**CARMINA COMICA**

**THE ANTIDOTE TO CHORAL CANTATAS**

**The original lyrics which Colin Sell has set to music in the Cantata**

**SONG 1: ALL HAIL AND THUNDER**

**TUTTI**

**Laudate!**

**MEN**

**Laudate, laudate, laudate chorum!**

**Laudemus deorum!**

**Laudemus omnes! Laudemus omnes!**

**Laudemus! Laudemus! Laudemus! Laudemus! Laude –**

**WOMEN**

**Ye gods! It’s loud enough, ‘laudes’ are loud enough,**

**Keep the noise low, low, low, low!**

**While the audience takes a seat!**

**MEN**

**Hail to those children of Chief God, Zeus’s,**

**Harmonious Apollo and the nine little Muses,**

**Hail to the Muses, hail!**

**WOMEN**

**Hail, witty Comus, and doleful Melpomene,**

**Prancing Terpsichore and epic Calliope.**

**SOLO**

**Searching the sky is wide-eyed Urania,**

**SOLO**

**Laughing her socks off is mirthful**

**WOMEN**

**Mirthful**

**SOLO**

**Mirthful**

**WOMEN**

**Mirthful Thalia, ha, ha ha!**

**MEN**

**There’s Erato the erotic**

**Strutting and rutting, rutting,**

**SOLO**

**While holy Polyminia glares,**

**Muttering**

**BASSES**

**Muttering**

**SOLO**

**And tutting.**

**BASSES**

**Muttering, tut-tut-tutting.**

**SOLO**

**Clio’s out on the fringe**

**SOLO**

**Out on the fringe**

**SOLO**

**Goddess of history,**

**TENORS**

**Why she is there**

**BASSES**

**Is a bit of a mystery.**

**WOMEN**

**Then around the margins more gods lounge,**

**Gods who encourage and inspire,**

**Looking for some songs to scrounge –**

**Hail to the Muses,**

**Hail to the Muses,**

**Hail to th’Immortal Choir!**

**SOLO**

**Not knowing which way –**

**SOLO**

**Not knowing which way –**

**SOLO**

**Not knowing which way –**

**SOLO**

**Not knowing which way to look**

**TUTTI**

**Is Janus, Janus,**

**MEN**

**Peering through his eyes or through his**

**Peering through his eyes or through his**

**TENORS**

**Peering through his eyes or through –**

**BASSES**

**Peering through his eyes or through**

**MEN**

**His –**

**WOMEN**

**Bacchus, Bacchus!**

**Dear Bacchus hale and hearty,**

**Life and soul of the heavenly party!**

**Laude! Laudate!**

**And all that other stuff.**

**We’d laud more gods but we think enough’s enough.**

**MEN  
Laudate, laudate -**

**WOMEN**

**No, we’d ‘laud’ more gods but we think**

**TUTTI**

**Enough’s enough.**

**SOLO**

**So, hail to the Muses,**

**WOMEN**

**Fa la la la, fa la la, fa la la, fa la la**

**SOLO TENOR**

**Hail to the Muses,**

**MEN**

**Doobt dooby, dooby-doo, dooby-doo, dooby-doo**

**TUTTI**

**Harmonious**

**WOMEN**

**Chorum!**

**MEN**

**Laudate!**

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**SSONG 2: UP THE STAVES**

**TUTTI**

**We’ve done now with gods, muses and sages,**

**Ready to trace choral singing through the ages.**

**Some say it all began**

**With German Georg Telemann;**

**Others point to Giovanni (Joe\*) Palestrina,**

**By one hundred years Telemann’s senior,**

**Who, along with Monteverdi (Claudio Monteverdi) and his mates in the Vatican**

**Wooed us all in classical Latin.**

**Which wouldn’t matter, not a single jot,**

**But alas, they sang in Latin rather a lot.**

**MEN**

**So, not to be coy or the least bit sheepish,**

**WOMEN**

**Here is a song in Latin**

**MEN  
And English.**

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**SONG 3 – QUIS DEDIT? QUIS DIDIT?**

