

Two great male choirs combine for Cherubini

SWANSEA is certainly stepping off the well-trodden Handelian highway of oratorio. Last week I was able to tell you of the preparations for the performance in Holy Week of Bach's St. John Passion by the Swansea Philharmonic Choir in St. Mary's Church. Now there's news of a performance of Cherubini's Mass in B minor.

This is a BBC enterprise, and for it the two leading Welsh male choirs, the Morriston Orpheus and the Treorchy, will join forces, with the B.B.C. Welsh Orchestra, to record the work for broadcasting in St. Mary's Church on Saturday of next week.

The recording will be made from 7 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. and admission is by ticket, for which application should be made to the Vicar of Swansea, Canon H. C. Williams, or at the church.

A large number of tickets are available, and I would say that with these two fine choirs singing this noble though little-known work it will be a very notable musical experience.

Great Requiem

THIS is the 200th anniversary of the birth of Cherubini, who, of course, was an Italian but who from his late twenties until his death at the age of 81 lived and worked mostly in Paris. He wrote a number of operas which were hugely successful in his day, and Beethoven declared he was the greatest living writer of music for the stage, but hardly a note of them survives today.

But for the last 30 years of his life Cherubini devoted himself to music for the church and to chamber music. He wrote 11 settings to the Mass and crowned his achievements with a great Requiem in C minor.

He was a master of counterpoint and the last composer in

the long and illustrious Italian classical tradition which embraced such names as Handel, Gluck and Mozart.

He was, in fact, a link between that 18th century school and the French composers of the first half of the 19th century, most of whom he trained, for from 1822 until his death he was inspector-general of the Paris conservatoire.