



Tristia: Requiems for Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette

Friday 25 January 2019 7.30pm, Hall

Plantade Requiem in D minor, 'in memory of Marie Antoinette'

Berlioz Tristia – La mort d'Ophélie; Méditation religieuse

interval 20 minutes

Berlioz Tristia – Marche funèbre pour la dernière scène d'Hamlet

Cherubini Requiem in C minor, 'in memory of Louis XVI'

Le Concert Spirituel Choir and Orchestra

Hervé Niquet conductor

Production Bru Zane France

The score of the Plantade Requiem is published by the Palazzetto Bru Zane

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Welcome

A warm welcome to tonight's concert in which Le Concert Spirituel and its founder and conductor Hervé Niquet present two Requiems composed in post-Revolutionary France in memory of King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, who were executed via guillotine in 1793.

Cherubini's Requiem in C minor was highly regarded by Beethoven, no less, and it's not difficult to understand why, for it's a work that combines deep-felt emotion with a grandeur of scale.

The name of Charles-Henri Plantade is a good deal less well-known and the exact origins of his Requiem, in memory of Marie Antoinette, whom he had known, are

shrouded in mystery. But the potency of the music itself needs no apology and it's a fascinating document that draws on both the inspiration of 18th-century French music and full-blown Romanticism.

Berlioz is also represented by a rarity. His *Tristia* is a triptych for chorus and orchestra that the composer fashioned from pre-existing pieces which are linked by their reflections on death – a subject that had long fascinated Berlioz.

It promises to be a powerfully majestic evening of music-making.

Huw Humphreys, Head of Music, Barbican

Requiem Masses for murdered royalty

For texts, see page 7

There were English-speaking witnesses in Paris as the French Revolution began to devour its own children. When Citizen Louis Capet, formerly Louis XVI of France was guillotined in what is now the Place de la Concorde on 21 January 1793, he was accompanied by Irish priest Henry Essex Edgeworth, 'He suddenly let go my arm, and I saw him cross with a firm foot the breadth of the whole scaffold; silence, by his look alone, 15 or 20 drums that were placed opposite to me; and, in a voice so loud that it must have been heard at the Pont Tournant, I heard him pronounce distinctly these memorable words: "I die innocent of all the crimes laid to my charge; I pardon those who have occasioned my death; and I pray to God that the blood you are going to shed may never be visited on France." ... a man on horseback, in the national uniform, waved his sword, and with a ferocious cry, ordered the drums to beat. Many voices were at the same time heard encouraging the executioners ... they dragged him under the axe of the guillotine, which with one stroke severed his head from his body ... The youngest of the guards, who seemed about 18, immediately seized the head, and showed it to the people as he walked round the scaffold; he accompanied this monstrous ceremony with the most atrocious and indecent gestures. At first an awful silence prevailed; at length some cries of "Vive la République!" were heard. By degrees the voices multiplied and in less than 10 minutes this cry, a thousand times repeated, became the universal shout of the multitude, and every hat was in the air.'

Ten months later Marie Antoinette was brought to trial, and in a letter home the writer and poet Helen Maria Williams, who lived in France during the Revolution, recorded the former queen's final days. 'She was condemned about four in the morning on 16 October and heard her sentence with composure. But her firmness forsook her on the way from the court to her dungeon. She burst into tears; when, as if ashamed of this weakness, she observed to her guards that though she

wept at that moment, they should see her go to the scaffold without shedding a tear.

'On her way to execution, where she was taken after the accustomed manner in a cart with her hands tied behind her ... she paid little attention to the priest who attended her. She reached the place of execution about noon, and when she turned her eyes towards ... the palace, she became visibly agitated. She ascended the scaffold with precipitation, and her head was in a moment held up to the people by the executioner.'