**TUTTI**

**Hello, audience, we’re your chorus.**

**We sing together with infectious relish,**

**In ancient Latin or just plain English,**

**Masses, requiems….. .. a Christmas oratorio**

**Or even ‘*Harpic With Pan’* or ‘*Ribena In Tesco’***

**Anything at all that does not bore us,**

**Because we are your reliable classy chorus.**

**Nunc Vecum telle abut Caesar Julius.**

**RANSLATOR *(very BBC Radio 1950s, pomp and pedantry)***

**Now we come to tell ye about Caesar Julius.**

**TUTTI  
O Caesar Julio! Caesar Julio!**

**O misere, O elatio!**

**Tellus, O tellus Julius historia.**

**TRANSLATOR**

**Tell us, tell us the story of Julius.**

**TUTTI**

**Tell us of Brutus unde gloriosa Gloria.**

**TRANSLATOR**

**Tell us of Brutus and glorious Gloria.**

**TUTTI**

**Caesar adsum iam forte –**

**TRANSLATOR**

**Caesar had some jam for tea –**

**TUTTI**

**Dum Brutus aderat.**

**TRANSLATOR**

**Dumb Brutus had a rat.**

**WOMEN**

**Iam forte?**

**MEN**

**Aderat!**

**TUTTI**

**Gloria forte et possum curre –**

**TRANSLATOR**

**Gloria for tea ate possum curry –**

**TUTTI**

**Plus extra totarum.**

**TRANSLATOR *(by now feeling the whole matter is beneath his dignity)***

**Plus extra tot of rum.**

**WOMEN**

**Totarum?**

**MEN *(enthusiastically)***

**Tot of rum!**

**WOMEN**

**Tellus more**

**–**

**TRANSLATOR**

**Tell us more –**

**WOMEN**

**Tellus feste –**

**TRANSLATOR**

**Tell us fast –**

**WOMEN**

**Tellus lauda, lauda, lauda, lauda…**

**TUTTI**

**Gloria mundi sic in transit, sic, sic, sic in transit.**

***(Car horn)***

**Caesar sic, Caesar sic, Caesar sic in omnibus.**

***(Bus bell or someone shouts “Ting! Ting!”)***

**Sed Brutus, sed Brutus, sed Brutus sic, sic Brutus indicat.**

***(Cat impersonator calls “Miao! Miao”!)***

**Gloria sed, Gloria sed super Caesar cadaver bonus.**

***(Jingling of many money bags)***

**MEN**

**Sed dum Brutus iusta agrunt –**

**TRANSLATOR**

**Said dumb Brutus just a grunt –**

**WOMEN**

**Gloria putabit ergo interim!**

**TRANSLATOR**

**Gloria, put a bit of go into him!**

**TUTTI**

**Quid effectus? Quid finis?**

**Hic, haec, hoc – vae victis!**

**WOMEN**

**Gloria iusta didit –**

**MEN**

**Brutus fixit –**

**WOMEN**

**Caesar dedit.**

**TRANSLATOR**

**Gloria just did it, Brutus fixed it, Caesar was - er - deaded.**

**TUTTI**

**Historia nunc est finis, nunc historia finis est.**

**TRANSLATOR  
The story now is finished, now the story finished is.**

**TUTTI**

**O mi, O mae, dedit Caesar!**

**O misere! O elatio! Finis, finis historia!**

**TRANSLATOR *(still dead-pan)***

**O woe. Yet, O joy. Finished is the story.**

**TUTTI**

**Fortuna!**

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**SONG 4 THE BUZZING OF THE BEES**

**SOPRANOS**

**Beginners were shaken and then overtaken**

**By the massive success of Bach, of Bach, Bach J. S.,**

**TUTTI**

**Maestro supremo, capo stupendo.**

**TUTTI**

**Now came Haydn, now came Haydn,**

**Then came Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart,**

**None more eminent in life’s fine beaux arts,**

**Spurning Latin, spurning Latin;**

**Wrote instead not in Eye-tye**

**But in Gothic very high German,**

**High German.**

***(During the following extended piano/orchestral piece, which dribbles on in ‘For Unto Us a Child is Born’ mode, the Choir look bored, sitting or wandering around, consulting their watches occasionally. At a point near the end they all quickly get into their standing positions, and focus.)***

