

LONDON
CONCORD
SINGERS

St John's, Smith Square

Tuesday 8 April 1975

8pm

PROGRAMME 10 pence

LONDON CONCORD SINGERS

Conductor: MALCOLM COTTLE

Komm, Jesu, Komm

J. S. BACH

Mass in G Minor

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

INTERVAL 30 MINUTES

Three Latin Motets

CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD

Symphony for Voices

MALCOLM WILLIAMSON

Five Flower Songs

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

LONDON CONCORD SINGERS

The choir was started in its present form in 1966. It seeks to maintain a small, well-knit group of some thirty voices, practising and performing a wide range of choral music. Its members come from a great variety of backgrounds, though few of them are full-time musicians. The choir's range of activities is equally varied; it has accepted cabaret engagements at many functions, as well as promoting very successful concerts in and around London. In 1974 the choir sang in all three South Bank concert halls, and in St John's, Smith Square, SW1. The group is also much-travelled, and has won competitive prizes at home and abroad. It has visited Richmond, Surrey, Walkern in Hertfordshire, Buxton, Castle Howard near York, Chester Cathedral and the Teesside International Festival, where they achieved second place. Previous festival appearances have included Montreux and Dubrovnik. The choir has enjoyed an enthusiastic reception from both audiences and Press.

MALCOLM COTTLE

Tonight's conductor sang for many years as a boy with the choir of St Paul's Cathedral, during which time he sang at the Coronation of the Queen. He also, with the Cathedral choir, toured the United States of America. 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 toured as Musical Director with the show *Close the Coalhouse Door*. He has appeared as Musical Director at the Sheffield Playhouse, the Swan Theatre, Worcester and lately at the Nottingham Playhouse in *The Canterbury Tales*.

KOMM, JESU, KOMM**J. S. BACH***Come, Jesus, Come**My body is weary; my strength is waning more and more.**I am longing for your peace.**Life's bitter way is too difficult for me;**O Come, I want to give myself to you entirely.**You are the Way, the Truth and the Life.**I place myself in your hands and say Farewell to the world.**My life is coming quickly to its end**And my spirit is well prepared.**It will soon be with its Creator,**For Jesus is, and remains, the true way to life.*

Bach spent most of the last thirty years of his life at Leipzig as Kantor of St Thomas's Church, a post which was one of the most responsible and important appointments for a musician in Protestant Germany, involving the direction of the music in the main churches of the city and in the university. It was during this time that the finest of his church music, including the St Matthew and St John Passions, the B Minor Mass and the six German motets were composed.

After his death, most of Bach's music was neglected and forgotten until Mendelssohn led the revival nearly a hundred years later. It seems, however, that the motets escaped this neglect and were frequently performed during that time. Indeed, 'Singet dem Herrn' was sung especially for Mozart by the choir of St Thomas's. An onlooker said of Mozart, who did not know Bach's music, that, as he listened "his whole soul seemed to be in his ears". It seems that in the Leipzig of Bach's time, the more prosperous citizens were married or buried with musical honours appropriate to their social and financial standing; the more wealthy having the full choir and 'figured music' while the less well off had to make do with half-choir and chorales. 'Komm, Jesu, Komm' was evidently composed for the funeral of someone belonging to the former category. It is in four sections, the first of which is slow and massive with the two choirs answering one another. The second is a lively fugue-like section which leads straight into the third where the two choirs again answer one another, but this time in a gentle 6/8 rhythm. The work closes with a chorale-like Aria.

MASS IN G MINOR**RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**

Kyrie; Gloria; Sanctus/Benedictus; Agnus Dei

Vaughan Williams was born in Down Ampney, Gloucestershire, in 1872. He was educated at Charterhouse and Cambridge, with a two-year spell at the Royal College of Music in between, and further studies there after university. In the early 1890's he began to be very active in the collection of English folk songs which were to be such a major influence on his work throughout his life.

The other great influence, particularly in his choral works, was the music, both sacred and secular, of the great English composers of the Tudor period. In his Mass, which was completed in 1922 and dedicated to Gustav Holst, and his Whitsuntide Singers, he has gone even further back, freely adopting mediaeval tonalities and methods of counterpoint. The Mass, which is for double choir and soloists, consists of the usual five movements.