The bodies of Louis and Marie Antoinette were buried in the cemetery of the Old Church of the Madeleine in graves that were deeper than usual since the authorities feared that their tombs might become the site of a Royalist cult. 'We chanted vespers and the service for the dead', wrote the curate loyal to the Revolution who buried Louis. 'In pursuance of an executive order, the body lying in its open coffin was thrown onto a bed of quicklime at the bottom of the pit. The head was placed at its feet. The whole was then covered by a bed of quicklime and one of earth, which was firmly and thoroughly tamped down.'

And there Louis and Marie Antoinette might have remained for eternity had not the Count of Provence been restored to the throne of France in 1814 as Louis XVIII. The new Bourbon monarch was determined that the remains of his brother and sister-in-law should be exhumed and reburied in the Basilica at Saint-Denis, the last resting place of the kings of France since the 10th century. So on 21 January 1815, the anniversary of Louis XVI's execution, a handful of bones that were presumed to be those of the king, together with a clump of greyish matter containing a lady's garter which had been found in the excavated graves at the Madeleine, were brought to the restored Bourbon crypt at Saint-Denis for reburial.

The Requiem Mass that Louis XVIII had commanded for the occasion was by a musician who had known the former king and queen and who had written for their chapel. Luigi Cherubini (1760–1842) had also managed to

keep on the right side of the Revolution, even composing music to celebrate the execution of the King. He'd kept his head above troubled waters when Napoleon was Emperor, too, though neither man much cared for the other.

Cherubini had first travelled to Paris from London in 1785. He was presented to Marie Antoinette by his friend the violinist Giovanni Battista Viotti and took part in a concert that the queen organised at Versailles. He was soon commissioned to compose *Démophon*, his first *tragédie-en-musique*; and, as tonight's conductor Hervé Niquet – a great admirer of Cherubini's music – reminds us, he would also have written for the Royal Chapel. 'He composed many French motets for the Chapel: there are perhaps between 20 and 30. The music is in separate parts and there is no conductor's score with combined parts for all the instruments so we have no idea what this music might be like.'

On the other hand, the music for Cherubini's Requiem in C minor 'à la mémoire de Louis XVI' is available in full score and in two versions. It's the first of these, probably composed around 1815 for mixed choir, that Le Concert Spirituel are going to perform in the second part of this evening's concert.

Beethoven considered Cherubini 'the greatest living composer of his time' and observed that if he were ever to write a Requiem, Cherubini's would be his only model (indeed the work was performed at Beethoven's funeral in Vienna in 1827).

Contemporary prints of the service at Saint-Denis confirm that Cherubini was composing a work for a majestic public occasion. The walls and pillars of the basilica church were draped with images of the royal coat of arms and the fleur de lis, with Louis XVIII and his family seated on a high dais from where they could see the Archbishop of Paris and an army of clergy officiating among a sea of candles.

It was only 20 years since Cherubini had conducted a choir in a ceremony celebrating the execution of the king that they now came to rebury – the composer had survived another turn of the French political wheel. The following

year he would be appointed Superintendent of the Chapel Royal and eventually he would become Director of the Paris Conservatoire. Unlike many others who lived through the Revolution and the Empire, he died in his own bed.

Cherubini's Requiem is composed on a grand scale, and while it clearly belongs to the French ceremonial tradition that reaches such a mighty climax with Berlioz's Requiem, *Te Deum* and *Grande symphonie funèbre et triomphale*, in other respects it's unusual. There are no soloists, so the musical argument is carried by the mixed choir and the orchestra. And Cherubini chooses not to compose all the individual numbers of the Requiem as separate movements, with one sometimes flowing into another.

This is a work that is deliberately ecclesiastical rather than theatrical – an extended prayer for the dead. So the opening Introitus et Kyrie seems to creep out of the dark with the lower strings intoning a solemn rising theme; and the entry of the chorus is equally restrained. But they are supplicants too and there's a heartfelt crescendo on the phrase 'exaudi orationem meam' ('hear my prayer'). The Graduale has a kind of Mozartian flavour, with an exquisite soprano-tenor duet presented in canon with an alto-bass duet.

