

WASO CHORUS SINGS CHERUBINI'S REQUIEM

Sunday 15 May, 2.30pm | St Mary's Cathedral

West Australian Symphony Orchestra respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners, Custodians and Elders of the Indigenous Nations across Western Australia and on whose Lands we work.

Jacob HANDL [GALLUS] *Pater noster*
(Our Father: The Lord's Prayer)

Orlando di LASSUS *Timor et tremor*
(Fear and trembling came over me)

Luigi CHERUBINI Requiem in C minor

1. *Introitus (Kyrie)*
2. *Graduale (Requiem)*
3. *Dies irae*
4. *Offertorium (Domine Jesu Christe)*
5. *Sanctus*
6. *Pie Jesu*
7. *Agnus Dei*

Andrew Foote director
Jacinta Jakovcevic organ
WASO Chorus

This concert has no interval.

This concert is performed in memory of Carmela Yom Tov,
in honour of her support to the WASO Chorus.

WASO CHORUS

SOPRANO

Anna Boerner
Annie Burke
Alinta Carroll
Clara Connor
Ceridwen Dumergue
Fay Edwards
Bronwyn Elliott
Marion Funke
Ro Gorell
Diane Hawkins
Deborah Jackson-Porteous
Michelle John
Sanya Jones
Katherine Langdon
Brooke McKnight
Sue Nightingale Hingston
Jane Royle
Lucy Sheppard
Sarah Shneier
Kate Sugars
Rebecca Thorne
Carol Unkovich
Alicia Walter
Margo Warburton

ALTO

Marian Agombar
Llewela Benn
Patsy Brown
Sue Coleson
Jeanette Collins
Catherine Dunn
Kaye Fairbairn
Jenny Fay
Susanna Fleck
Louise Hayes
Katie Hunt
Jill Jones
Mathilda Joubert

Kate Lewis
Robyn Main
Tina McDonald
Lynne Naylor
Philomena Nulsen
Deborah Pearson
Deborah Piesse
Fiona Robson
Neb Ryland
Rebecca Shiel
Olga Ward
Moirra Westmore
Jacquie Wright

TENOR

David Collings
Nick Fielding
Matthew Flood
Jay Reso
Chris Ryland
Stephen Turley
Malcolm Vernon
Brad Wake

BASS

Justin Audcent
Bertel Bulten
Francis Joseph
Benjamin Lee
Andrew Lynch
Tony Marrion
Geoff Massey
Jim Rhoads
Mark Richardson
Peter Ormond
Steve Sherwood
Tim Strahan
Robert Turnbull
Mark Wiklund

PROGRAM NOTES

All three composers represented today were prolific borrowers of musical styles and ideas from others, resulting in compositions that were alternately ancient and modern for their respective times. In *Pater Noster* for 8 voices, Handl—not to be confused with Handel—employs the new Venetian polyphonic and antiphonal techniques he would have heard in works by composers such as Palestrina, Victoria and the Gabrieli in the reverberant cathedrals of Europe.

In *Timor et Tremor* for 6 voices, Lassus plays with some delightful word-painting by employing alternating major/minor tonalities, and unexpected chordal progressions to underpin the text: “Fear and trembling came over me, and darkness fell over me”, before concluding with a syncopated and almost joyful dance to amplify the expectancy of *non confundar*, “I shall not be disappointed”.

An Italian by birth, Maria Luigi Carlo Zenobio Salvatore Cherubini spent most of his adult life in France, and in later years became the director of the Paris Conservatoire. In his early career he was a highly acclaimed opera composer, but as works of younger composers began to gain greater attention following the French Revolution, Cherubini transitioned to writing church music. He maintained strong, yet hidden, associations with the aristocracy, and it is this association that led to the commission of this Requiem from Louis XVIII to commemorate the execution of this king’s brother Louis XVI. The Requiem was first performed with modest forces on twenty-third anniversary of Louis XVI’s death (21 January 1817), at a special memorial service in the crypt of the Basilica of Saint Denis to the north of Paris.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, Cherubini’s setting quickly became the Requiem of choice, and was performed at funerals and commemorations of French public figures, as well as in music festivals and concert halls all over Europe. As one of the most performed Requiems of the age, second only to Mozart’s, Beethoven remarked that if he were to write a requiem, Cherubini’s setting would be a model. (It was performed at Beethoven’s own memorial service.) Yet, as Martin Pearlman notes, “It is remarkable, therefore, that this beautiful work so admired by composers [such as Schumann, Beethoven, Berlioz, Rossini, Chopin], as well as by Mendelssohn and Brahms, this Requiem which the nineteenth century put on a level with the Mozart Requiem, fell into obscurity by the end of the century, along with most of the rest of Cherubini’s music”.

In today’s performance we have no orchestra, but a grand pipe organ. As there is no known or extant organ part, I have created a transcription—a common approach when we consider other masterworks, yet surprisingly absent for this work. The transcription does not intend to imitate the orchestration of strings, winds, and brass, but rather lend a distinct voice to speak to Cherubini’s style and word-setting.

Taking a lead from our earlier Handl and Lassus, listen for borrowings either from or by other requiems. For example: the opening phrases are similar of the opening of Faure’s Requiem; the *Dies irae* both copies from Mozart (the *confutatis* and *salva me* sections) and points to the Verdi settings in the more bombastic moments; the Bach-inspired fugue of the *quam olim Abrahae* and the Fauré-esque *Hostias* in the *Offertorium*; and the repetition and highly emotive monotoned C by the choir in the fading final requiem, as we might hear in sombre music of Beethoven and Rossini.

It’s hard to know why this Requiem has faded from the standard concert repertoire, but we hope today rekindles an admiration for this forgotten masterwork.