INTERVAL 30 MINUTES

THREE LATIN MOTETS**CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD****1. Justorum Animae***The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and the torment of malice shall not touch them, in the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, but they are in peace.***2. Coelos Ascendit Hodie***Today Jesus Christ, the King of glory has ascended into the heavens. Alleluia!**He sits at the Father's right hand, ruling heaven and earth. Alleluia!**Now are David's songs fulfilled, now is the Lord with his Lord. Alleluia!**He sits upon the royal throne of God, in this his greatest triumph. Alleluia!**Let us bless the Lord: let the Holy Trinity be praised, let us give thanks to the Lord. Alleluia! Amen.***3. Beati Quorum Via***Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.*

Stanford was probably the composer most responsible for bringing English church music out of the rather depressed state into which it had sunk during the 19th century. He was born in 1852, the son of a Dublin legal official, who was himself a keen amateur musician. At 18, he went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he became organist. He was also conductor of the University Musical Society for whom he conducted many notable first British performances, especially of Brahms, with whom he later became friendly. Probably his greatest contribution to English music was his influence as a teacher of composition at the Royal College of Music on such composers as Vaughan Williams and Holst.

The three Latin motets are his most imaginative and accomplished choral settings. They date from 1905 and were written, curiously enough, not for a church occasion but to be sung in Hall at Trinity College on Gaudy Days (feast days). No. 1 is for four voices with occasional divisions, and is a setting of words from the Wisdom of Solomon, showing Stanford's ability to illustrate the words with his music, particularly at 'tormentum malitiae'. No. 2, for double choir, is a joyful hymn of praise for the feast of the Ascension. No. 3 is a beautiful, gentle setting of the first verse of Psalm 119.

SYMPHONY FOR VOICES**MALCOLM WILLIAMSON****1. Invocation****2. Terra Australis****3. Jesus****4. Envoi****5. New Guinea**

Malcolm Williamson was born in Sydney in 1931. He studied composition with Eugene Goossens, and later with Elizabeth Lutyens in England. He is a versatile composer as well as a brilliant performer on piano and organ, for which instruments he has written much fine music. In addition to his instrumental and orchestral music he has composed many operas and cantatas, including several for children, as well as hymns and anthems in the popular vein.

The Symphony for Voices, written in 1960 for John Alldis, consists of settings of five poems by fellow Australian James McAuley. The first movement is an unaccompanied mezzo-soprano solo. In the second, the melody shifts from voice to voice with the rest of the choir providing accompaniment, and only occasionally do the four parts come together. In the third movement the choir sings in unison throughout, while in the fourth, which takes its rhythmic cue from the opening line '... a wild precision, a strict disorder', the sopranos and altos sing always a fifth or a fourth apart, while the tenors and basses do the same, usually in contrary motion to the upper parts and making a cross rhythm with them. The final movement is descriptive of the island of New Guinea, with its outer appearance of beauty and its inner reality of harshness and cruelty.

FIVE FLOWER SONGS

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

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

The Flower Songs were written in 1950 as a somewhat unusual silver wedding gift for some friends of the composer, and are themselves, as always with Britten, a perfect marriage of words and music.

No. 1 likens the transience of our own lives to those of daffodils. In No. 2 the successive entries of the voices introduce the successive 'sweet' months, April, May, June and July. Each of the rather spiky and sometimes unpleasant flowers in George Crabbe's marshland town is sensitively characterised whilst in the Evening Primrose the feeling of night is powerfully portrayed. The folk-like Ballad of Green Broom rounds off the proceedings, appropriately, with a peal of wedding bells.

St John's, Smith Square, London, SW1

Director: Joanna Brendon. Telephone 01-799 2168

For details of future events please send 50p annual subscription, payable to: The Friends of St John's, at the above address.

Smoking is permitted ONLY IN THE CRYPT.

The interval is 30 minutes. Licensed refreshments available in the Crypt.

LONDON CONCORD SINGERS would welcome friends wishing to subscribe to increase the activities of the group. Anyone requiring further details or wishing to be placed on the mailing list please contact:

Mrs Helen Ford,
55a Granville Place,
London, N12