qui ex Patre Filioque procedit.
Qui cum Patre et Filio simul
adoratur et conglorificatur:
qui locutus est per Prophetas.
Et in unam sanctam
catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam.
Confiteor unum baptisma,
in remissionem peccatorum.
Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum
et vitam venturi sæculi. Amen.

And on the third day He rose again
according to the Scriptures:
and ascended into heaven.
He sitteth at the right hand of the Father;
and He shall come again with glory
to judge the living and the dead;
and His kingdom shall have no end.
I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the Lord and giver of life,
Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son,
Who with the Father and the Son together
is worshipped and glorified;
as it was told by the Prophets.
And I believe in one holy
catholic and apostolic Church.
I acknowledge one baptism
for the remission of sins.
And I await the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

If you had to sum up Haydn's musical personality in three minutes, you could point to this movement and hit most of the key points: the element of surprise (at the beginning); the bounding, bouncing rhythms (especially in the violins) throughout; the clever text-painting; and the infectiously jazzy "amens" at the end, to name a few! Most of all, though, listen for Haydn's sense of humour revealed through the repeated, insistent "et...et...et" ("and...and...and"); we can't help being reminded of a late-night infomercial: "And if you order now you'll get this knife set for free, and we'll send you one for a friend, and..."

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Osanna in excelsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy,
Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He that cometh
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

The vision delivered by the seraphim in the book of Isaiah arrives quietly, then bursts into song and dance at the "Osanna." (Remember that dark, descending D-minor motif [D-A-F-D] that opened the whole mass? It is turned upside-down [D-F#-A-D] at the words "Pleni sunt coeli.") The "Benedictus" that follows returns to the forbidding mood of earlier movements, especially in its extended orchestral introduction, which uses the trumpets and timpani to great militaristic effect.

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God,
Who takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Grant us peace.

The only movement in the mass not to involve the chorus is the “Agnus Dei,” a sweet-tempered meditation introduced not by the flashy soprano but by the contemplative mezzo-soprano. The other soloists enter in turn, setting the stage for Haydn’s final flourish: the “Dona nobis pacem,” a rocking musical party for a good cause. The message is sincere, but that doesn’t stop Haydn from throwing in a few jokes; toward the end of the movement, listen for the cheeky, softly-sung “dona nobis pacem” from the chorus followed by unmistakable giggles from the violins. Haydn knew more than a little about keeping faith during the difficult times, and keeping his sense of humour amid the stress. Both skills are richly in evidence in the Lord Nelson Mass, and neither has gone out of style since.



Jan Ralston

In May, the choir was privileged to participated in the funeral of Jan Haskins at the Camellia chapel at Macquarie Park. We have received a card from her husband, Hugh, which contained the following message:



Dear Phil,

I've tried to put into words personally how honoured we were to have you, Peter and so many of the choir to contribute to Jan's farewell and celebration of life. I can't say adequately but am reminded of an investiture at Sydney Government House. Marie Bashir was pinning a medal on a pathetic nun who over a period of 30 years had created two significant church choirs. Marie said "Today sister, the angels in heaven will be singing for you." I suspect they will also sing for you and the St Swithun's choir regularly. Phil, please thank all those I have listed; those that signed in the "memory" book: Trish & Bruce Kinghorn, Leonie Anderson, Amanda Drake, Belinda Robinson, Jenny Kaan, Lynne Bullock, Brian & Wendy Watson.

Kindest regards, Hugh



Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes

Both William Byrd and Thomas Attwood set the fourth set of eight verses of Psalm 119 to music. Byrd lived in the sixteenth century during the times of Elizabeth I and William Shakespeare; Attwood two hundred years later, in the eighteenth century when convicts were being sent to Australia.

Byrd’s setting is the Third Psalm in his Second set of Preces for the Evening Service. Copies of an edited version of this piece are held in our choir library, so it is within our repertoire.

Peter Hamilton has nominated the Attwood version to be sung at the 2024 Psalm Celebration in August, so this version is in our current rehearsal list.



