

35TH
ANNIVERSARY
SEASON



WALTON
**BELSHAZZAR'S
FEAST** VERDI
FOUR SACRED PIECES

**THE CITY OF GLASGOW CHORUS
ORCHESTRA OF SCOTTISH OPERA**

Colin Murray BARITONE Graham Taylor CONDUCTOR

**SUNDAY 3 JUNE 2018, 7.30PM
THE CITY HALLS, GLASGOW**

TICKETS: £14, £20, £22.50 (Students £10) **BOX OFFICE:** 0141 353 8000
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The City of Glasgow Chorus has built a reputation for tackling not only the more demanding works in the choral repertoire but also the seldom-heard works of mainstream composers. This concert ticks both boxes.

Verdi's *Quattro Pezzi Sacri – Four Sacred Pieces* was his last composition before his death in 1901. Anyone listening to this work for the first time will detect Verdi's trademark composition style throughout.

Although the *Four Sacred Pieces* were published together, Verdi did not intend that they should be performed together as they will be at this concert. Both the *Ave Maria* (first movement) and *Laudi alla Vergine Maria* (third movement) are unaccompanied with the second and fourth movements – the *Stabat Mater* and *Te Deum* performed with full orchestra.

In complete contrast, William Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* is scored for double choir, baritone soloist and large orchestra, augmented by two brass ensembles, which for this performance will be located high above the orchestra, on the rear balconies of the City Hall.

The story is told of the young William Walton, who had been commissioned to write a large choral work for the Leeds Festival in 1931, seeking advice from Sir Thomas Beecham. Walton pointed out to Sir Thomas that, as they would be performing Berlioz *Requiem* with its extra brass bands in the same festival, should he use these additional forces also. "Why not?" was the reply. "You'll never hear the work again." How wrong could Sir Thomas Beecham have been in this absurdly inaccurate prediction!

Belshazzar's Feast – a great choral work – is now firmly established in the mainstream choral repertoire.

It lasts a mere 35 minutes and transports the audience at high speed through the biblical story of the lamentations of the Jews exiled in Babylon, describes the Feast in detail when Belshazzar dares to use the Jews' sacred vessels to praise his heathen gods. Belshazzar is spooked by strange writing on the wall which is interpreted by his captive Daniel, who tells him his days are numbered for his blasphemous acts. Belshazzar is slain, his kingdom divided, and the Jews are liberated.

