

Westminster Abbey



A SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING
FOR THE LIFE AND WORK OF
DAME JOAN SUTHERLAND OM AC DBE
1926–2010

‘La Stupenda’

Tuesday 15 February 2011
Noon

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

In February 1959 Covent Garden staged a new production of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*; and a star was born. Overnight, Joan Sutherland achieved international fame, and her Lucia was in demand everywhere. Her success though had not come instantly, but was the result of years of hard work and preparation. After her debut at Covent Garden in 1952, in the relatively minor role of First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, she had sung with the company for seven seasons in a wide variety of roles, only some of which pointed to the glories that were still to come.

Joan had sung from childhood. Her mother had a fine mezzo-soprano voice and, each day, while she practised, Joan sat at her side absorbing the music. But it was the acute ear of her husband, Richard Bonynghe, which recognised she was not a mezzo-soprano like her mother, nor the dramatic soprano of general belief. He realised that she was blessed with a much rarer gift for the nineteenth-century romantic bel canto repertory. He encouraged her, pushed her, and guided her to develop that talent: it is no wonder that Joan described him as the 'architect' of her career.

Within a few years of her triumph in *Lucia di Lammermoor* Joan's repertory exploded as she breathed new life into the music of Handel, Bellini, and Rossini. After a performance of Handel's *Alcina* in Venice she was dubbed 'La Stupenda', and went on to make such an indelible impression on her chosen repertory that her name became synonymous with some operas.

As she sang the great bel canto roles of Elvira in *I puritani*, Amina in *La sonnambula*, of Norma, Semiramide, and Esclarmonde, among others, with many of her greatest contemporaries, she captivated audiences in opera houses and concert halls around the world. Her voice was unique, distinctive, instantly recognisable, and generated the excitement in the theatre that is the hallmark of a truly great singer.

Throughout a career spanning four decades she remained refreshingly unspoiled by all the acclaim. She truly deserved the respect and affection of those with whom she worked and they revered her quiet confidence and naturalness, her sense of fun and absolute dedication to her art.

A vast legacy of recordings documents her career more accurately than that of any earlier singer. She set a yardstick for excellence and her voice lives on to delight and impress generations to come.

She was born with a God-given talent and shared it generously with the world.

Dame Norma Major DBE



Members of the congregation are kindly requested to refrain from using private cameras, video, or sound recording equipment. Please ensure that mobile phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are switched off.

The service is conducted by The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster.

The service is sung by the Choir of Westminster Abbey, conducted by James O'Donnell, Organist and Master of the Choristers.

The organ is played by Robert Quinney, Sub-Organist.

The soprano is Valda Wilson. She is a member of the Junges Ensemble, Sächsische Staatsoper, Semperoper Dresden, and has been supported in her studies by the Australian Music Foundation and the Tait Memorial Trust, among others.

The two recordings of Dame Joan Sutherland are played with the kind permission of Decca Records.

Music before the service:

James McVinnie, Assistant Organist, plays:

Fantasia *William Byrd (c 1540–1623)*

*Allein Gott in der Hoh
sei Ehr BWV 663* *Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)*

Canzona from Sonata in C minor *Percy Whitlock (1903–46)*

The Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, conducted by Antonio Pappano, plays:

Overture and Pastoral Symphony *George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)*
from Messiah *arranged by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91)*

Overture from Alcina *George Frideric Handel*

Prelude to Act 1 from La traviata *Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)*

Meditation from Thaïs *Jules Massenet (1842–1912)*
Vasko Vassilev, violin

The Lord Mayor of Westminster is received at the Great West Door by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster and conducted to her place in Quire. All stand, and then sit.

An organ fanfare is sounded. All stand.

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, representing Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, is received by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster and conducted to his place in Quire.

ORDER OF SERVICE

All remain standing. The Choir sings

THE INTROIT

SING joyfully unto God our strength: sing loud unto the God of Jacob.
Take the song, and bring forth the timbrel: the pleasant harp, and the viol.

Blow the trumpet in the new moon: even in the time appointed, and at our feast-day.

For this is a statute for Israel: and a law of the God of Jacob.