**BARITONE SOLO**

**Then arrived Georg Frid’ric Handel.**

**Handel was his name, and portable his game;**

**Handel was his handle.**

**He was king of all cantatas**

**And of serenatas,**

**Colossus of odes**

**And all other modes.**

**TUTTI**

**Georg proved himself so very savvy,**

**Getting himself buried in the Abbey.**

**Then a great buzzing of Bees arose:**

**Behold Beethoven, Brahms and Berlioz,**

**Making the rest of ‘em look like asses**

**With masses of operas –**

**SOPRANO SOLO**

**Ah ha ha ha ha ha ha!**

**TUTTI**

**And masses of masses!**

**Verdi, Verdi, and Gounod!**

**Oh, all those requiems by jolly old Berlioz**

**Dvorak, Fauré and Brahms!**

**As did the fervour and dulcet tone**

**Of choral chaps like Mendelssohn,**

**Lifting spirits, pulling heart strings,**

**MEN**

**Elevating misery,**

**WOMEN**

**Giving woe wings –**

**MEN**

**Giving woe wings –**

**TUTTI**

**But laughter and humour, find them if you can;**

**Yes, they’re out there –**

**Gilbert and Sullivan.**

**MALE SOLO**

**They never turned their genius to oratorios long and hard,**

**They never did grand opera or ‘Hallelujah’ by the yard.**

**TUTTI**

**They never turned their genius to oratorios long and hard,**

**They never did grand opera or ‘Hallelujah’ by the yard.**

**FEMALE SOLO**

**Money, there’s money,**

**There’s far more cash in operetta, that’s for sure.**

**TUTTI**

**Money, there’s money,**

**MALE SOLO**

**There’s money, more money,**

**So, Gilly and Sully**

**Wrote *Gondoliers, Pinafore* and *Ruddigore.***

**TUTTI**

***Gondoliers, Pinafore* and *Ruddigore.***

**FEMALE SOLO**

**Witty operettas they wrote by the score!**

**TUTTI *(very warmly and with smiles)***

**The nineteenth century ended**

**Before twelve-tone had struck –**

***(Discordant phrase from piano/orchestra. Choir look horrified. Then back to warm and smiley singing)***

**Choirs lived in a paradise,**

**Choirs didn’t know their luck.**

**They couldn’t see the future**

**And what the future would bring –**

***(More and longer discordant stuff from the accompaniment. Choir wince. Then back to warm and smiley singing)***

**Little did they know –**

**Little did they know –**

**Little did they know –**

**Little did they know –**

***(The gentle ‘Jesu Joy’-type intro of the whole song is re-introduced. Then the Choir sing a rather atonal phrase)***

**What they’d be called upon to**

**Sing!**

**Sing!**

**Sing!**

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**SONG 5 RULE AND MISRULE**

**TUTTI**

**The Twentieth Century was a big surprise,**

**So farewell to Elgar and all those other guys;**

***Land of Hope and Glory* you’re deceased!**

**Now William Walton’s *Belshazzar* has a feast!**

**MEN *(shout)***

**Slain!**

**WOMEN**

**Twenty-first Century sees us pay the price**

**With melody all put on ice.**

**And what of women? Women are rare –**

**The list’s about as long as *Widdicombe Fair*:**

**Sally Beamish, Florence Price,**

**Janet Wheeler, Amy Beach…**

***(Trying to think)* Mmm…**

**And Dame Ethel Smyth DBE,**

**And Dame Ethel Smyth DBE**

**In her hat.**

**MEN *(boisterously)***

**Goodnight, ladies! Here come the musical knights!**

**Sir Benjamin Britten and his *War Requiem*,**

**Sir Ralphy Vaughan Williams went all choral now and then;**

**Your hat, you have to tip it**

**To valiant Sir Michael Tippett:**

***Child of Our Time* was an epic and a half,**

**An ast-er-ological laugh.**

***(Cynically)* Ha! Ha!**

**TUTTI**

**Then, crossing cultures, all flags unfurled,**

**We sing the Caribbean, we sing the world…**

***(Accompaniment goes into a sort of calypso over which CHOIR shout any random foreign words and make any random foreign sounds)***

**What a rich mix chorally!**

**See our happy clique!**

**Without choral music**

**We’d be up the creek!**

**We are pigs in chiffon,**

**Overflows our cup;**

**Such a great tradition,**

**How to sum it up?**

**Always we’ll be multi-chorical,**

**Be it pop or soul, sad or comical;**

**Ditties hysterical and historical,**

**Biographical, mythological;**

**Hymns liturgical and shanties sociological –**

**Something for everyone to sing,**

**Let’s hear those vocalists do their thing!**

**Voices of beauty,**

**Fa la la la la,**

**Let’s have tutti frutti**

**Carmina Comica!**

**Ah….**

***(As big finish is reached CHOIR produce as if from nowhere party poppers and squeakers and anything else equally celebratory and silly and let them loose on the last chord of the accompaniment.)***

**END**

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