Thomas Attwood was the son of a London coal merchant. In his childhood he became a chorister in the Chapel Royal at St James’ Palace. There, he impressed the Prince of Wales with his ability on the harpsichord. In 1783 he was sponsored by the Prince to study first in Naples, then in Vienna where he became a favourite pupil of Mozart. He returned to London after four years away and became one of the Prince’s chamber musicians.

In 1796 he was appointed organist at St Paul’s Cathedral, and in the same year he was made composer to the Chapel Royal. His connection with the Royal Court was further confirmed by his appointment as musical instructor to the duchess of York, and afterwards to the princess of Wales.

The Prince of Wales, who had reigned for a decade as Regent during the illness (madness) of his father George III, was crowned King George IV in 1820. Thomas composed the anthem *The King shall rejoice* for the coronation.

Soon after the creation of the Royal Academy of Music in 1823, Attwood was chosen one of the professors. He was also one of the original members of the Philharmonic Society, founded in 1813.

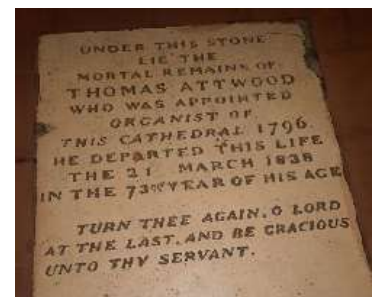
Attwood was one of the earliest to recognise Felix Mendelssohn's genius when he first came to London in the spring of 1829. Soon after his return to London from his journey to Scotland and Wales in that year, Mendelssohn was 'thrown out of a cabriolet and very severely wounded in the leg'. He recuperated in London for two months and was impressed by the kindness of his friends, including Attwood, who sent him a generous hamper – 'on the top were splendid flowers, which are now smelling deliciously around my fireside: under the flowers lay a large pheasant: under the pheasant a quantity of apples for pies.' A week later, twenty-year-old Mendelssohn moved into the home of 'dear old Attwood', at that time aged sixty-four.

Mendelssohn dedicated his *Three Preludes and Fugues for the Organ* (Op. 37) to Attwood.

Attwood composed twenty-eight operas and much secular and theatrical work, as well as church services, anthems, hymns and psalm chants, many of which were compiled and published after his death by his godson and pupil (and former Organist of St John's College) Thomas Attwood Walmisley. Attwood's *Grand Dirge* for organ was played for the funeral of Admiral Lord Nelson in 1805.

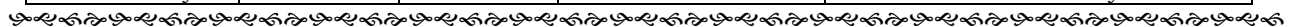
The anthem *I was glad* has been sung at all coronations since 1626 when Charles I took the English throne. Attwood's version of the anthem was first sung at the coronation of George IV, and again at the coronations of William IV and Queen Victoria.

He also composed the anthem *O Lord, grant the King a Long Life* for the coronation of William IV, and he was composing a similar work for the coronation of Queen Victoria when he died at his house in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, on the 24th of March 1838. His body was laid to rest in the crypt, under the organ, in St Paul's Cathedral.



Choir Calendar for 2024

Day	Date	Time	Location	Service/activity
Saturday	17 Aug	5 pm	Swiz	Celebrating Psalms
Saturday	14 Sep	5 pm	Swiz	Evensong
Wednesday	25 Sep	6 pm	St James, King Street	Evensong
Saturday	26 Oct	7:30 pm	Swiz	Foundation Concert
Saturday	30 Nov	5 pm	Swiz	Advent Evensong
Monday	9 Dec	12:30 pm?	RNSH?	Carols
Sunday	22 Dec	9 am	Swiz	Lessons & carols
Tuesday	24 Dec	10 pm	Swiz	Christmas Eve
Wednesday	25 Dec	8:30 am	Swiz	Christmas Day



Stop Press

John Rutter is now Sir John Rutter, having been knighted in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours in Britain.