

LONDON CONCORD SINGERS

St. James' Church, Sussex Gardens

Saturday, July 13th., 1991

BEATUS VIR

Claudio Monteverdi

Soloists:	Soprano	Rowena Wells
		Tracey Kelly
	Alto	Kate Hampshire
	Tenor	Jonathan Norris
		Robert Hugill
	Bass	Simon Brearley

Monteverdi was born in Cremona in 1567. He started his musical career as a choirboy in the cathedral there. When he was twenty-three he moved to the court at Mantua as musician and composer, eventually becoming *maestro di capella* in 1601. In 1612 he resigned the post after being refused a rise in salary. The following year he was unanimously elected to the highest musical position in Italy, the directorship of St. Marks, Venice, where he remained to his death in 1643.

Beatus Vir comes from *Selva morale e spirituale* published in 1641 although it probably dates from about 1630. No guide is given as to the use of forces but it was probably performed much as we are doing it tonight, with six soloists singing the bulk of the work, the chorus joining in at the more concerted moments and in the *Gloria*. The orchestra consists of two solo violins and continuo with the rest joining in the full choir passages.

Blessed is the man that fears the Lord, that delights in His commandments.

His seed shall be great on the earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

Glory and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness shall endure for ever.

There shall arise from the darkness a light to the upright man: he is gracious and merciful and righteous.

A good man shows mercy and is generous: he will guide his affairs with discretion.

He will remain steadfast for ever: the just man shall be remembered for ever.

*He shall not be upset by bad tidings: his heart is fixed,
trusting in the Lord.*

*His heart is strong and will not be moved until he sees his
desire on his enemies.*

*He has dispersed, he has given to the poor: his
righteousness endures for ever: his horn shall be exalted with
glory.*

*The wicked man shall see it, and be grieved: he shall gnash
his teeth and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.*

Glory be to the Father..... (Psalm 112)

AN OXFORD ELEGY

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Speaker: Dominic Batty

An Oxford Elegy is a comparatively late work of Vaughan Williams being published in 1952, just six years before his death in 1958. It sets an adaptation of two poems by Matthew Arnold - *The Scholar Gipsy* and *Thyrsis*, in which the poet remembers student days at Oxford and wonders what has become of an old friend.

The original scoring is for eight wind instruments and strings, but, like many of Vaughan Williams choral works, there is a version for reduced orchestra; in this case the wind parts are taken, by solo strings. The narrative is mostly carried by the speaker accompanied by the orchestra and wordless chorus but occasionally the choir takes over.

I N T E R V A L

THE COMPANY OF HEAVEN

Benjamin Britten

Speakers: Jill Batty

Dominic Batty

Soloists: Soprano Caroline Sewry

Tenor Paul Zimmerman

On the 29th. of September 1937, to celebrate the feast of St. Michael and all Angels, a programme of readings and music on the subject of angels was broadcast by the BBC National Programme. What was unusual about this particular anthology was that, instead of taking the music from various sources, Britten was asked to compose original music on texts provided for him by the programme's compiler, R. Ellis Roberts. This gave to the programme a unity of thought and feeling which was unusual.

The original performance was given by the BBC Chorus and Orchestra. One of the members of the chorus at that time was a young tenor by the name of Peter Pears, and it was he who sang the tenor solo (No.VII), so this is almost certainly the first piece that Britten wrote specifically for Pears.

PART ONE: BEFORE CREATION

I Chaos (Introduction for orchestra)

Who is this? (Theodosius)

When all the sons of God (Gerard Manley Hopkins)

Hell heard th'unsufferable word (Milton: Paradise Lost)

II Chorus: The morning stars who, ere light was were light
(adapted from Joseph the Hymnographer)

PART TWO: ANGELS IN SCRIPTURE

Angels were the first creatures (Thomas Heywood)

IIIa Jacob

And Jacob went out (Genesis ch 28)

And when the servant of Elisha (2 Kings ch.6)

IIIb Elisha

And is there care in heaven (Edmund Spencer)

It was the rebel angel, Lucifer (R.Ellis Roberts)

IIIc Hail Mary

And in the sixth month (Luke ch.1)

IV Chorus: Christ the fair glory (ascribed to Rabamus
Maurus)

Angels came to minister (R.E.R.)

I go from earth to heaven (Christina Rosetti)

And as it was in the beginning (R.E.R.)

V Chorus: And there was war in heaven (Revelations 12)

PART THREE: ANGELS IN COMMON LIFE AND AT OUR DEATH

VI Chorus: Heaven is here (Anon)

Suppose that over Ludgate Hill (John Ruskin)

Not where the wheeling systems (Francis Thompson)

There are those (R.E.R.)

VII Tenor Solo: A thousand thousand gleaming fires

(Emily Bronte)

In the reign of Queen Victoria (R.E.R.)

VIII Orchestra: Funeral march for a boy.

Golden-winged, silver winged (Christina Rosetti)

IX Chorus: Whoso dwelleth under the shadow (Psalm 91)

Farewell, green fields (William Blake)

X Speaker and Orchestra: There came out also (John

Bunyan)

But they which shall be accounted worthy (Luke ch.20)

I think they laugh in heaven (D.G.Rosetti)

XI Chorus: Ye watchers and ye holy ones (Athelstan Riley)