

LONDON
CONCORD
SINGERS

PURCELL ROOM

**FRIDAY, March 3rd, 1972
7.30 pm**

Programme 10p

LONDON CONCORD SINGERS

MALCOLM COTTLE Conductor

DAVID JOHNSTON Tenor

NICHOLAS HAMBLIN Alto

BRITTEN

Choral Dances from Gloria

Winter Words

Five Flower Songs

Ballad of Little Musgrave
and Lady Barnard

Canticle II : Abraham and Isaac

Hymn to St. Cecilia

Greater London Council

PURCELL ROOM

Director : John Denison CBE

LONDON CONCORD SINGERS was started in its present form in 1966. It consists of amateur singers who wish to strive towards a high standard of performance of all types of choral music, although due to its comparatively small size (approximately 30 voices) it is not able to attempt some of the larger scale works. The choir has won prizes at Eisteddfodau and has travelled to the Montreux International Choral Festival, where it won a major prize competing against choirs from all over Europe. In 1969 the choir went to Yugoslavia where it performed during the Dubrovnik Summer Festival. During last season the choir gave performances in many parts of the country, including Richmond, Buxton and Walkern in Hertfordshire, besides giving a concert at St. Martin in the Fields and winning three classes in the Brent Festival.

The conductor of the choir, MALCOLM COTTLE, sang for many years as a boy with the choir of St. Pauls Cathedral, during which time he sang at the Coronation of the Queen, and also toured the U.S.A. with them. More recently, as well as conducting the London Concord Singers, he has worked as repetiteur with the New Opera Company at Sadlers Wells Theatre, and also toured as Musical Director with the show 'Close the Coalhouse Door'. He was also Musical Director for the 1970 Christmas Season at Sheffield Playhouse Theatre.

DAVID JOHNSTON began his musical life as a cathedral chorister. On leaving school he sang in Salisbury Cathedral choir and taught in the choir school. During this time he decided on a singing career and he received his training from the late Eric Greene. Then followed two seasons with the Glyndebourne Festival Chorus and more intensive study with Alexander Young. In the past few years David Johnston has appeared in all the major cities in this country, and many countries abroad.

NICHOLAS HAMBLIN has been a pupil of St. Clement Danes Grammar School for eighteen months, during which time he has taken part in several operas at Covent Garden. These include Boris Godunov and Tosca.

CHORAL DANCES FROM GLORIANA Words by William Plomer

1. Time
2. Concord
3. Time and Concord
4. Country Girls
5. Rustics and Fishermen
6. Final Dance of Homage

Composed for the Coronation in 1953, Gloriana was first performed at Covent Garden in that year. It was not at first a success and had to wait until it was revived much later by the English Opera Group to achieve the recognition it deserved.

The choral dances occur when Queen Elizabeth I is on a 'progress' through Norwich, and the citizens of that town present a masque in her honour. In the opera the songs are connected by a solo voice introducing each dance but we sing them here as a straight set. No.4 is for sopranos and altos only and No.5 for mens chorus.

WINTER WORDS Op.52 Lyrics and Ballads of Thomas Hardy

DAVID JOHNSTON Tenor

1. At Day-close in November
2. Midnight on the Great Western (or the Journeying Boy)
3. Wagtail and Baby (a Satire)
4. The Little Old Table
5. The Choirmaster's Burial (or the Tenor Man's Story)
6. Proud Songsters (Thrushes, Finches and Nightingales)
7. At the Railway Station, Upway (or the Convict and Boy with the Violin)
8. Before Life and After

Winter Words is not actually a cycle but rather a set of songs. This is not to say that they should be sung separately, as Britten has obviously conceived them as a group to be performed together.

The songs are varied in character, humourous, sad, reflective, philosophical, and in each Hardy's words are matched perfectly by Britten's music.

FIVE FLOWER SONGS Op.47

1. To Daffodils - Robert Herrick
2. The Succession of the
Four Sweet Months - Robert Herrick
3. Marsh Flowers - George Crabbe
4. The Evening Primrose - John Clare
5. Ballad of Green Broom - anon.

The Flower Songs, written in 1950 as a silver wedding gift for some friends, are themselves a beautiful marriage of words and music.

No.1 likens the shortness of life to that of the daffodil. In no.2 the successive entries of the voices introduce the successive months. Each flower in George Crabbe's marshland town is sensitively characterized whilst in Evening Primrose the feeling of night is powerfully portrayed. The folk-type Ballad of Green Broom rounds off the proceedings appropriately with a peal of bells.

I N T E R V A L

THE BALLAD OF LITTLE MUSGRAVE AND LADY BARNARD

This small scale dramatic masterpiece for male voice choir and piano tells a grim story of adultery and revenge, but yet it makes its impact, not with great thunderings, as one might expect, but rather with understatement and dramatic irony, together with brilliant handling of textures and skilful transitions.

CANTICLE II : ABRAHAM AND ISAAC Op.51

Nicholas Hamblin	Alto
David Johnston	Tenor

This beautiful and moving version of the old testament story (the text is from the Chester Miracle Play) was composed in 1952 and first performed that year by Kathleen Ferrier and Peter Pears.

At the start the voice of God (both voices together) tells Abraham to take Isaac and sacrifice him. Thereafter the story unfolds with the Tenor singing the part of Abraham and the Alto that of Isaac. At the end an Envoi (a prayer for God to grant us the obedience of Abraham) is sung by both voices, this time in Canon.

HYMN TO ST. CECILIA Op.27

This setting of words specially written for him by W.H. Auden, is one of Britten's most popular choral pieces. Composed, or at least completed 'at sea ... April 2nd 1942', it consists of three sections after each of which occurs a sort of chorus (Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions to all musicians...).

The first section is gentle and stately, the second ('I cannot grow') fast and nervous, and the third, which contains an extended soprano solo and short solos for all four voices imitating musical instruments, again slow but now bitter and despairing until finally the invocation to St. Cecilia brings the work to a close.

CONDUCTOR : NICHOLAS HAMBLIN
ALSO :
Tenor

Nicholas Hamblin appears by kind permission of St. Clement Danes Grammar School.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE GREATER LONDON COUNCIL : Persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating or to sit in any of the other gangways.

No smoking in the Auditorium.

The taking of photographs in the Auditorium is not permitted.

THURSDAY, 8th JUNE 1972 at 7.30 pm

ST. MARTIN IN THE FIELDS

LONDON CONCORD SINGERS
EPSILON WIND ENSEMBLE

Stravinsky : Mass for mixed chorus and double wind quintet
Stravinsky : Cantata
Bruckner : Mass in E minor

London Concord Singers would welcome friends wishing to subscribe to the increasing activities of the Group.

Anyone requiring further details or wishing to go on our mailing list, please contact :

Miss Susan Rivers
4 Flag Walk
Pinner, Middlesex
866 2651

The National Federation of Music Societies, to which this Society is affiliated, gives support towards the cost of this concert with the funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain.