

London Concord Singers

ST PAUL'S, COVENT GARDEN, WC1
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LONDON CONCORD SINGERS

present

THE FOLK INFLUENCE

A Concert of Choral Music to celebrate
the centenaries of the births of
ZOLTAN KODALY and PERCY GRAINGER

Conductor: Malcolm Cottle

Piano: Tony McIntee

Thursday 15 July, 1982 at 7.30pm

At first sight there may not appear to be much in common between Kodaly, fervent Nationalist and educational innovator, and Grainger, virtually stateless, composer of drawing-room pleasantries such as *Handel in the Strand* and *Country Gardens* and given to slight sexual deviations. The common factor is their great devotion to, and research into, Folk Music.

Kodaly was born in Galanta in Western Hungary (now Czechoslovakia) on 16th December 1882. As a music student in Budapest he became increasingly conscious of the idea that Hungarian motifs should be dominant in Hungarian music, even though his Professor (Janos Koessler) dismissed the native folk motifs as nothing more than 'ornamental material'.

In 1905 began the collaboration with his friend, Bartok, which was to revolutionise Hungarian music. The two musicians travelled through the villages with a phonograph to record not only the music but the performances of peasant musicians. The result of this, the first great exercise in folk musicology in the field, was 16,000 recordings.

From this time on folk music played an ever-increasing role in Kodaly's composition with many folk-song arrangements, both vocal and instrumental, and always his music bears a strong folk influence. The real feature of his music is that it swept away the pseudo-folk compositions of such composers as Liszt and Lehar, based as it was on the imported gypsy music, and got back to the real, native Hungarian music.

Grainger was born in Melbourne, Australia on 8th July, 1882, studied in Germany from 1895, came to England in 1901 and became an American citizen in 1914. Unlike Kodaly he did not confine his folk-song collecting to one country but took his material from all over Northern Europe, particularly England and Scandinavia. As a boy he had been given a volume of Myths and Sagas of Scandinavia which was a great influence to him (he even referred to himself as Grettir the Strong). Another influence was the poetry of Rudyard Kipling -- he made settings of over 20 Kipling poems.

It is unfortunate that Grainger is best known today for his more light-weight works as he was really a more serious composer. Many of his ideas which are now regarded as having been influential on later writers were at the time dubbed as eccentricities. In the 1930s he was experimenting with what he called 'free music', in which "reigns complete freedom from scales, complete rhythmic freedom, and complete freedom from what I call 'harmonic morality'".

Folk Songs

GRAINGER

Ye banks and braes o' Bonnie Doon (Scottish folksong)

There was a pig went out to dig (English playing song, collected in Lancashire)

Brigg Fair (Folk song from Lincolnshire — Grainger's choral arrangement used by Delius in his English Rhapsody of the same name).

Irish Tune from County Derry (now known as *The Londonderry Air*, wordless, because, at the time of composition, no words had been given to this famous tune).

KODALY

The Peacock (A famous revolutionary song from 19th century Hungary)

Matra Pictures (An extended suite of folk-songs from the Matra area of Hungary).

INTERVAL — 15 minutes

Original Compositions

KODALY

To the Magyars (A robust Nationalistic song in strict canon)

Evening (An early piece — 1904 — depicting the calm and beauty of evening)

The old ones (A moving picture of sad and ageing people)

GRAINGER

Kipling settings:

Recessional (A hymn-like setting of the poem which contains the famous words 'Lest we forget').

Red Dog (6th movement of Kipling's 'Jungle Book cycle')

The Peora Hunt (From 'Plain Tales from the Hills')

Soldier, Soldier (From 'Barrack-room Ballads')

The Merry Wedding (Refrain taken from a Faroe Island folk-poem entitled 'The Song of Brownsvain'; other verses from V U Hammershaimb's 'Faroes Anthology'. Grainger was proficient in many Scandinavian languages. This piece is for 9 soloists, chorus and piano).

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 and they plan to appear in Holland in late Autumn of this year.

The choir has enjoyed an enthusiastic reception from audiences and the Press, having recorded with the London Symphony Orchestra and worked with modern composers on British and world premieres of their compositions. 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.

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.

London Concord Singers would welcome friends wishing to subscribe to increase the activities of the group. Details from:

MRS JO KEELING, 23 Fircroft Road, London SW17.

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UNAUTHORISED RECORDING OF THE CONCERT IS NOT ALLOWED**