William Byrd

Psalm 81: 1-4

All sing

THE HYMN

*during which the Collegiate Procession
moves to places in the Quire and Sacrarium*



HOW shall I sing that majesty
which angels do admire?
Let dust in dust and silence lie;
sing, sing ye heavenly choir.
Thousands of thousands stand around
thy throne, O God most high;
ten thousand times ten thousand sound
thy praise; but who am I?

Thy brightness unto them appears,
whilst I thy footsteps trace;
a sound of God comes to my ears,
but they behold thy face.
They sing because thou art their Sun;
Lord, send a beam on me;
for where heaven is but once begun
there alleluias be.

Enlighten with faith's light my heart,
in flame it with love's fire;
then shall I sing and bear a part
with that celestial choir.
I shall, I fear, be dark and cold,
with all my fire and light;
yet when thou dost accept their gold,
Lord, treasure up my mite.

How great a being, Lord, is thine,
which doth all beings keep!
Thy knowledge is the only line
to sound so vast a deep.
Thou art a sea without a shore,
a sun without a sphere;
thy time is now and evermore,
thy place is everywhere.

Coe Fen 466 CP
Ken Naylor (1931–91)

373 NEH
John Mason (c 1646–94)

All remain standing. The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster, says

THE BIDDING

LA Stupenda, with the Voice of the Century, a voice like heaven, Joan Sutherland was a *prima donna*, a star for over fifty years. The symbols of her Companionship of the Order of Australia, of her Damehood of the Order of the British Empire, and of her Order of Merit to be offered at the high altar will represent what cannot be shown: the joy and love of her audiences and the admiration of her colleagues.

We come to remember her remarkable gifts. We pray for those who follow now in her footsteps, as we celebrate their gifts and the pleasure they bring to so many. We pray for the people of Australia, remembering in particular those who are homeless and dispossessed, suffering and mourning, as a result of flood, bushfire, and tornado.

Above all, as we listen once again to her stupendous voice, we give thanks to almighty God, the giver of all good gifts.

All remain standing for

LET THE BRIGHT SERAPHIM *from* SAMSON

sung by

Dame Joan Sutherland OM AC DBE
with the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House,
Harry Dilley, trumpet, conducted by Francesco Molinari-Pradelli

during which Vanya Bonyngé bears the insignia of the Order of Merit, the Companion, Order of Australia, and the Dame Commander; Order of the British Empire, through the Abbey to the High Altar

LET the bright Seraphim, in burning row,
their loud, uplifted angel-trumpets blow.
Let the cherubic host, in tuneful choirs,
touch their immortal harps with golden wires.

George Frideric Handel
from Samson Act 3; Scene III

after John Milton (1608–74)

The Dean says:

O ALMIGHTY and everliving God, whose worship is the delight of the cherubim and seraphim: as we offer thee hearty thanks for thy servant Joan, and praise thee for her gifts and artistry, we pray that thou wouldest welcome her to thy heavenly kingdom where she may join in the songs of the redeemed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All sit. Valda Wilson, soprano, and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, conducted by Antonio Pappano, perform:

Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis sempiternam requiem.
Holy Lord Jesu, grant them everlasting rest.

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)
from Messe de Requiem Op 48

All remain seated. Dame Norma Major DBE reads

1 SAMUEL 16: 14–23

THE spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me. Then answered one of the servants, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him. Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep. And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul. And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armour-bearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight. And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand; so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

CASTA DIVA *from* NORMA

sung by

Dame Joan Sutherland OM AC DBE

with Richard Cross, bass-baritone, the London Symphony Orchestra and
Chorus, conducted by Richard Bonynges AO CBE

CASTA diva, che inargenti
Queste sacre, queste sacre antiche piante,
A noi volgi il bel sembiante
Senza nube e senza vel.
Tempra tu de' cori ardenti,
Tempra ancor lo zelo audace.
Spargi in terra quella pace
Che regnar tu fai nel ciel,

*Chaste goddess, you who silver
these ancient, holy trees,
turn upon us thy fair face,
unclouded and unveiled!
Temper these burning hearts,
temper too their rash zeal.
Spread upon Earth that peace,
that due to thee reigns in Heaven.*

*Vincenzo Bellini (1801–35)
from Norma Act I; Scene IV*

Felice Romani (1788–1865)

Richard Bonyngre AO CBE reads

COLOSSIANS 3: 12–17

PUT on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Valda Wilson and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, conducted by Antonio Pappano, perform

ALLELUIA

*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
from Exsultate jubilate K 165*

THE ADDRESS

by

Sir John Tooley
*General Director, Royal Opera House
1970–88*

All remain seated. The Choir sings

THE ANTHEM

LET all the world in every corner sing,
my God and King!
The heavens are not too high,
his praise may thither fly;
the earth is not too low,
his praises there may grow.
Let all the world in every corner sing,
my God and King!
The Church with psalms must shout,
no door can keep them out;
but above all the heart
must bear the longest part.

Let all the world in every corner sing,
my God and King!

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)
from Five Mystical Songs

George Herbert (1593–1633)

All kneel or remain seated. The Reverend Dr James Hawkey, Minor Canon of Westminster, introduces

THE PRAYERS

IN thanksgiving, let us offer our prayers to the Father.

His Excellency John Dauth AO LVO, High Commissioner for Australia, says:

We give thanks for Joan's humanity, as well as her supreme talent and artistry; for her gift of communication, and for her commitment to her audiences throughout the world.

Let us bless the Lord;

thanks be to God.

Elaine Padmore, Director of Opera, The Royal Opera, says:

We give thanks for Joan's ability to open up the treasures of great operatic repertoire; for her gift of interpretation and characterisation, and for her devotion to the Royal Opera House.

Let us bless the Lord;

thanks be to God.

Heather de Haes, International Director, Australia Music Foundation, says:

We give thanks for the magnificent example Joan gave to younger artists and for the inspiration and support she gave her colleagues; for her ability to challenge, console, and comfort through the music she made.

Let us bless the Lord;

thanks be to God.

Ruth Sutherland says:

We give thanks for Joan's family life; for her love and support as a wife, mother, grandmother, and aunt; for her staunch gift of friendship and loyalty to those she loved.

Let us bless the Lord;

thanks be to God.

Isla Baring, Chair, Tait Memorial Trust, says:

We give thanks for Joan's support of young musicians; for the encouragement she gave to many artists at the early stages of their careers, and for her enrichment of lives both on and off the stage.

Let us bless the Lord;

thanks be to God.

The Reverend Robert Reiss, Canon in Residence, says:

We give thanks for the gift of music; for those who compose and craft great art, and for all performers whose talents move us to contemplate the mystery and wonder of God's love in creation and redemption.

Let us bless the Lord;

thanks be to God.

The Minor Canon concludes:

As we offer these praises, let us commend to the Lord all young musicians and their benefactors; our shared cultural heritage and those who maintain it; and all whose lives have been devastated by natural disaster in Queensland, Perth, and Victoria, therefore let us pray for the coming of God's kingdom in the words our Saviour Christ taught us:

OUR Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

All stand to sing

THE HYMN



GLORIOUS things of thee are spoken,
Sion, city of our God;
he whose word cannot be broken
formed thee for his own abode:
On the rock of ages founded,
what can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,
thou may'st smile at all thy foes.

See, the streams of living waters,
springing from eternal love,
well supply thy sons and daughters,
and all fear of want remove:
Who can faint, while such a river
ever flows their thirst to assuage?
Grace, which like the Lord the giver,
never fails from age to age.

Saviour, if of Sion's city
I through grace a member am,
let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in thy name:
Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
all his boasted pomp and show;
solid joys and lasting treasure
none but Sion's children know.

Abbot's Leigh 185 NEH
Cyril Taylor (1907–91)

362 NEH
John Newton (1725–1807)

All remain standing. The Dean pronounces

THE BLESSING

GOD grant to the living, grace; to the departed, rest; to the Church, The Queen, the Commonwealth, and all mankind peace and concord, and to us sinners, life everlasting; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

All sing

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

G OD save our gracious Queen. Long live our noble Queen. God save The Queen. Send her victorious, happy and glorious, long to reign over us: God save The Queen.	Thy choicest gifts in store on her be pleased to pour, long may she reign. May she defend our laws, and ever give us cause to sing with heart and voice, God save The Queen.
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Music after the service:

The organist plays:

Sinfonia *from* Wir danken dir, Gott BWV 29 *Johann Sebastian Bach*
arranged by Marcel Dupré (1886–1971)

Fantasia and Fugue in G Op 188 *Hubert Parry (1848–1918)*

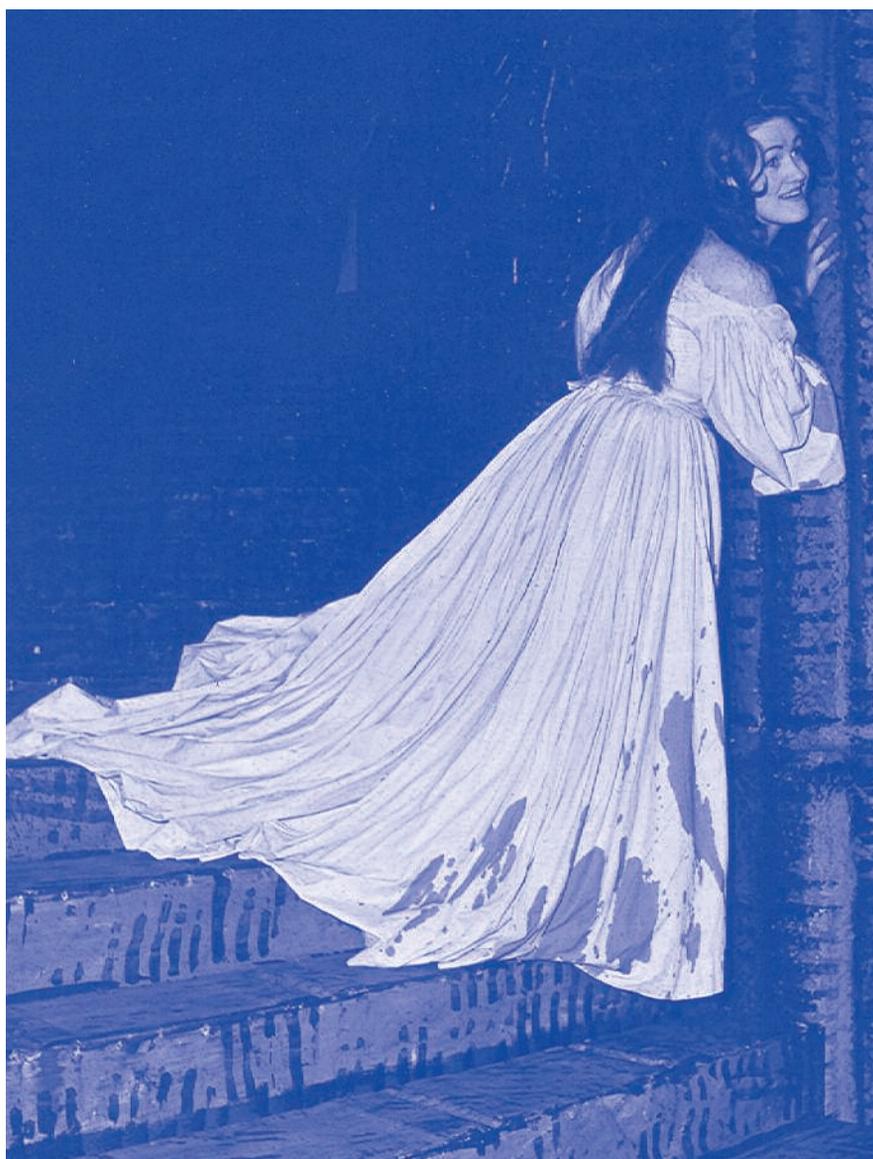
All remain standing as the Collegiate Procession, together with His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, moves to the west end of the church.

Members of the Congregation are requested to remain in their places until invited to move by the Stewards.

The bells of the Abbey Church are rung.

There will be a retiring collection in aid of the work of the Royal Opera House Benevolent Fund, the Australian Music Foundation, and the Tait Memorial Trust.

Today's service would not have been possible without the munificence of the Royal Opera House, the Australian High Commission, and the Australian Music Foundation, to whom Dame Joan's family and friends extend their heartfelt thanks.



Joan Sutherland, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Royal Opera House, 1959

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