

London Concord Singers

St George's Church, Hanover Square, London W1

LONDON CONCORD SINGERS
AND ORCHESTRA
Conductor: Malcolm Cottle

MUSIC FOR CHOIR AND BRASS
INCLUDING
GLORIA by JOHN RUTTER
and the first performance of the revised version of
WINTER SOLSTICE by ANDRZEJ PANUFNIK

THURSDAY 3 DECEMBER 1981 at 7.30pm

Rejoice in the Lord alway

Anon 16th Century

This charming setting of the Epistle for the fourth Sunday in Advent (Philippians 4 vv. 4-7) was formerly attributed to John Redford — one-time organist of St Paul's Cathedral, who died in 1547.

This is the record of John

Gibbons

Tenor Solo — Alan Armstrong

Gibbons was one of the greatest of English composers in the early 17th Century. In his church music, one form which he particularly favoured was the verse anthem of which this is probably the finest example. It sets part of the Gospel for the 4th Sunday in Advent (St John 1 vv. 19-23).

The Wilderness

S S Wesley

Baritone Solo — Andrew Copeman

One of the pillars of the Anglican Church music scene in the 19th Century, Samuel Sebastian Wesley was the bastard son of Samuel Wesley, who in turn was the (legitimate) son of Charles Wesley, one of the co-founders, with his brother John, of the Methodist movement.

S S Wesley was renowned as one of the great organists and extemporisers of his day. He had the highest ideals in Church music and fought a hard fight for them against the officialdom of his day. He was successively organist of Hereford and Exeter Cathedrals, Leeds Parish Church and Winchester and Gloucester Cathedrals. This setting of one of Isaiah's Messianic prophecies ranks as one of his finest works, indeed of all English 19th Century music.

Soprano Solo – Nessa Nedd
Baritone Solo – Andrew Copeman

Andrzej Panufnik was born in Warsaw in 1914 and held many honours in his native Poland until he left there in 1954 as a protest against political control over creative artists. He settled in England and now lives beside the river at Twickenham. Of *Winter Solstice*, composed in 1972 and revised in 1979 (this is the first performance of the revised version), Panufnik says in his booklet 'Impulse and Design in my music':—

When I was asked to compose a Christmas choral work, my mind could not help turning immediately towards the fascinating dualism between paganism and early Christianity, particularly the close parallel between the celebration of Christ's birth — the Son of God, and the pagan celebration for the birth of their God — the Sun.

The text for this work was specially written for me by Camilla Jessel, to give me full opportunity to express musically this dualism between Christianity and paganism. The cantata has five movements:

(i) *Mistletoe Carol*: The Christians sing a mistletoe carol of Christmas cheer. The pagans meanwhile express their pious feelings towards the mistletoe, the healer of all ills and bringer of fertility.

The contrasting attitude of each group emerges in the music. Bitonality is used to illustrate their divergent ideas. The pagans (male voices, because women were often excluded from the rites) use a rather primitive song-speech, repeating the same rhythmic and melodic pattern; while the Christians (female voices) are more lyrical, more *cantabile*.

(ii) *Chant of the Earth Mother*: This is a kind of *arioso*, sung by soprano solo on a background of trombone chords, while from time to time, the male voices and timpani break in with recitation of different names by which the Earth Mother has been known in various primitive religions. The movement starts very softly, gradually working up, reaching an emotional climax which leads into the next movement.

(iii) *Nativity of the SO(u)N*: Christians and pagans are simultaneously celebrating the Nativity, both filled with religious exultation. Though they seem to begin alike, fervent debate rapidly ensues, and they remain divided about the vital point — 'the Son of God' or 'the Sun, our God'. The movement starts with the two choruses' mutual outburst: 'The Son/Sun is born!'

(iv) *Sermon of St Augustine*: This movement is based on St Augustine's Christmas Sermons. It is sung by the baritone solo on the chords of the trumpets, with the female voices (Christians) like a congregation supporting his declamation. The structure is similar to the *Chant of the Earth Mother*, but in reverse.

(v) *Hymn for the New Year*: The Christians and pagans at last find really common ground in their prayers for the New Year. This movement starts, after a brass introduction, with *chorus a cappella* like a *chorale*, the brass instruments joining in to emphasise the festive atmosphere of both Christmas and Winter Solstice. The soloists take part too, each with their characteristic wishes for the coming year.

