

ST. JAMES CHURCH, PADDINGTON

Saturday 16th. November 1991

LONDON CONCORD SINGERS

Conductor: MALCOLM COTTLE

25TH. ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

Who would have thought in 1966 that, 25 years later, Concord would still be going strong? Well we are, and, I hope, still pursuing our policy of rehearsing and performing music that is both challenging and rewarding to sing and to listen to.

There is now only one of the original members still left - Derek Hill - although three others came soon after we started. It is good that we have been able to keep in touch with many old members, and that sometimes some of them have been able to help us when we have required stiffening, indeed several will be joining us tonight in performing the Tallis 'forty part'.

My grateful thanks go to everybody who has sung with us over the years for the support and enthusiasm they have given me. I like to think we have shared some great moments and tonight's programme is designed to reflect some of the highlights.

REQUIEM

HERBERT HOWELLS

1. Salvator Mundi (O saviour of the world)
2. Psalm 23 (The Lord is my Shepherd)
3. Requiem aeternam(1)
4. Psalm 121 (I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills)
5. Requiem aeternam(2)
6. I heard a voice from heaven.

Herbert Howells, who died in 1983, and who's centenary is celebrated next year, was deeply affected by the death in childhood of his only son in 1935. The *Requiem* was composed as a direct response to this event and is a moving and personal expression of the deep grief he felt. So much so that he did not allow the work to be released for publication and performance until 1980.

Howells later used much of the material from the *Requiem* as a basis for his large scale choral and orchestral masterpiece, *Hymnus Paradisi*, which he also suppressed until Vaughan Williams persuaded him to release it in 1950.

The *Requiem* is scored for mixed choir with occasional soloists. It consists of six fairly short movements and is like the Brahms in that it is not at all a liturgical Requiem, but the texts are drawn from various sources as well as the Roman Mass for the Dead.

RORATE COELI

THEA MUSGRAVE

Thea Musgrave was born in Edinburgh in 1928. She studied at Edinburgh University and, like so many other contemporary British composers, with Nadia Boulanger. She now lives and works in the United States.

Rorate Coeli was written in 1977 to a commission from the National Federation of Music Societies. It is a setting of two poems, (which run concurrently for much of the time,) by fellow Scot William Dunbar (c1465-1520). Soloists from each voice are used, though the Bass is exclusive to *Done is the battle*.

VESPERS (Excerpts)

RACHMANINOV

Many of the great Russian composers have written music for use in the Orthodox services, including Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Gretchaninov, but one work stands out above the others - Rachmaninov's Vespers.

Other composers were content to write very much in the traditional Orthodox style, while Rachmaninov, although observing the basic rules, was able to expand the style a great deal by varying harmonies, changing keys and moving the melody line around through the voices.

1. Pri-iditye poklonimsya (Come let us worship)
3. Blazhen muzh (Blessed is the man)
5. Ninye otpushtchayeshi (Nunc dimittis)
6. Bogoroditse dyevo (Ave Maria)
7. Slava v vyshnykh bogu (Glory to God in the highest)
8. Khvalitye imya Gospodnye (Praise the name of the Lord)
14. Voskries iz groba (Hymn of the Resurrection)
15. Vzbrannoy boyevodye (O victorious leader)

SPEM IN ALIUM

THOMAS TALLIS

Organ continuo: Graham Owen

Tallis started his career before the Reformation, and was organist of Waltham Abbey at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries in 1540. After the Reformation he obtained a position at the Chapel Royal and served there under four successive monarchs, eventually becoming organist, a post he shared for some time with William Byrd. Also with Byrd, he was given by Queen Elizabeth I the monopoly of printing music and music paper, and, like his partner, contributed 17 motets to the 34 they published in 1575 under the title of *Cantiones Sacrae*.

I N T E R V A L

The sponsors of the 1575 collection expressed the hope that this first printed set of English motets would advertise the skill of native composers abroad. The monumental *Spem in Alium*, written for no less than 40 voices, set in eight 5-part choirs (with divided basses) was possibly written in the same spirit of patriotic endeavour, and may have been performed on some great state occasion such as a royal birthday. It uses a dramatic style rare in English music of the time. The 40 voices enter successively on points of imitation, working down through the eight choirs, but Tallis soon begins to exploit antiphonal effects between the choirs (usually in groups of two at a time), alternating contrapuntal passages with broad chordal phrases. He keeps his boldest stroke for the first appearance of the word *respice*, where all 40 voices enter together on a chord of A major, the previous passage having ended in C major.

The London Concord Singers is affiliated to the City Literary Institute, and we would like to express our appreciation to them, and especially to the Head of the Music Department, Graham Owen, for all their help.

We are also very grateful for assistance provided by Barclays Bank plc.