Then comes a Dies irae to rattle the living and awaken the dead with brass fanfares and a strident tam-tam. If the tension eases a little in the middle section with the Recordare, the setting of the Confutatis shakes us out of our complacency with the words 'Confutatis maledictis, Flammis acribus addictis' ('When the accursed have been confounded, and consigned to the searing flames'). A single voice pleads, 'call me with the blessed'.

A positively jaunty Offertorium follows, with the traditional robust fugue sent off on its journey by the line 'quam olim Abrahae'. And the fugue returns in the final section of the Hostias, which begins with consolation rather than chastisement.

Cherubini's Sanctus, so often a great set piece in other Requiems, is short and sharp and segues directly into the Benedictus and Pie Jesu. The Requiem ends with a heartfelt and highly

original Agnus Dei. An edgy angular phrase for the orchestra grows every more anguished as the chorus plead for mercy, before they, and we, are promised rest of a kind. As Michael Moore observes in an essay on this Requiem ‘Cherubini repeats the final line, “dona eis requiem sempiternam”, “grant them eternal rest”, ending with a very long modulation on the word sempiternam, like a musical depiction of eternity’. A solemn Lux aeterna reminds us of the inherent seriousness of the occasion.

Cherubini’s style is all his own, says Hervé Niquet. He began to compose in the Classical period, worked through the Revolution when marches and choruses accompanied by brass and woodwinds were the politically correct tools for composers, and continued into the early Romantic period. Other than a deep dislike of the flute, it’s difficult to detect traces of these distinctive periods in French music in this Requiem. ‘Like any genius he noted and subsumed all the influences around him to make his own compositional style,’ explains Niquet. ‘It is so very modern for this period, the way he uses the volume of the orchestra, the power of the instruments; and how to write for the voice and the collective power of the choir. He subsumed all these influences and he stayed Cherubini!’

It seems possible that Berlioz would have known the Requiem and might even have heard it performed. What is not speculation is that Cherubini and the younger composer were chalk and cheese. Berlioz was an awkward-minded student when Cherubini was Director of the Paris Conservatoire. And in his memoirs he relates that the Director had issued an order that men and women were to use entrances at the opposite ends of the building. Berlioz, unaware of the order, came in through the Ladies’ entrance on his way to study Gluck scores in the library. When a servant endeavoured to bar his entry Berlioz refused to budge and the Director was summoned. What followed was an unseemly squabble with Berlioz refusing to give his name and shouting ‘Gluck’s music is the most magnificent I know’, while Cherubini and his staff chased the young man around the library.

The ‘Méditation religieuse’, the first of the three pieces that comprise *Tristia*, was composed in 1831, just after Berlioz had graduated from the Conservatoire. He was living at the Villa Medici, having at last won the celebrated Prix de Rome. The other two numbers were written nearly a decade later and, as Hervé Niquet reminds us, they are a trio of separate pieces, a compilation assembled when the composer was in London in 1848. ‘It’s three musical moments in one book so to speak. You might say that it’s three different choirs and three different orchestras. You have three different texts with different material and different atmospheres.’ The title, which can loosely be translated as ‘Sad Things’, was borrowed from Ovid, who had been banished from Rome; like the Latin poet, Berlioz felt the pain of exile keenly.

The Méditation (which tonight is performed second) is a setting of a poem for a six-part chorus and a modest orchestra by Thomas Moore. The plaintive horn solo at the end set against dying strings more than hints at the remarkable instrumentalist that Berlioz would become.

In his own mind Berlioz associated *Tristia* with *Hamlet* and it was when she was playing Ophelia in 1827 that the budding composer first saw Harriet Smithson, the actress who would haunt his dreams and his music, and eventually become his rather disappointing wife. ‘La mort d’Ophélie’ is a setting of a poem by the composer’s friend Ernest Legouvé. The piece was written for a Shakespeare concert at Covent Garden that never happened and it was composed for that most English of voices, the contralto. It’s a rare example of Berlioz writing for this lower register, which much impressed him during his seven months in London.

