

## Program Notes

One of the great characters in music history, Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868) retired while at the height of his fame in 1829 when he was 37 years old. He was acknowledged as the greatest opera composer of his time and his speed and work habits were legendary: his most enduring opera, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (“The Barber of Seville”) was written in just two weeks, and he was said to write the overtures to his operas on the day of the first performance, dropping each page of music off the bed in which he reclined and wrote while copyists took the pages off the floor and wrote out the orchestral parts from his score. No one knows why he suddenly retired, but for the next 33 years he wrote just one significant work (his *Stabat Mater* for chorus and orchestra) and a large number of chamber works which he described as “the sins of my old age.”

This brings us to 1863, when Rossini, for reasons unknown, sat down and wrote his longest sacred work, the *Petite Messe Solennelle*. Composed for the dedication of a friend’s private chapel, Rossini wrote the following on the autograph page:

*Petite messe solennelle*, in four parts with accompaniment of two pianos and harmonium, composed during my country vacation at Passy. Twelve singers of three sexes—men, women and *castrati*—will be sufficient for its execution: that is, eight for the chorus, four for the solos, a total of twelve cherubim... Twelve also are the Apostles in the celebrated fresco painted by Leonardo called *The Last Supper*... Be assured Lord, I guarantee there will be no Judas at my Supper and that mine will sing in tune and *with love* your praises and this little composition which is, alas, the last mortal sin of my old age.

The piece was an instant success, both critically and commercially, and it didn’t take long before his publisher began badgering Rossini to orchestrate the work to make it available for large chorus and orchestra. Convinced that his publisher would just get someone to do it after his death anyway, the ageing composer decided to do it himself in 1867, but it was not performed in this form until 1868, just after Rossini’s death. It was so popular that it received 14 performances in the first month in the Théâtre-Italien, and sixty performances the following year in France, Belgium and Holland. Today, however, the piece is usually presented in its original version with two pianos and harmonium and it has certainly been many years since the orchestral version was last heard in Philadelphia.

The *Petite Messe Solennelle* has too many wonderful details to cover a fraction of them in this short page of notes, but look at the text of each movement before the Chorus sings: whether he is singing heroic praises to God in “Domine Deus” (Lord God, King of Heaven), expressing his joy in his great fugue “Cum Sancto” (With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father), or closing the work with his remarkable setting of the “Agnus Dei” (Lamb of God, grant us peace) with its dramatic change from E minor to E major in the final statement of the text, Rossini always expresses the emotion of the text directly to the audience.

And in keeping with this direct expression of his feelings, Rossini wrote the following on the final page of the composition:

Well, this poor little Mass is completed. Have I for once written *musique sacrée* [sacred music] or merely *sacrée musique* [damned music]? I was born to *opera buffa*, as You well know. Little skill, but some heart; that about sums it up. So blessed be Thou and grant me Paradise.

Drexel University’s Department of Performing Arts presents

# Rossini’s final masterpiece



## *Petite Messe Solennelle*

## The University Chorus Fairmount Chamber Orchestra

SARA JANE DUFFEY, SOPRANO

K. REBECCA OEHLERS, MEZZO-SOPRANO

PAUL VETRANO, TENOR

JAMES KIRK, BASS

STEVEN POWELL, CONDUCTOR



ANTOINETTE WESTPHAL  
COLLEGE OF MEDIA ARTS & DESIGN

Sunday, March 16, 2008

3:00 p.m.

Main Auditorium

## Program

*Petite Messe Solennelle* ..... Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)

### Kyrie

1. Kyrie (chorus)
2. Christe (chorus)
3. Kyrie (chorus)

### Gloria

4. Gloria (chorus)
5. Laudamus te (chorus, SATB soli)
6. Gratias (ATB soli)
7. Domine Deus (tenor solo)
8. Qui tollis (soprano, alto duet)
9. Quoniam tu solus (bass solo)
10. Cum Sancto Spiritu (chorus)

### Intermission (10 minutes)

### Credo

11. Credo (chorus, SATB soli)
12. Crucifixus (soprano solo)
13. Et resurrexit (chorus, SATB soli)
14. Et vitam venturi (chorus, SATB soli)

### Sanctus

15. Sanctus (chorus, SATB soli)

16. O Salutaris (soprano solo)

### Agnus Dei

17. Agnus Dei (chorus, alto solo)

SARA JANE DUFFEY, SOPRANO  
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FAIRMOUNT CHAMBER ORCHESTRA  
UNIVERSITY CHORUS

## Translation

*Kyrie:* Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us, Lord have mercy upon us.

*Gloria:* Glory be to God on high and on earth peace to men of good will. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, We adore Thee, we glorify Thee. We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory. O Lord God! O heavenly King! O God, the father Almighty! O Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son! O Lord God! Lamb of God! Son of the Father.

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

For Thou art Lord, Thou alone art most high, O Jesus Christ! together with the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the father. Amen.

*Credo:* I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of the Father before all ages. God of Gods, Light of Light, True God of true god; Begotten, not made; consubstantial to the father, by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our Salvation, came down from heaven,

[And] He became incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. He was crucified also for us; suffered death and was buried.