The performers are divided into two groups; the Christians, represented by female voices and baritone solo (St Augustine), 3 trumpets and glockenspiel — and the pagans, by male voices, solo soprano (the Earth Mother), 3 trombones and timpani. The two groups have their own characteristics in musical language, at the same time reflecting each other musically just as they do in their parallel religious celebrations.

To reflect the similarities rather than contrasts of the Christian and pagan celebrations, the work is designed palindromically.

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INTERVAL — 20 minutes

Offertorium: Afferentur regi

Ecce Sacerdos

Bruckner

It is, perhaps, surprising that Bruckner, who was for much of his life a church and cathedral organist, should write so little music for the church, a handful of motets and three mature Mass settings. Most of the motets are for unaccompanied choir but these two are scored for mixed choir and three trombones 'Ecce Sacerdos', the mighty greeting for a Bishop into a church also has organ.

Afferentur regi. After her shall virgins be brought to the King; her neighbours shall be brought to Thee. With gladness and joy shall they be brought; they shall enter the King's palace (Ps 45 vv. 14-15).

Ecce Sacerdos. Behold a great priest, who in his days pleased God.

Therefore by an oath the Lord made him increase among his people.

He gave him the blessing of all nations and confirmed his covenant upon his head.

Gloria

John Rutter

John Rutter's setting of the Gloria was commissioned by the Voices of Mel Olson, and was first performed by them on May 5th, 1974 in Omaha, USA under the direction of the composer. While it is typical of the composer's work, making much use of rhythms and harmonies taken from modern popular music and jazz, its form is strictly classical. 'Gloria' is scored for brass, organ and percussion.

The Gloria is in the usual three movements. The first opens with a fanfare-like passage for the brass followed by the choir singing the opening theme in canon accompanied by a lively figure on the organ leading back into the opening Gloria, which brings the movement to a close.

The second movement is slower and opens with a long organ solo, rhapsodic in nature. The brass is used sparingly and the second half is sung by the unaccompanied choir alternating with Soprano and Alto soloists.

The final movement opens with another fanfare loosely based on that at the beginning of the first movement. The choir enters with a jaunty melody to the words 'Quoniam tu solus sanctus'. This is followed, as in the classical tradition, by a fugue of rhythmic complexity at 'Cum Sancto Spiritu'. The tempo increases steadily through repeated Amens until a brief return to 'Gloria in excelsis' leads to a final round of Amens and the opening fanfare brings the work to a triumphant conclusion.

The 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, none of them being full-time musicians. The choir's range of activities is equally varied; it has accepted cabaret engagements in and around London and has sung in all three South Bank concert halls, at the Royal Albert Hall and at St John's, Smith Square. The group has travelled widely and has won competitive prizes at home and abroad. Festival appearances include Montreux and Dubrovnik. The choir has enjoyed an enthusiastic reception from audiences and the Press and has recorded with the London Symphony Orchestra. In 1977, in recognition of their continuing support of Contemporary Music, particularly British compositions of the previous 25 years, London Concord Singers received a Jubilee Award from the Performing Rights Society.

Malcolm Cottle

The Conductor sang for many years as a boy with the choir of St Paul's Cathedral, London, during which time he sang at the Coronation of the Queen and 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 Sadler's Wells and conducted for Orpheus Opera. He has appeared as Musical Director at the Sheffield Playhouse; the Swan Theatre, Worcester; Nottingham Playhouse and the Wyvern Theatre, Swindon.

John Rutter

John Rutter was born in 1945 in London and educated at Highgate School and at Clare College, Cambridge where he obtained a double first-class honours degree. He continued his studies there researching into nineteenth century music, and was, until recently, Director of Music at his former college.

The National Federation of Music Societies, to whom this society is affiliated, supports these concerts with funds made available by the Arts Council of Great Britain. Financial assistance towards the cost of this concert has been given by the City of Westminster Arts Council (supported by Westminster City Council).

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 the Secretary:

Mrs Jo Keeling, 23 Fircroft Rd., London SW17 7PR

We would like to remind members of the public that unauthorised recording of the Concert is not allowed.