It seems likely that the final piece, ‘Marche funèbre’, was originally composed in 1844 for a production of *Hamlet* in Paris that never made it off the drawing board – like so many of Berlioz’s projects. Hamlet is dead. Fortinbras orders four captains to bear his body to the ramparts where ‘The soldiers’ music and the rites of war/ [will] Speak loudly for him.’ Muskets salute the dead hero and the rest is silence, with only the wordless chorus left to mourn.

Is this a Requiem for the Prince of Denmark?
A 'secular' Requiem, says Hervé Niquet.

It's Niquet who has helped to rediscover the other liturgical Requiem in tonight's programme: the *Messe des morts à la mémoire de Marie Antoinette* by Charles-Henri Plantade (1764–1839). The origins of this Requiem are unclear but it seems likely that it was composed and perhaps performed (although not published) some time before its first recorded appearance, at the commemoration in 1823 of the 30th anniversary of the execution of Marie Antoinette.

Plantade had known the Queen before the Revolution, having composed for the court, but Hervé Niquet reminds us that when he came to compose this Requiem, and possibly revise it for the Marie Antoinette anniversary, the musical world had changed. 'French music had been organised differently during the Revolution; the orchestra, for example, was used in a new manner. Choirs too were organised differently. So the high male tenor – the *haute-contre* – was banished and now there were female altos, etc. Plantade was writing for a different orchestra and a different choir than those he had known before the executions of the King and Queen of France. Yet in many ways he composes for both as if he were still in 18th-century France, writing, for example, for *haute-contre* tenors. I think that this Requiem is a sort of homage to pre-Revolutionary 18th-century music.'

Certainly, Plantade's choral writing for three male voices with the tenors always divided and a single soprano, belongs to the sound-world of French motets composed in the manner of Lully and Rameau. The structure of this Requiem too, which closely follows that chosen by Cherubini, is equally traditional.

Yet there's a hint of 1830s modernity in the chromaticism of the Introit and then the dramatic appearance of the tam-tam that seems inexorably to beat out the last of human days. Indeed, you can sense the Romantic sound-world to come in the thrilling *Dies irae*, where Berlioz seems to be watching in the wings. On the other hand, the fugue that spins the Kyrie on its way dips its toe into plainchant, while the Graduel could happily have been composed in the 1780s, with the soprano line divided into two parts, giving the movement a particular richness. However, Alexandre Dratwicki (Palazzetto Bru Zane), the musicologist who rescued Plantade's Requiem

from its musical exile, argues that the next movement is right up to the minute. 'The Prose [*Dies irae*] ... is the most substantial section of the Mass of the Dead, and is also the one in which Plantade will display the full wealth of his invention: one senses here the operatic excitement of the Revolutionary works of Méhul and Cherubini, and even the vigour of the style of Rossini, then at the height of his popularity.'

Plantade does not set the complete text of the Offertoire and his Sanctus is short and sweet. However, in the Benedictus, sung unaccompanied by the sopranos, there is an unmistakable plainchant melody; and there is more musical history in the Pie Jesu, which closes this section with Plantade's violas and cellos sounding like a 17th-century consort of viols. 'The music is a sort of mix,' says Hervé Niquet. 'Plantade liked to be "modern"; he had found fame during the pre-Revolutionary period, but he knew he couldn't go back to the past. And at the same time, he is impressed by Romanticism. However, it's really a farewell to the music of the 18th century.' And to the music that Marie Antoinette would have known.

Perhaps the most striking effect in the Requiem occurs in that Pie Jesu. There's a curious sound, a sighing groan in the brass section – an 'open' chromatic note played on the horn, which is imitated by the strings later in the movement. This is surely the kind of orchestral effect that Berlioz liked. The *Agnus Dei* that follows is brief and Plantade transforms the closing *Lux aeterna* into a stately funeral march for the dead Queen.

