

St Mary's Church, Upper Street, NI

Tuesday 4 July at 7.30

1972

STRAVINSKY

Mass for Mixed Chorus and Wind Instruments
Octet for Wind Instruments

BRUCKNER

Mass No 2 in E minor

CONCORD SINGERS
EPSILON WIND ENSEMBLE

Conductor - Malcolm Cottle

Admission by this programme 40p

Mass for Mixed Chorus and Wind Instruments

Stravinsky

Kyrie
Gloria
Credo
Sanctus-Benedictus
Agnus Dei

Stravinsky's Mass was composed in 1948. He intended it for liturgical use although it is now more often performed in concert. The writing is intentionally unemotional so that the music should not detract from the solemnity of the church service. Stravinsky felt the function of sacred music to be 'to reveal itself as a form of communion - with our fellow man and with the Supreme Being'.

Most of this mass has a very strong feeling of plainsong about it, although the Credo would appear to have been influenced more by Russian Orthodox music with its constant repetition of phrases (Stravinsky was brought up and educated in the Orthodox Church).

The orchestration is 2 oboes, 1 Cor Anglais, 2 bassoons, 2 trumpets and 3 trombones.

Octet for Wind Instruments

Stravinsky

I Sinfonia. Lento - Allegro Moderato
II Tema con Variazioni
III Finale. Tempo giusto

The Octet was said by Casella to be 'the most perfect specimen produced by Stravinsky of the universal style which clothes in new terms and in new forms the spirit of ancient classical art'. Composed in 1922-3 during his neo-classical period, it is scored for Flute, Clarinet, 2 Bassoons, 2 Trumpets and 2 Trombones.

The work is in three movements, the first 'Sinfonia' is to be taken in its pre-classical sense (i.e. a single movement in what later became an overture style), it begins with a slow introduction.

The second movement is a Theme (in a tragic mood) followed by a set of variations which pass through many different moods including a march in the manner of Rossini and an elegant waltz. The finale which leads straight on from the 2nd movement is a fugato for 2, 3 and 4 voices full of rustic joviality.

Mass No. 2 in E minor

Bruckner

Kyrie

Gloria

Credo

Sanctus

Benedictus

Agnus Dei

Like Stravinsky's Mass, this one of Bruckner also has its roots firmly in the past. The main influence is Palestrina, particularly in the great eight-part movements, the Kyrie, Sanctus and Agnus Dei.

The E minor Mass (usually known as No. 2 although it is in fact the 6th or 7th that Bruckner wrote) was composed for the Dedication of the Votive Chapel of the new cathedral at Linz in 1867. It was first performed in the open air, although this is not the reason for using a wind orchestra. In fact the orchestration is much the same as that of the Stravinsky Mass without the Cor Anglais and with the addition of 2 clarinets and 4 horns.

There are at least two quotations from other composers. The Sanctus opens with, and the first half of it is built on, a phrase from Palestrina's Missa Brevis. Similarly the Benedictus uses a short, 5 note chromatic phrase taken from the prelude of Tristan by Bruckner's great hero Wagner.

THE CONCORD SINGERS are a young amateur group with various professional backgrounds, who began singing together early in 1966. They give frequent concerts in London and in other parts of England and in 1967 went to Switzerland where they won a first prize in the Montreux International Choral Festival and have also sung during the Dubrovnik Summer Festival. Earlier this year they made their South Bank debut at the Purcell Room. Their repertoire consists mainly of unaccompanied works in many languages and of all periods.

Their resident conductor is Malcolm Cottle, who, as a boy, sang at the Coronation of the Queen and also toured the U. S. A. with St Paul's Cathedral Choir. He toured as Musical Director of 'Close the Coalhouse Door', has sung at Sadler's Wells and has worked as repititeur and accompanist with the New Opera Group and other well-known societies.

The Epsilon Ensemble - on this occasion performing as the Epsilon Wind Ensemble - consists of 25 to 30 wind and string players in their early twenties, who were first brought together by Janis and Isabel Darras with a view to their forming groups to play mainly modern works wherever and whenever occasion demands. They have already had a number of highly successful engagements at St John's, Smith Square, the South Bank's Purcell Room, and St Martin-in-the-Fields.