

WIGMORE HALL

Saturday 17 September 2022
7.30pm

Fauré Requiem

Tonight's concert is dedicated to the memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Le Concert Spirituel

Hervé Niquet conductor
Jean-Christophe Lanièce bass,
soloist
Chouchane Siranossian violin,
soloist
Lucile Lucie Uzzeni viola
Gesine Queyras cello
Pierre-Augustin Lay cello
Chionchini viola

Luc Devanne bass
Emma Cottet horn
Cyrille Grenot horn
Valeria Kafelnikov harp
François Saint-Yves organ
Marie-Pierre Wattiez soprano
Aude Fenoy soprano
Marie Serri soprano
Armelle Marq soprano

Lucia Nigohossian mezzo-soprano
Anne-Fleur Inizan mezzo-soprano
Alice Habellion mezzo-soprano
Benoit Porcherot tenor
Pascal Richardin tenor
Nicolas Maire tenor
Benoit Descamps bass
Jérôme Collet bass
François Heraud bass

Théodore Dubois (1837-1924)

Benedicat vobis (1894)

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

Tantum ergo Op. 5 (1856)

O salutaris in A flat (1869)

Offertoire pour la Toussaint (1904)

Charles Gounod (1818-1893)

Elévation in B minor (c.1850-70)

Léo Delibes (1836-1891)

Ave maris stella (pub. 1891)

Camille Saint-Saëns

O salutaris in E (1884)

Ave verum in D

Théodore Dubois

Ave Maria (1894)

Méditation in D (pub. 1869)

Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911)

O salutaris Op. 37 (1895)

Interval

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Requiem Op. 48 (1893 version, adapted for solo baritone, mixed choir and chamber orchestra)

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Head and heart clashed over religion in France throughout the 19th Century. Anticlericalism became the default position for so-called progressives, while conservative Catholics reacted fiercely to republican attacks on the Church and its alleged suppression of individual liberty. Despite heated political debates against organised religion, many rational supporters of the Third Republic were also regulars at Mass and benefactors of the monumental churches built in Paris during the second half of the 19th Century.

This evening's programme reflects the strength of faith held by composers best known today for their secular music.

Charles Gounod, for instance, became immersed in evangelical Catholicism after he won the coveted Prix de Rome in 1839. Gounod's childhood faith was turbocharged during his time as a student at the French Academy in Rome by the charismatic preaching of Henri-Dominique Lacordaire. While the young composer considered training for the priesthood, he instead channelled his religious conviction into the creation of church music. *Élévation* for violin, organ and double bass was published in his *Oeuvres religieuses*, a collection of sacred or pious works from the 1850s and 1860s. Although the piece could have been performed at the elevation of the host during Mass, it was more likely conceived to stimulate meditation on Christian themes.

Camille Saint-Saëns was appointed organist at the Parisian church of Saint-Merri in 1853 and assumed the same post at Ste Marie-Madeleine four years later. His prolific output of sacred music, much of it written for the Madeleine, includes eight individual settings of the eucharistic hymn *O salutaris hostia* and one as part of his early Mass Op. 4. The version in A flat major, for solo soprano, alto and baritone or choir and organ (1869) bears the brand of elegant simplicity which Saint-Saëns perfected while teaching at the Ecole Niedermeyer, a Parisian institution devoted to improving sacred music in France. The gentle chromaticisms of the E-major setting for tenor, baritone and organ (1884), express the pain of Christ's sacrifice and intensify the hymn's closing song of praise. **Alexandre Guilmant's** *O salutaris* (1895), a sophisticated setting for solo baritone, choir, organ, harp and double bass, reflects its composer's feeling for lucid textures and his sensitivity as a melodist.

Tantum ergo dates from Saint-Saëns's time at Saint-Merri. The exquisite hymn's memorable opening melody and straightforward part writing, tinged with chromatic sidesteps, suited the purposes of developing his choir's skills while heightening the frisson surrounding the adoration of the blessed sacrament during Mass. *Offertoire pour la Toussaint*, for the feast of All Saints, conveys the torment of death and promise of eternal rest with spellbinding grace. Saint-Saëns's *Ave verum*, complete with incisive horn solo, treats its eucharistic text to a setting that balances reverence for the body of Christ with a dramatic reaction to the holy saviour's sacrifice.