These Requiems by Plantade and Cherubini remember a King and his Queen executed in public during a Revolution. *Requiescat in pace*. But another Latin phrase comes to mind as you hear this music: *Ars longa, vita brevis* ('Art is long, life is short'). Musicians kept their heads during difficult days, as Hervé Niquet reminds us. 'In France the Revolution was both a good thing and a bad thing – but I find that the artists were more intelligent than the politicians. We don't know enough of the music of the Revolutionary period. But, because the world had changed so much, musicians had to find another approach to art in order to ensure that they would remain alive; it's true that life in France changed dramatically, but I would also say that you can't kill music, so the legacy of the French 18th century was preserved.'

Programme note © Christopher Cook

Requiem

Introitus

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.
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Kyrie

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

Graduale

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
In memoria aeterna erit justus:

ab auditione mala non timebit.

Sequentia [Dies irae]

Dies irae, dies illa,
Solvat saeculum in favilla,
Teste David cum Sibylla!
Quantus tremor est futurus,
Quando iudex est venturus,
Cuncta stricte discussurus!
Tuba mirum spargens sonum
Per sepulcra regionum,
Coget omnes ante thronum.
Mors stupebit et Natura,
Cum resurget creatura,
Judicanti responsura.
Liber scriptus proferetur,
In quo totum continetur,
Unde mundus judicetur.
Iudex ergo cum sedebit,
Quid latet apparebit,
Nihil inultum remanebit.
Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus,
Cum vix justus sit securus?
Rex tremendae majestatis,
Qui salvandos salvas gratis,
Salva me, fons pietatis.
Recordare, Jesu pie,
Quod sum causa tuae viae;
Ne me perdas illa die.
Quaerens me, sedisti lassus,
Redemisti crucem passus,
Tantus labor non sit cassus.
Juste Iudex ultionis,
Donum fac remissionis
Ante diem rationis.

Introit

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
A hymn, O God, becomes thee in Zion
and a vow shall be paid to thee in Jerusalem.
Hear my prayer; all flesh shall come before thee.
Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Kyrie

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

Gradual

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
The righteous shall be had in everlasting
remembrance:
he will not be afraid of any evil tidings.

Prose [Dies irae]

The day of wrath, that day
will dissolve the world in ashes
as David prophesied with the Sibyl.
What dread there will be
when the Judge shall come
to examine all things with rigour!
The trumpet, diffusing a wondrous sound
through the tombs of every region,
will summon all before the throne.
Death and nature shall stand amazed
when creation rises again
to answer to the Judge.
A written book will be brought forth,
that contains everything
for which the world shall be judged.
When therefore the Judge takes his seat,
whatever is hidden shall be made manifest:
nothing will remain unpunished.
What am I, wretch, then to say,
what advocate ask to plead for me,
when scarcely the righteous shall be safe?
King of awful majesty,
who freely savest the redeemed,
save me, O Fount of pity.
Remember, merciful Jesus,
that I am the cause of thy journey,
lest thou destroy me on that day.
Seeking me, thou didst sit down weary;
thou didst redeem me by suffering the Cross:
let not such hardship be in vain.
Just Judge of vengeance,
grant me remission
before the day of reckoning.

Ingemisco, tamquam reus,
 Culpa rubet vultus meus,
 Supplicanti parce Deus.
 Qui Mariam absolvisti,
 Et latronem exaudisti,
 Mihi quoque spem dedisti.
 Preces meae non sunt dignae,
 Sed tu bonus fac benigne,
 Ne perenni cremer igne.
 Inter oves locum praesta,
 Et ab haedis me sequestra,
 Statuens in parte dextra.
 Confutatis maledictis,
 Flammis acribus addictis,
 Voca me cum benedictis.
 Oro supplex et acclinis,
 Cor contritum quasi cinis,
 Gere curam mei finis.
 Lacrimosa dies illa,
 Qua resurget ex favilla
 Judicandus homo reus.
 Huic ergo parce, Deus.
 Pie Jesu Domine,
 Dona eis requiem. Amen.

Offertorium

Domine, Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae,
 libera animas omnium fidelium defunctorum
 de poenis inferni et de profundo lacu.
 [Libera eas de ore leonis,
 ne absorbeat eas tartarus,
 ne cadant in obscurum.
 [Sed signifer sanctus Michael
 repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam,
 quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semini ejus.]

Hostias et preces tibi, [laudis,] offerimus,

[tu suscipe] pro animabus illis;
 [quarum hodie memoriam facimus:]
 Fac eas, Domine, de morte aeterna transire ad
 vitam.

[] text in square brackets is in the Cherubini only

Sanctus & Benedictus

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

Pie Jesu

Pie Iesu, Domine, dona eis requiem sempiternam.

I groan as one who is guilty;
 my face blushes with guilt:
 spare the suppliant, O God.
 Thou who didst absolve Mary Magdalene
 and didst hear the thief's entreaty,
 to me too hast thou given hope.
 My prayers are not worthy,
 yet thou who art kind, show mercy,
 lest I burn in eternal fire.
 Grant me a place among the sheep,
 and separate me from the goats,
 setting me on thy right hand.
 When the accursed have been confounded,
 and consigned to the searing flames,
 call me with the blessed.
 I pray, kneeling in supplication,
 my heart as contrite as ashes:
 take my fate into thy care.
 Full of weeping will be that day
 when from the ashes shall rise again
 guilty man to be judged:
 therefore spare this one, O God.
 Merciful Lord Jesus,
 grant them rest. Amen.

Offertory

O Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,
 deliver the souls of all the faithful departed
 from the pains of hell and the bottomless pit:
 [Deliver them from the jaws of the lion,
 lest hell engulf them,
 lest they be plunged into darkness.
 [But let the holy standard-bearer Michael
 lead them into the holy light,
 As once thou promised to Abraham and to his
 seed.]
 Lord, [in praise,] we offer thee sacrifices and
 prayers,
 [Accept them] on behalf of those souls
 [whom we remember this day:]
 Lord, make them pass from death to life.

Sanctus & Benedictus

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, etc.

Pie Jesu

Merciful Lord Jesus, grant them eternal rest.

Agnus Dei & Communio

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,

Dona eis requiem,
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,

Dona eis requiem,
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,

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

Hector Berlioz (1803–69)

Tristia

La mort d'Ophélie

Auprès d'un torrent Ophélie
Cueillait, tout en suivant le bord,
Dans sa douce et tendre folie,
Des pervenches, des boutons d'or,
Des iris aux couleurs d'opale,
Et ces fleurs d'un rose pâle
Qu'on appelle des doigts de mort.

Puis, élevant sur ses mains blanches,
Les rians trésors du matin,
Elle les suspendait aux branches,
Aux branches d'un saule voisin.
Mais trop faible le rameau plie,
Se brise, et la pauvre Ophélie
Tombe, sa guirlande à la main.

Quelques instants sa robe enflée
La tint encor sur le courant,
Et, comme une voile gonflée,
Elle flottait toujours chantant,
Chantant quelque vieille ballade,
Chantant ainsi qu'une naïade,
Née au milieu de ce torrent.

Mais cette étrange mélodie
Passa, rapide comme un son.
Par les flots la robe alourdie
Bientôt dans l'abîme profond
Entraîna la pauvre insensée,
Laissant à peine commencée
Sa mélodieuse chanson.

Ernest Legouvé (1807–1903), after William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

Agnus Dei & Communio

Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the
world,
grant them rest.
Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the
world,
grant them rest.
Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the
world,
grant them eternal rest.
Let perpetual light shine upon them.
with thy saints for ever,
for thou art merciful.
Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.

The Death of Ophelia

Beside a brook Ophelia,
as she followed the bank, gathered,
in her gentle, tender madness,
periwinkles, buttercups,
opal-coloured irises,
and those pale pink flowers
they call dead men's fingers.

Then, lifting in her white hands
the morning's laughing trophies,
she hung them on the branches,
the branches of a nearby willow-tree.
But the bough, too frail, bends
and breaks, and poor Ophelia
falls, her garland in her hand.

