The ‘Little Solemn Mass’ that’s neither little nor solemn

When in 1863 the renowned Italian composer Gioachino Rossini wrote his Petit Messe Solennelle, he was a 71-year-old man looking to secure his entry into the next world.

The result is an affecting piece of music written for soloists, chorus, two pianos and a harmonium that is full of beauty and drama, with tender arias and glorious fugues, drawn together by the composer’s trademark melodiousness.

But the famously witty composer of comic operas such as The Barber of Seville couldn’t resist a little joke in his preface to the score. “Good God – behold completed this poor little Mass,” Rossini wrote. “Is it indeed music for the blessed that I have just written, or just some blessed music? Thou knowest well, I was born for comic opera. A little science, a little heart, that is all. So bless thee and grant me Paradise!”

Rossini’s Petit Messe Solennelle will be performed in the Music Auditorium of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts on July 30 at 7.30pm by the Academy’s Vocal students.

This important piece of sacred music, written by a man who is remembered for his immense contribution to the Italian operatic repertoire, is notable for its overtly operatic style.

“Rossini’s Petit Messe Solennelle, or Little Solemn Mass, is neither little nor solemn but lots of fun with the most beautiful music to sing,” says Patricia Price, WAAPA’s Coordinator of Vocal Studies. “All of WAAPA’s Vocal students – from first to postgraduate years – will sing in the concert under conductor Micheál McCarthy, so this promises to be a performance of great energy and classy sounds.”

Performance Information: Petit Messe Solennelle by Rossini
Thursday 30 July at 7.30pm.
Music Auditorium, WAAPA, Edith Cowan University, 2 Bradford St, Mt Lawley.
Tickets are $20 full/$15 concession. Bookings through WAAPA Box Office on 9370 6636.

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To secure complimentary tickets to this concert or for further information, interviews or photo opportunities, please contact:
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