And on the third day He arose again according to the Scriptures. And He ascended into heaven, to sit at the right hand of the Father. And He is to come again, with glory to judge both the living and the dead; of whose kingdom there shall be no end. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord the Giver of life; Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who, with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified; Who spoke by the prophets. I believe in one baptism for remission of sins. And I expect the resurrection of the dead, And the life of the world to come. Amen.

*Sanctus:* Holy is the lord God Sabaoth. Heaven and earth ar full of Thy Glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

*O Salutaris:* O victim and salvation who opens wide the gate of heaven, we are oppressed by savage wars, give us your strength, bring us your aid.]

*Agnus Dei:* O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Grant us peace.

**Drexel Chorus**  
Dr. Steven Powell, director  
Brian Dilts, accompanist

**Soprano**

Jen Chesterson.....Graphic Design  
Christina Curreri ..... Engineering  
Charlotte DiGiorgio .....Architecture  
Elizabeth Gee ..... Music Industry  
Rachel Hudes ..... Nutrition and Food Science  
#Kristin Imhoff..... Mechanical Engineering & Mechanics  
Sozit Kurtu ..... Chemistry  
Emma Louth .....Culinary Arts  
Danielle Mayo..... Music Industry  
#Johanna Mikitka ..... Architectural & Civil Engineering  
#Marielle Octaviano.....Information Systems  
Katarzyna Pieklo ..... Information Technology  
Elizabeth Plowman ..... Electrical Engineering  
Sheena Pradhan .....Architecture  
Shefali Ramsinghani ..... Business Administration  
Julia Sickler ..... Entertainment & Arts Management  
Jamie Tijerina .....Biology/Pre-Med  
• Alison Toback.....Biology/Pre-Med  
Danielle Traitz.....Graphic Design  
Alicia Wise .....Health Sciences

**Alto**

Emily Bell.....Environmental Science  
Chrystina Cappello..... Architectural Engineering  
Holly Diegel .....Health Sciences  
Madison Eggert-Crowe ..... Political Science/Mathematics  
Michelle Krichilsky..... Music Industry  
Erica Louth ..... Interior Design  
Elaine Lubaszka ..... Fashion Design  
Anastasiya Maslova..... Business Administration  
Melissa Menago ..... Music Industry  
• Chelsea Meyer .....Graphic Design  
Audrey Simpkins .....Architecture  
Victoria Spellman ..... Teacher Education

**Tenor**

Sean Ballentine .....Mathematics  
David Humes ..... Music Industry  
Michael Jeffers ..... Engineering  
Shaun Kozlowski.....Computer Engineering  
Matthew Lesnak..... Computer Science

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David Humes ..... Music Industry  
Michael Jeffers ..... Engineering  
Shaun Kozlowski.....Computer Engineering  
Matthew Lesnak..... Computer Science

Michael Long ..... Film & Video  
 #Richard Price ..... Software Engineering  
 George Rogers ..... Digital Media  
 Alex Schiano ..... Psychology  
 #Brian Summers ..... Computer Science  
 Will Torgerson ..... Business Administration  
 Isaac Weber ..... Architecture

**Bass**

Zachary Brooks ..... Digital Media  
 Ray Canzanese ..... Computer Engineering  
 Mike Dalton ..... Computer Science  
 Nicholas Gioffre ..... Entertainment & Arts Management  
 Jonathan Greenblatt ..... Computer Engineering  
 Stephen Lombardelli ..... Music Industry  
 Steve Pribis ..... Civil Engineering  
 Zack Reph ..... Business Administration  
 Luke Rodgers ..... History  
 Devin Ruffner ..... Music Industry  
 Brandon Rutter ..... Music Industry  
 Stefan Seltz-Axmacher ..... Business Administration  
 Benjamin Smith ..... Mechanical Engineering  
 Levi Toback ..... Psychology  
 #Jeremy Toll ..... Music Industry  
 • #Matthew White ..... Mechanical Engineering and Mechanics  
 Brian Yi ..... Biological Sciences

- Section Leader
- # Pi Nu Epsilon Member

Michael Long ..... Film & Video  
 #Richard Price ..... Software Engineering  
 George Rogers ..... Digital Media  
 Alex Schiano ..... Psychology  
 #Brian Summers ..... Computer Science  
 Will Torgerson ..... Business Administration  
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## Fairmount Chamber Orchestra

|                 |   |                   |                                    |
|-----------------|---|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Violins:</b> | Taia Harlos<br>Youngah Suk<br>Federico Piantini<br>Daniela Pierson<br>Emily Guglielmi<br>Leah Kim | <b>Clarinets:</b> | Matthew M. Marsit<br>Erika Bliznik |
| <b>Violas:</b>  | Beth Dzwil<br>Gregory Lipscomb  | <b>Bassoons:</b>  | Ping Liang<br>Bing Li              |
| <b>Celli:</b>   | Ronald Lipscomb<br>Lynne Bieler   | <b>Trumpets:</b>  | Darin Kelly<br>Frank Ferraro       |
| <b>Bass:</b>    | Dennis Topper   | <b>Timpani:</b>   | Scott Bacon                        |
|                 |   | <b>Keyboard:</b>  | Brian Dilts                        |