Awhile her dress, spread wide,
bore her on the surface,
and like a swelling sail
she floated, singing as she went,
singing an ancient ballad,
singing like a naiad
for whom the stream was home.

But the strange melody
eased, fleeting as a snatch of sound.
Her dress, made heavy with water,
soon into the depths
dragged the poor mad girl,
leaving as yet hardly begun
her melodious song.

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Méditation religieuse

Ce monde entier n'est qu'une ombre fugitive;
Il n'est rien de vrai qu le Ciel.
L'éclat des ailes de la gloire est faux et passager;
Les fleurs de l'amour, de l'espérance, de la beauté
S'épanouissent pour la tombe;
Il n'est rien de brillant qu le Ciel.
Pauvres voyageurs d'un jour orageux,
Le flambeau du génie, celui de la raison
Ne font que nous montrer les dangers de la route;
Il n'est rien de calme que le Ciel.

Louise Belloc (1796–1881), after Thomas Moore

Marche funèbre pour la dernière scène d'Hamlet

[with wordless chorus]

Religious Reflection

This world is all a fleeting show ...
there's nothing true but Heaven!
And false the light on Glory's plume ...
And Love and Hope and Beauty's bloom
are blossoms gathered for the tomb –
there's nothing bright but Heaven!
Poor wanderers of a stormy day ...
And Fancy's flash and Reason's ray
seem but to light the troubled way –
there's nothing calm but heaven.

Thomas Moore (1779–1852)

About the performers

Guy Vivien



Hervé Niquet

Hervé Niquet conductor

Hervé Niquet pursued a thorough training as a harpsichordist, organist, pianist, vocalist, composer, choral conductor and orchestral conductor, which has influenced his approach to music-making: he always returns to the original source in order to avoid the pitfalls of convention and habit. It was for this reason that he created Le Concert Spirituel in 1987 with the goal of reviving the French *grand motet*. More than 30 years later, the ensemble enjoys a reputation as one of the most renowned groups in the interpretation of Baroque music, presenting both known and obscure works by French, Italian and British composers.

Hervé Niquet also conducts mainstream international orchestras, bringing the same dedication to 19th- and early 20th-century repertoire, and he believes that French music has remained unique throughout the centuries. As a musical pioneer he was involved in the formation of the Palazzetto Bru Zane – Centre de musique romantique française in Venice in 2009. He has an equal enthusiasm for opera and frequently conducts staged productions, either with Le Concert Spirituel or as a guest conductor. He has worked with a wide variety of stage directors, including Mariame Clément, Georges Lavaudant, Gilles and Corinne Benizio (alias Shirley and Dino), Joachim Schlömer, Christoph Marthaler, Romeo Castellucci and Christian Schiaretti.

Hervé Niquet is musical director of the Vlaams Radio Choir and principal guest conductor of the

Brussels Philharmonic Orchestra, collaborating with them on a project to record cantatas by winners of the Prix de Rome. So far works by Debussy, Saint-Saëns, Gustave Charpentier, Max d'Ollone and Paul Dukas have been released, as well as operatic rarities by Victorin Joncières, Félicien David, Fromental Halévy and, most recently, Gounod's *Le Tribut de Zamora*. Hervé Niquet and Véronique Gens have received numerous awards in France and internationally with their CD *Visions*.

Hervé Niquet is also committed to youth education projects, teaching in leading institutions and giving masterclasses and lectures.

He has been appointed Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite and Commandeur des Arts et Lettres by the French government.

Le Concert Spirituel Choir and Orchestra

The multi-award-winning Le Concert Spirituel was founded in 1987 by Hervé Niquet with the aim of resurrecting the great French repertoire played at the court of Versailles. It soon became renowned as one of the leading period-instrument ensembles and it collaborates closely with the Centre de Musique Baroque in Versailles and is devoted to performing the music of the great French composers of the past, from Charpentier to Lully, via Campra and Boismortier.

