



11 May 2011

I hope you're keeping snug and warm despite the early arrival of winter!

What a glorious start to the year we've had! First the Vivaldi/Fauré concert with the London Chorus; it was great to sing with a visiting overseas choir and – from a chorister's point of view – we found out how spoiled we are with Richard on the podium! Fauré's Requiem is a firm favourite with many, and the choir was on its best form. Just over two weeks later we were on stage again with the traditional Easter fare: Handel's Messiah. The house was totally sold out; we even had members of the audience sitting on stage. The Easter concerts are always hugely popular and, believe me, the fact that every last seat in the house is taken, helps balance the books for the rest of the year. The soloists were fabulous – you can look forward to hearing the great voices of Magdaleen Minnaar and Aubrey Lodewyk again in Rossini's Stabat Mater – personally I cannot wait! Of course we also performed the abbreviated version of Messiah on Mandela Square again this year to a huge crowd!

I hope you've enjoyed the concerts thus far as much as we have. It is thanks to your continued support, that we can put on concerts of this quality so *Thank You!*

Our next concerts will be 'paid gigs': Last Night of the Proms, which is a Lifeline fundraiser, on 28 & 29 May, and on 15 June we'll be singing Italian opera choruses at the Viva Verdi Festival at Monte Casino at the invitation of the Italian Embassy. As these concerts are not choir produced, we're not able to secure tickets for you through your sponsorship of the choir, but they're open to the public and we'd love to see you there.

Our next choir produced concert will take place 'in the bleak midwinter':

**July 17<sup>th</sup> @ 15.00 at the Linder Auditorium – Rossini: Stabat Mater**

'The Stabat Mater is to Rossini what the Requiem would be to Verdi, a unique full-scale religious setting which still seems to have its essence in the lyric theatre' says music critic David Doughty. Rossini actually came out of retirement to compose this wonderful work. The grief of Mary at the foot of the cross is beautifully portrayed in the music – but this is Rossini – and the Stabat Mater is also highly melodic and operatic in style.

The quite demanding solo parts will be taken by very accomplished singers: Soprano Magdaleen Minnaar, she has a fabulous voice and has already performed with the choir on a number of occasions; Mezzo-soprano Elizabeth Frandsen, a rising star in the Mezzo-soprano range; visiting Dutch tenor Bernhard Loonen; and the fantastic bass Aubrey Lodewyk whose rich voice is by now also well known to you. Booking for this concert is through Debbie (082 853 9709 or [scj@worldonline.co.za](mailto:scj@worldonline.co.za)) as usual. Don't miss it; it's going to be great!

I thank you once again for your continued support of the Choir. It is greatly appreciated!

Yours sincerely, on behalf of the Symphony Choir of Johannesburg,

*Kate Pope*

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