Théodore Dubois, son of a basket-maker, won the Prix de Rome in 1861 and became choirmaster of the recently

completed Sainte-Clotilde on his return to Paris from the French Academy. Dubois succeeded Saint-Saëns as organist at the Madeleine in 1877, with Fauré becoming the church's choirmaster. Dubois's *Ave Maria*, with its mellifluous soprano melody and elegant instrumental interplay, speaks of his experience as an opera composer, while the exquisite *Méditation-Prière* for violin, harp, organ and double bass has the feel of an operatic intermezzo. The motet *Benedicat vobis* (1894), a setting of words from Psalm 133 for the liturgy of the nuptial Mass, is distinguished by its expressive writing for unison choir and solo cello.

Léo Delibes, famed for his ballet *Coppélia*, was raised as a boy chorister at the Madeleine. He became organist of St Pierre-de-Chaillot at the age of 17 and remained there long after scoring his first stage hit. *Ave maris stella* for female voices with organ accompaniment, published posthumously in the year of his death, binds St Bernard of Clairvaux's hymn to the Blessed Virgin to music of touching simplicity.

The origins of **Fauré's** *Messe de Requiem* were obscured by the composer's hazy recollections of its creation and confusion sown by his early biographers, who stated that the work was written between the death of his father in July 1885 and that of his mother in December 1887. While Fauré may have had his parents in mind when composing parts of the Requiem, he later recalled that it 'was composed *for nothing* ... for fun, if I may be permitted to say so!' The work, he noted, was first performed 'in 1890 [...] If my memory serves me right, the deceased ... was a M. Le Soufaché, which is not exactly an ordinary name!' The register of deaths at the Madeleine reveals that the funeral service for the architect Joseph Le Soufaché, held on 16 January 1888, included music for choir and orchestra.

Fauré subsequently chose to extend the piece by returning to sketches for the Offertory made in 1887. He completed the Hostias setting for solo baritone in 1889 and appears to have fashioned the Offertory's sublime opening and closing choral sections in the early 1890s. The 'Liberate me', composed for solo voice and organ in 1877, was revised and added to the Requiem in 1891. The work in its expanded form may have been performed for the first time at a grand funeral service in January 1893 at the Madeleine. **Hervé Niquet** has adapted this version of the score for chamber forces, retaining its nobility while intensifying its *tendresse*.

'It was not the economic aspect that made me choose the "small" form of Fauré's *Requiem*,' he explains. 'Of course, it is easier to travel with 25 than with 80 musicians, but with its orchestration reduced to a shimmering minimum, these pages are closer to the intimacy of the funeral of a dear friend than to a work intended for a large concert hall. No grandiloquence but tenderness; little noise but much strength. In short, this version is dear to me and above all brings back many personal memories.'

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Théodore Dubois (1837-1924)

Benedicat vobis (1894) **May the Lord bless you**

Liturgical text

Benedicat vobis Dominus ex
Sion
Qui fecit caelum et terram.

From the heights of Zion, may
the Lord bless you,
who made heaven and earth.

Deus Israël conjugat vos, et
ipse sit vobiscum
Qui misertus est duobus
unicis.

May the God of Israel unite you,
and may he himself be with you,
who had mercy on two only
children.

Et nunc, Domine, fac eos
plenius benedicere te.
Alleluia.

May they bless you more and
more, O Lord.
Alleluia.

Uxor tua sicut vitis abundans
In lateribus domus tuae.

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
in your house.

Deus Israël conjugat vos, et
ipse sit vobiscum
Qui misertus est duobus
unicis.

May the God of Israel unite you,
and may he himself be with you,
who had mercy on two only
children.

Et nunc, Domine, fac eos
plenius benedicere te.
Alleluia.

May they bless you more and
more, O Lord.
Alleluia.

Benedicat vobis Dominus ex
Sion
Qui fecit caelum et terram.
Alleluia.