It performs at the world's most prestigious concert halls, including the Barbican Centre, Wigmore Hall, Royal Albert Hall (for the BBC Proms), Luxemburg Philharmonie, Tokyo Opera, BOZAR in Brussels, Madrid's Auditorio Nacional, Shanghai Concert Hall, the Theater an der Wien, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Philharmonie de Paris and Palace of Versailles.

While Le Concert Spirituel specialises in French sacred music, for which it is recognised worldwide, it is also acclaimed in other fields. Its opera recordings, which include Marais's *Sémélé*, Grétry's *Andromaque* and Campra's *Le Carnaval de Venise*, have won major awards.

Since 2015 Le Concert Spirituel has had an exclusive recording contract with Alpha Classics, releasing on DVD Boismortier's *Don Quichotte chez la Duchesse*, as well as CDs of Vivaldi's *Gloria* and *Magnificat*, the *Requiems* of Cherubini and Plantade that we hear tonight, Lully's *Persée*, Handel's *Messiah* and Benevolo's *Missa Si Deus Pro Nobis*.

The ensemble has worked with leading directors and choreographers, including Gilles and Corinne Benizio, Karole Armitage, Georges Lavaudant, Joachim Schlömer and Christian Schiaretti.

Highlights this season include a major concert around Berlioz's *Messe solennelle* and Martini's *Requiem* at the Festival Berlioz in Côte Saint-André, then at the Royal Chapel in Versailles;

Vivaldi's *Gloria* and *Magnificat* in Geneva and at the Cité de la Musique; the re-creation of Francoeur's 1778 revision of Lully's *Armide* with Véronique Gens in the title-role at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Metz Arsenal and BOZAR in Brussels; and Handel's *Messiah* and Purcell's *King Arthur* (staged by Shirley and Dino) at the Château de Versailles.

Le Concert Spirituel is funded by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication and the City of Paris. The ensemble is grateful to the donors of its Endowment Fund, and the individual donors of 'Le Carré des Muses'. Le Concert Spirituel is also funded by its Principal Patrons: Mécénat Musical Société Générale and Fondation Bru.

concertspirituel.com

Le Concert Spirituel

Violin 1

Olivier Briand
leader
Stéphan Dudermel
Matthieu Camilleri
Nathalie Fontaine
Florence Stroesser
Julie Friez

Violin 2

Bérangère Maillard
Yannis Roger
Myriam Cambreling
Tiphaine Coquempot

Viola

Benjamin Lescoat
Jean-Pierre Garcia
Jean-Luc Thonnerieux
Géraldine Roux

Cello

Tormod Dalen
Annabelle Luis
Julie Mondor
Pauline Lacambra

Double Bass

Luc Devanne
Brigitte Quentin
Marie-Amélie Clément
Rémi Vermeulen

Flute

Olivier Benichou
Anne Perillat

Oboe

Claire Sirjacobs
Tatjana Zimre

Clarinet

Nicola Boud
Daniele Latini

Bassoon

Nicolas André
Hélène Burle

Horn

Pierre-Yves Madeuf
Cyrille Grenot

Trumpet

Jean-François Madeuf
Joël Lahens

Trombone

Laurent Madeuf
Guy Duverget
Lucas Perruchon

Timpani

Cyril Landriau

Soprano

Marie-Pierre Wattiez
Agathe Boudet
Gwenaëlle Clémino
Alice Kamenezky
Aude Fenoy
Alice Glaie
Edwige Parat
Eugénie de Padirac

Alto

Marianne Byloo
Helen Cassano
Eugénie de Mey
Clémence Heurtebise
Lucia Nigohossian
Anaïs Hardouin-Finez

High Tenor

Marc Scaramozzino
Lancelot Lamotte
Stéphen Collardelle

Tenor

Benoît Porcherot
Pierre Perny
Pascal Richardin
Edouard Hazebrouck
Edmond Hurtrait
Randol Rodriguez
Nicolas Maire

Bass-baritone

François Joron
Igor Bouin
Benoît Descamps
Simon Bailly
François Héraud
Felip Andrés Carrasco
Lutz

*The list of musicians
was correct at the time
of going to press*