

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, BLOOMSBURY

THURSDAY 8th. JULY, 1993

LONDON CONCORD SINGERS

Conductor: MALCOLM COTTLE

Piano Duo: TONY McINTEE
MALCOLM COTTLE

MAGNIFICAT - GILES SWAYNE

Giles Swayne wrote his Magnificat in 1986 for Francis Grier and the choir of Christ Church, Oxford. It is for 2 choirs and the text is mainly sung staccato with the parts gradually moving apart, creating complex rhythmic patterns. The piece opens and is interspersed with a Senegalese ploughing song.

IN YOUTH IS PLEASURE - HERBERT HOWELLS

This "Madrigal" for SSATB was written by the youthful Howells in 1915 and is dedicated to Sir Frederick Bridge. It sets a poem by 16th. century writer, Robert Wever.

In a harb'our grene aslepe whereas I lay,
The byrdes sang swete in the middes of the day,
I dreamed fast of mirth and play:
In youth is pleasure.

Methought I walked still to and fro,
And from her company I could not go,
But when I waked it was not so.
In youth is pleasure.

Therefore my heart is surely pyght,
Of her alone to have a sight,
Which is my joy and heartes delight.
In youth is pleasure.

LEGENDS Op.59 Nos.6-10 - DVORAK

Dvorak's "Legends" for piano duet was written in 1881, soon after the completion of the D major Symphony, probably as a relaxation after such a large scale work. Like the earlier Slavonic Dances, also originally for piano duet, Dvorak subsequently orchestrated "Legends" and it is in that form that it is better known. The title implies a programmatic content, but this does not seem to be the case, rather they are free flights of the composer's imagination.

FEST UND GEDENKSPRUCHE Op.109 - BRAHMS
(Festival and Commemoration Sentences)

These three motets for double choir were written as an acknowledgement of Brahms having been given the rare honour of the Freedom of the City of Hamburg, his native city. They were

first performed at the opening of an industrial exhibition in the city in September, 1889. The motets show clearly, through the antiphonal and polyphonic writing, Brahms's interest in the music of the Renaissance, particularly in the works of Schutz which had just been published in Spitta's new edition.

The work is of a patriotic nature, and each motet refers to a specific event in fairly recent German history.

No. 1 refers to the battle of Leipzig in 1813 and the relief from Napoleonic bondage.

Unsere Vater.....Our fathers trusted in you: they trusted and you delivered them.
They cried to you and were delivered: they trusted you and were not confounded
The Lord will give strength to his people: the Lord will bless his people with peace.

No. 2 is concerned with the war of 1870 which was again a disaster for the French.

Wenn ein starker Gewappneter.....When a strong man armed keeps his palace, his goods are in peace. But a kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation: and a house divided against a house falleth.

No. 3 is both a celebration of German unification and a warning to its people.

Wo ist ein so herrlich Volk.....What nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgements so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them to thy children, and to thy childrens' children. Amen.

INTERVAL

A FANCY FOR TWO TO PLAY - THOMAS TOMKINS
ALLEGRO from Duetto in G Op.3 No.3 - MUZIO CLEMENTI

Because of the small size and compass of early keyboard instruments, very few duets were written. However, the earliest duets to survive and Tomkins' "Fancy" is a fine example.

Clementi was an Italian composer who settled in London and spent most of his life here. He is probably best known for his Op.36 Sonatinas, played by nearly every child who learns piano. In addition to 62 Sonatas for solo piano he wrote 7 for piano duet.

THE CREEL - Suite for Piano Duet after Izaak Walton - ALAN RAWSTHORNE

Each short movement of this entertaining work is prefaced by a quote from Walton.

1. The mighty PIKE is the Tyrant of the Fresh Water.
2. The SPRAT; a Fish that is ever in Motion.
3. The CARP is the Queen of Rivers; a Stately, a Good, and a very Subtil Fish.
4. The LEAP or Summersault of the Salmon.

BEFORE LIFE AND AFTER 4 Melancholy Songs for 4 part choir - MICHAEL PHILPOT

Michael, a former member of the choir, wrote these four Thomas Hardy settings in 1983. He studied harmony and counterpoint with Geoffrey Tristram. In 1977 he won 1st. prize in the

GLAA Young Composers Competition and has had works performed on Radio 3. He has degrees in Psychology and Medicine and, unfortunately, with the demands of his hospital work and of a new son, has little time to devote to music.

1. By Henstridge Cross at the Years End (from "Late Lyrics")

Why go the east road now?
That way a youth went on the morrow
After mirth, and brought back sorrow
Painted upon his brow.
Why go the east road now?

Why go the north road now?
Leaf strewn, as if scoured by foemen
Once edging fiefs to my fore-folk yoemen
Fallows fat to the plough.
Why go the north road now?

Why go the west road now?
Thence to us came she, bosom burning,
Welcome with joyousness, returning
She sleeps under under the bough.
Why go the west road now?

Why go the south road now?
That way marched they, some are forgetting
Stark to the moon left, past regretting
Loves who have falsed their vows.
Why go the south road now?

Why go any road now?
White stands the hand-posts for brisk on-bearers,
Halt! is the word for wan-cheeked farers
Musing on "Whither and How".
Why go any road now?

"Yea we want new feet now"
Answer the stones, "Want chit-chat laughter,
Plenty of such to go here-after,
By our tracks we trow!
We are for new feet now".

2. Before Life and After (From "Times Laughingstocks")

A time there was, as one may guess
And as, indeed, earth's testimonies tell,
Before the birth of consciousness
When all went well.

None suffered sickness, love or loss,
None knew regret, starved hope or heart-burnings;
None cared whatever crash or cross
Brought wrack to things

If something ceased, no tongue bewailed,
If something winced and waned, no heart was wrung.

If brightness dimmed and dark prevailed.
No sense was stung.

But the disease of feeling germed
And primal rightness took the tinct of wrong;
Ere nescience shall be re-affirmed,
How long? How long?

3. In time of the "Breaking of Nations" (From Moments of Vision)

Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they walk.

Only a thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass.
Yet this will go onward the same
Though dynasties pass.

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by.
Wars annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

Thou art my battle-axe, my weapon of war
For with thee will I break in pieces the nations.
And with thee will I destroy kingdoms
Ere their story die.

4. What's there to tell (From Human Shows)

What's there to tell of the world
More than is told?
Into its vortex hurled,
Out of it rolled.
Can we yet more of the world
Find to be told.

If some could last alive
Much might be told.
Yes! gladness might survive
But they go cold
Each and each late alive
And their tale told.

There's little more of the world
Then to be told.
Had ever life unfurled
Joys manifold.
There had been more of the world
Left to be told.