From the heights of Zion, may
the Lord bless you,
who made heaven and earth.
Alleluia.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

Tantum ergo Op. 5 (1856) **Therefore let us greatly venerate**

*Liturgical text attr. St Thomas
Aquinas*

Tantum ergo sacramentu
Veneremur
cernui:

Therefore let us greatly venerate
the Sacrament, with bowed
heads:

Et antiquum documentum
Novo cedat ritui:

And let the old practice
give way to the new rite:

Praestet fides supplementum
Sensuum defectui.

Let faith provide a supplement
for the failure of the senses.

Genitori, Genitoque
Laus et jubilatio,

To the Begetter and Begotten
be praise and jubilation,

Salus, honor, virtus quoque
Sit et benedictio:

Good wishes, honour and virtue
be, and blessing:

Procedenti ab utroque
Compar sit laudatio.

To the One proceeding from Both
let there be equal praise.

Amen Amen

O salutaris in A flat (1869)

St Thomas Aquinas

O salutaris Hostia,
Que coeli pandis ostium:

Bella premunt hostilia,
Da robur, fer
auxilium.

Offertoire pour la Toussaint (1904)

Liturgical text

Iustorum animae in manu Dei
sunt
Et non tanget illos tormentum
malitiae.
Visi sunt oculis insipientium
mori:
Illi autem sunt in pace.

O saving Victim

O saving Victim, opening wide
the gate of Heaven to man below:

Our foes press hard on every side;
thine aid supply; thy strength
bestow.

Offertory for All Saints' Day

But the souls of the just are in
the hand of God,
and the torment of wickedness
shall not touch them.
In the sight of the unwise, they
seemed to die,
but they are in peace.

Charles Gounod (1818-1893)

Élévation in B minor (c.1850-70)

Léo Delibes (1836-1891)

Ave maris stella (pub. 1891)

Anonymous

Ave, maris stella,
Dei mater alma,
Atque semper virgo,
Felix caeli porta.

Ave, maris stella,
Dei mater alma.

Solve vincula reis,
Profer lumen caecis,
Mala nostra pelle,
Bona cuncta posce.

Monstra te esse matrem,
Sumat per te
preces
Qui pro nobis natus
Tulit esse tuus

Ave, maris stella,
Dei mater alma,
Amen

Hail star of the sea

Hail, star of the sea,
loving Mother of God,
and ever a virgin,
blessed gate of heaven.

Hail, star of the sea,
loving Mother of God.

Break the chains of sinners,
bring light to the blind,
dispel our evils,
entreat good things.

Show that you are a mother,
may he accept prayers
through you,
he who, born for us,
chose to be yours.

Hail, star of the sea,
loving Mother of God,
Amen.

Camille Saint-Saëns

O salutaris in E (1884)

St Thomas Aquinas

O salutaris Hostia,
Que coeli pandis
ostium:

Bella premunt hostilia,
Da robur, fer
auxilium.

Ave verum in D

Liturgical text

Ave verum corpus natum de
Maria Virgine,

Vere passum immolatum in
cruce pro homine,

Cujus latus per foratum fluxit
aqua et sanguine

Esto nobis praegustatum
mortis in examine!

O Jesu dulcis! O Jesu pie! O
Jesu fili Mariae!

Tu nobis miserere!

Théodore Dubois

Ave Maria (1894)

Liturgical text

Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum.

Benedicta tu in mulieribus
Et benedictus fructus ventris
tui, Jesu!

Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
Ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
Nunc, et in hora mortis
nostrae.

Amen

Méditation in D (pub. 1869)

O saving Victim

O saving Victim, opening wide
The gate of Heaven to man
below;

Our foes press hard on every side;
Thine aid supply; thy strength
bestow.

Hail, true Body

Hail, true Body, born of the
Virgin Mary,

Having truly suffered, sacrificed
on the cross for mankind,

From whose pierced side
water and blood flowed:

Be for us a foretaste in the trial
of death!

O sweet Jesus, O holy Jesus, O
Jesus, son of Mary,

Have mercy on us!

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou among women,
And blessed is the fruit of thy
womb, Jesu!

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and in the hour of our
death.

Amen

Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911)

O salutaris Op. 37 (1895)

St Thomas Aquinas

O salutaris Hostia,
Que coeli pandis ostium:
Bella premunt hostilia,
Da robur, fer
auxilium.

