

STOUR MUSIC 2021



Splendeur et Révérence

Instruments of Time & Truth

Oxford Consort of Voices

Edward Higginbottom *director*

*Sponsored by
the John Swire (1989) Charitable Trust*

Saturday 26th June
6 & 8pm

BOUGHTON ALUPH CHURCH

Splendeur et Révérence

M.-A. Charpentier, *Missa Assumpta est Maria* (H 4)

Kyrie

Simphonie – Kyrie – G.-G. Nivers organ verset – Christe – Simphonie –
Kyrie

Gloria

Ouverture pour le sacre d'un évêque (H 536)

Credo

Offertoire:

Louis Couperin, Duo

Sanctus

Elevation:

O sacramentum pietatis (H 260)

Benedictus:

Anonymous organ verset (livre d'orgue de Marguerite Thiery)

Agnus Dei

Simphonie – Agnus Dei – Simphonie

Domine Salvum Fac Regem (H 303)

Performers

Instruments of Time & Truth

Nicolette Moonen *dessus de violon*

Oliver Webber *hautecontre de violon*

Rachel Byrt *taille*

Gavin Kibble *basse de viole*

Paula Chateauneuf *théorbe*

Silas Wollston *orgue*

Oxford Consort of Voices

Alice Harberd *dessus*

Elspeth Piggott *dessus*

Matthew Keighley *hautecontre*

Michael Bell *hautecontre*

Ed Woodhouse *taille*

Will Anderson *taille*

Humphrey Thompson *basse*

Tom Lowen *basse*

directed by

Edward Higginbottom

Programme note

Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643 – 1704) is one of the leading figures of the French baroque. In many ways he is to French music what Henry Purcell is to English. His output, some 550 works, is conserved in a series of manuscript volumes, all in his hand. Only his opera *Medée* was published. For Charpentier, an opera was something of an outlier: his focus was largely on liturgical or sacred music. The *Missa Assumpta est Maria*, the focus of this concert, is one of his undisputed masterpieces. It was composed towards the end of his life, in 1702, when he was employed as music director at La Sainte Chapelle in Paris. This was his last appointment, and the most prestigious. In earlier times he had worked in the Private Music of Mlle de Guise; he had also been employed by the Jesuits to direct the music at their principal church in Paris, St Louis-le-Grand. La Sainte Chapelle crowned these previous appointments, and his *Missa Assumpta est Maria* crowns his liturgical compositions. We may safely assume it was performed on 15 August, 1702, for the Feast of the Assumption, arguably the grandest of all the Marian feasts in the year. Charpentier didn't disappoint his colleagues in the richness of invention and ambition of the work.

Like all masses, it is a setting of the Ordinary: Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus and Agnus Dei. In this performance, the vocal setting is articulated by some instrumental pieces. Following the instructions given by Charpentier in his manuscript, organ versets are provided for the Kyrie and the Benedictus (where the verset in effect replaces a sung setting). We have added a third organ piece to serve as the Offertory verset. All are by Charpentier's near contemporaries. The *Ouverture pour le sacre d'un évêque* provides for the moment when the Gospel was recited. It employs the same string ensemble as we hear used in the mass setting, for indeed this is a 'messe concertante'. Within the mass, the strings provide independent 'simphonies' (most obviously in the elaborate Kyrie), in addition to extending the textures of the vocal writing. The sequence of movements ends with the prayer for the King: *Domine salvum fac regem*.

Many things stand out in Charpentier's music, not least what we might call the visual. Using a dazzling range of scorings, he presents us with one cameo after another, curating an entire gallery. His resource in this regard is remarkable, and hugely effective. We can read it as a reflection of the medieval glass of the Chapel, each musical vignette reaching out to one of the lights forming the very walls of the building. Also, listen out for a range of harmonic practice which places Charpentier alongside Purcell as one of the most innovative harmonists of the baroque period.

As regards performing forces, it is very likely that the mass was sung by solo voices. Each of the voice types, dessus (soprano), hautecontre (high tenor), taille (tenor) and basse is allotted solo lines within reduced textures (duos, trios, quartets). At the same time, Charpentier divides his vocal ensemble into a first and second 'choir', adding to the spatial opulence. Here is where social distancing comes into its own. Following suit, the strings are also single players, supported by lute and organ.

EH

Kyrie

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

*Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.*

Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo. Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te. Benedicimus te. Adoramus te. Glorificamus te. Gratiam 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 to God in the highest. And on earth peace to men of good will. We praise Thee. We bless Thee. We worship Thee. We glorify Thee. We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father almighty. Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son. Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For Thou alone art holy; Thou alone art Lord; Thou alone, O Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the Glory of God the Father. Amen.

Credo

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium omnium, et invisibilium. Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum. Et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula. 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. Et incarnatus est de spiritu sancto ex maria virgine: et homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis, sub Pontio Pilato passus, et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas. Et ascendit in coelum: sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria, iudicare 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 unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum. Et vitam ventura saeculi. Amen.

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages; God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven. and was incarnate by the holy ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. He was also crucified for us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried. 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, together with the Father and the Son, is adored and glorified: who spoke through the prophets. And one, holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are filled with Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Elevatio – O Sacramentum pietatis

O sacramentum pietatis,
O signum unitatis,
O vinculum charitatis.

Jesu dulcissime
Quam felix est quam satias,
Quam felix est quam beatus,
Quam felix est quam inebrias,
Nihil desiderat nisi Jesum
quam diligit.

Transfige dulcissime Domine Jesu,
Transfige medullas et viscera
animae meae suavissimo,
ac saluberrimo amoris tuae vulnerae
ut te solum adoret, ut te solum cupiat,
et tibi semper adhaeret
et in aeternum te possideat.

*O sacrament of devotion!
O sign of unity!
O bond of charity!*

*Most sweet Jesus, how happy is the one who is full of you,
how happy who is drunk with you.
That person wants nothing, but the love of Jesus.*

*Pierce, sweet Lord Jesus,
Pierce the inmost parts
of my most sweet soul
with the joyous and healthful wound of Thy love;
So that it adores only you, only desires you,
and may always adhere to you
and may possess you for ever.*

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: dona nobis pacem.

*Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace.*

Domine salvum fac regem
Domine salvum fac regem: et exaudi nos in die qua invocaverimus te.

God save the King, and hear us when we call unto you.

Biography



Instruments of Time and Truth was founded in 2014. It is Oxford's period ensemble, profiting from the number of early music specialists living in or near the city. It has a wide repertorial remit, ranging from Monteverdi to Mendelssohn. Its reach has extended to France and Spain. And through its educational programme it is also developing links with local schools. Its principal musical director is **Edward Higginbottom**. Since stepping down from his post at New College Oxford, he has pursued a varied freelance career, including frequent appearances with IT&T. He also directs the vocal ensemble **Oxford Consort of Voices**, many of whose singers were formed in the collegiate choirs of Oxford (and to be fair, also Cambridge). This evening's foray into the French baroque represents a life-long interest of Edward Higginbottom. His work for French culture has been recognised by the decoration, *Commandeur de l'ordre des arts et des lettres*.