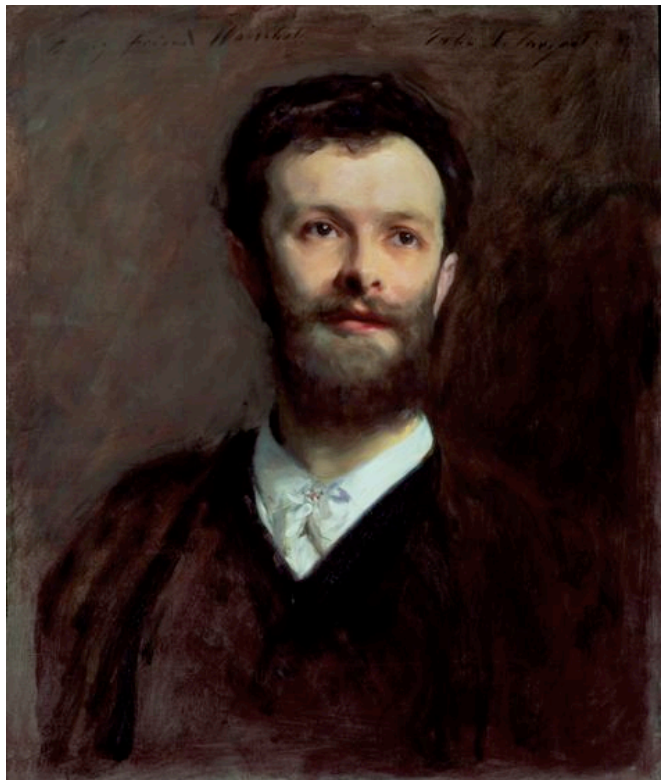

WHAT WE SING

at Saint Bartholomew's

No. 7 **Tantum ergo**

by George Henschel (1850 – 1934)

sung on Thursday 11 June 2009 by the boys and men



WHAT WE SING is a scheme that is designed to enhance and complement the music sung by the church choirs throughout the year. We hope that it will help the whole church community to achieve a greater understanding and appreciation of the music that is heard each Sunday. It will also form an integral part of the education and training of the boy and girl choristers, helping them to understand what they are singing about and to discover the lives and stories behind the music itself.

The hope is that **contributions** will be forthcoming from many different people within the church community. We'll always be delighted to hear from those who wish to write an article for the series. Please contact Fraser Wilson or Fr Andrew McCroskery if you would like to know more.

You can find current music lists and details of future issues on the table at the back of church and also on the internet at www.stbartholomews.ie. Past issues are archived there, too.

Forthcoming issues

Sunday 28 June: *Pearsall* Tu es Petrus

Tantum ergo

by George Henschel (1850 – 1934)

sung on Thursday 11 June 2009 by the boys and men

by Tim Thurston

The composer of this Eucharistic motet was born of Jewish/Polish parents in former Breslau in Prussia – now Wroclaw, Poland – in 1850 as Isador Georg Henschel. After studies in Leipzig and Berlin he began a successful career as a baritone, a pianist and conductor. He sang the part of Hans Sachs in Wagner's *Meistersingers* at the age of 18. In 1875 he sang

in a Bach *St Matthew Passion* under Brahms and they became close friends. Moving to Boston two years later it was his conducting which claimed attention and in 1881 he became the first conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. After three seasons he moved to England where he conducted, performed and in 1886 became Professor of Singing at the Royal College of Music in London. He was renowned for his concerts where he accompanied himself on piano while singing Lieder (a 1928 recording is available on CD). His compositions included three operas, 20 piano pieces and many songs, a Requiem Mass in eight parts (in memory of his first wife, American soprano, Lillian Bailey) and a *Stabat Mater*. He became a British citizen in 1890 and was knighted in 1914. He gave a Schubert recital at the age of 78 and continued conducting well into his 80s. He was a proficient painter, wrote a memoir of Brahms and had a great love of Scotland – he died in 1934 at his holiday home in Aviemore in Scotland.

Little of his music is currently available. *Tantum ergo* is published by Cathedral Music and I have tracked down two recordings, one from 1993 by the choir of All Saints' Margaret Street (the famous Anglo-Catholic church in London, source of our red Psalters) on Priory Records and a lovely 2002 compilation by St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh on Delphian which also includes a number of other Bart's favourites.

'*Tantum ergo sacramentum*' are the opening words of the final two verses of the great hymn 'Pange Lingua', written in the thirteenth century by St Thomas Aquinas and traditionally sung during veneration and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

The men begin with a gentle verse in five parts....

Tantum ergo Sacramentum veneremur cernui:

Therefore we, before him bending, this great sacrament revere:

Et antiquum documentum novo cedat ritui:

Types and shadows have their ending, for the newer rite is here:

Praestet fides supplementum sensuum defectui.

Faith, our outward sense befriending, makes the inward vision clear.

The basses start the second verse strongly joined first by the organ, then the full choir, ending with a majestic chorus of praise:

Genitori, Genitoque, laus et jubilatio,

Glory let us give and blessing to the Father and the Son,

Salus, honor, virtus quoque sit et benedictio:

Honour, might, and praise addressing while eternal ages run:

Procedenti ab utroque compare sit laudatio. Amen.

Ever too his love confessing, who from both with both is one. Amen.