Uni trinoque
Domino
Sit sempiterna gloria,
Qui vitam sine
termino
Nobis donet in patria.
Amen

O saving Victim

O saving Victim, opening wide
the gate of Heaven to man below;
Our foes press hard on every side;
thine aid supply; thy strength
bestow.

To thy great name be endless
praise,
immortal Godhead, One in Three.
Oh, grant us endless length of
days,
in our true native land with thee.
Amen

Interval

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Requiem Op. 48 (1893 version, adapted for solo baritone, mixed choir and chamber orchestra)

Liturgical text

Introit - Kyrie

Requiem aeternam dona eis
Domine,
Et lux perpetua luceat
eis.
Te decet hymnus, Deus, in
Sion,
Et tibi reddetur votum in
Jerusalem.
Exaudi orationem meam,
Ad te omnis caro veniet.

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

Grant them eternal rest, O
Lord,
and may perpetual light shine
upon them.
Thou, O God, art praised in
Sion,
and unto Thee shall the vow be
performed in Jerusalem.
Hear my prayer,
unto Thee shall all flesh come.

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

Offertorium

O Domine, Jesu Christe, Rex
gloriae,
Libera animas
defunctorum
De poenis inferni
Et de profundo lacu.

O Domine, Jesu Christe, Rex
gloriae,
Libera animas
defunctorum
De ore leonis,
Ne absorbeat
tartarus.

Lord Jesus Christ, King of
glory,
deliver the souls of all the
faithful departed
from the pains of hell
and from the bottomless pit.

Lord Jesus Christ, King of
glory,
deliver the souls of all the
faithful departed
from the lion's mouth,
nor let the black abyss swallow
them up.

O Domine, Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae,
Ne cadant in obscurum.
Hostias et preces tibi, Domine, Laudis offerimus: tu suscipe
Pro animabus illis Quarum hodie memoriam facimus:
Fac eas, Domine, de morte transire ad vitam.
Quam olim Abrahae promisisti, Et semini ejus.

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,
do not let them fall into darkness.
We offer unto Thee, O Lord, this sacrifice of prayer and praise: receive it
for those souls whom today we commemorate:
allow them, O Lord, to cross from death into life
which once Thou didst promise to Abraham and his seed.

O Domine, Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae,
Libera animas defunctorum
De poenis inferni et de profundo lacu.
Ne cadant in obscurum.

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,
deliver the souls of all the faithful departed
from the pains of hell and from the bottomless pit.
Do not let them fall into darkness.

Amen Amen

Sanctus

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

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord
Hosanna in the highest.

Pie Jesu

Pie Jesu, Domine,
Dona eis requiem,
Sempiternam requiem.

Merciful Jesus, Lord,
grant them rest,
eternal rest.

Agnus Dei et Lux aeterna

Agnus Dei,
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
Dona eis requiem,
sempiternam requiem.

Lamb of God,
that takest away the sins of the world,
grant them rest, eternal rest.

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine,
Cum sanctis tuis in aeternum,
quia pius es.
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

May eternal light shine on them, O Lord,
with Thy saints for ever,
because Thou art merciful.
Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and may perpetual light shine on them.

Libera me

Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna,
In die illa tremenda:
Quando coeli movendi sunt et terra;
Dum veneris judicare Saeculum per ignem.
Tremens factus sum ego et timeo,
Dum discussio venerit, Atque ventura ira.
Dies illa, dies irae, Calamitatis et miseriae,
Dies magna et amara valde.
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Libera me, Domine...

Deliver me, O Lord, from everlasting death
on that dreadful day
when the heavens and the earth shall be moved;
when Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.
I quake with fear and I tremble
awaiting the day of account
and the wrath to come.
That day, the day of anger,
of calamity, of misery,
that day, the great day, and most bitter.
Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and may perpetual light shine on them.
Deliver me, O Lord...

In paradisum

In Paradisum deducant te angeli,
In tuo adventu, suscipiant te martyres,
Et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem.
Chorus angelorum te suscipiat,
Et cum Lazaro quondam paupere,
Aeternam habeas requiem.

May the angels receive you in Paradise,
at your arrival may the martyrs receive you
and bring you into the holy city of Jerusalem.
There, may the chorus of angels receive you,
and with Lazarus, once a beggar,
may you have eternal rest.

Texts and translations kindly provided by the artists.