

THE CHANTRY SINGERS

Organist - Christopher Mabley

Conductor - Timothy Venvell

present

A CONCERT OF CHORAL AND ORGAN MUSIC

in

Holy Trinity Church, Guildford

on

Saturday, 23rd June, 1984

at 7.30 p.m.

Admission by programme: £1.50

Students and O.A.P.'s: 50p

P R O G R A M M E

1. Sing Joyfully BYRD
When David Heard WEELKES
2. Hymne to God the Father HUMFREY
Solo Bass - Adrian Peacocke
3. Larghetto in F~~♯~~ minor S. S. WESLEY
"Gavotte" from 3 Short Pieces S. WESLEY
4. Hymn to St. Cecilia BRITTEN

INTERVAL OF 15 MINUTES

6. Hail, Gladdening Light WOOD
6. The Shower ELGAR
- My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land ELGAR
- The Blue Bird STANFORD
7. Allelujas PRESTON
8. Set Me as a Seal WALTON
- God is Gone Up FINZI

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The Chantry Singers

Sopranos

* Jean Woolhead
Pat Turner
Guen Wheeler
June Hoare
Lucienne Suter
Sheila Kirkland
Sue Poole
Penny Deamer
Jo Murrelle
Rosemary Munro
Alex White

Tenors

John McElroy
/ Iain Murdoch
* Ray Wright
Chris Nabley

* Soloists (Britten)
/ Soloist (Walton)
' Soloist (Stanford)

Altos

* Angela Doughty
Penelope Gordon
Sarah Roberts
Jo Willcox
Judy Davies
Jean Matthews
Vicki Shore
Margaret Jackson
Margaret Peat

Basses

* Adrian Peacock
Gordon Elsey
Mervin Lloyd
Ranald Spiers
Tony Morden
Peter Hoare

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PROGRAMME NOTES

WILLIAM BYRD (1542/3-1623) was organist of Lincoln Cathedral and of the Chapel Royal, and may have studied under Thomas Tallis. He wrote in a number of genres, excelling particularly in his keyboard and vocal music (he was one of the founders of the English madrigal school). His setting of Psalm 81:1-4, Sing Joyfully, was one of the most popular anthems of its period. It demonstrates Byrd's intention to write music that was "framed to the life of the words" from the opening exhortation "Sing joyfully" to the stately declaration towards the end, "For this is a statute".

THOMAS WEELKES (c.1575-1623) was organist for Winchester College and later for Chichester Cathedral. With John Wilbye, he began to move away from the pure renaissance style of Byrd and Morley in his madrigals, writing also much church music and some music for viols. He seems to have been particularly interested in "the acrobatics of anguish and the gymnastics of grief" in which the Italians were so adept. This is reflected in his six-part setting of 2 Samuel 18:33, When David Heard. Notice how he arrests the movement on the word "O" at the phrase "O my son".

PELLIAM HUMFREY (1647-1674) was a chorister, with John Blow, in the Chapel Royal and subsequently enriched Charles II's court with music influenced by the most contemporary French and Italian styles (he probably had direct contact with Lully and Carissimi in his travels abroad). Hymne to God the Father (or "Wilt Thou forgive that sin") is the last of Humfrey's five devotional songs which are among the most expressive miniatures of the time.

SAMUEL SEBASTIAN WESLEY (1810-1876) was a natural son of S. Wesley and seems to have inherited his tendency towards eccentricity as well as his talent as a composer and organist (both Wesleys were famed for their extemporizing at this instrument). A choir-boy at the Chapel Royal, he later became successively organist of Hereford, Exeter, Winchester and Gloucester Cathedrals. We hear tonight his Largetto in F# minor for organ.

The Gavotte from "Three Short Pieces" is by SAMUEL WESLEY (1766-1837), father of the above, who was himself son of Charles and nephew of John, founders of the Methodist movement. Samuel's musical talent was apparent as a child - by the time he was eight he had already composed an oratorio. His friends included Mendelssohn, and both men were champions of Bach at a time when that composer's genius was less well recognised than it is today.

BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913-1976) was educated in Norfolk where his talent was encouraged by Frank Bridge, and at the Royal College of Music, where he studied composition under John Ireland. Hymn to St. Cecilia, Op.27, is one of the fruits of Britten's artistic association with the poet W. H. Auden in the late 1930's. Written in five voices, there is a soprano soloist in the final section in addition to four solo phrases which appear subsequently in different voices, representing respectively timpani (bass), violin (alto), flute (soprano) and trumpet (tenor).

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CHARLES WOOD (1866-1926) was an Irish composer who held the post of Professor of Music at Cambridge. His anthem for Double Choir, Hail Gladdening Light, is to words by John Keble. Written for the most part

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in a broad declamatory style, there is an increase of movement in the central section with fugal entries for "The lights of evening".

SIR EDWARD ELGAR (1857-1934) first made his mark on the musical world as an instrumentalist (he played strings, bassoon and trombone), bandmaster and violin teacher, and gradually became known as a composer through the various British festivals. The Shower, Op.71 no.1, is in four parts, to lines from a poem by Henry Vaughan (1621-1695). Dedicated to Miss Frances Smart of Malvern (where Elgar lived before he moved to Hereford), the piece is a short reverie with some self-evident word painting.

My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land, also by Elgar, is to words by Andrew Lang. The central section has a distinctive texture produced by the soprano and tenor lines singing in unison while the remaining parts provide a string-like accompaniment.

SIR CHARLES V. STANFORD (1852-1924), conductor and composer (he published 177 Opus numbers) taught at Cambridge and at the Royal College of Music where Vaughan Williams was among his pupils. The Blue Bird, Op.119 no.3, is a charming, nostalgic part-song to words by Mary Coleridge. It has been described as "a rounded and perfect miniature...to be classed with the best, in equivalent fields, of Mendelssohn, Sullivan, and Schumann".

SIMON PRESTON (b.1938) was educated at King's College, Cambridge, and has since been sub-organist at Westminster Abbey and acting organist to St. Alban's Abbey. From 1970 he has been organist and lecturer in music at Christ Church, Oxford, and conducted the BBC Choir from 1971-74. Tonight we hear his "Allelujas" for organ.

SIR WILLIAM WALTON (1902-1983) also has associations with Christ Church, Oxford - he was a chorister in the Cathedral - but apart from this he was largely self-taught as a musician. Set Me as a Seal was written in 1938 (by which date Walton had already produced the Viola Concerto, "Belchazzar's Feast", and a Symphony) to words from the Song of Solomon. It is dedicated "to the Honourable Ivor Guest and the Lady Mabel Fox-Strangeways on the occasion of their marriage, Nov.22nd, 1938". An allusion to this happy event may perhaps be seen in Walton's use of two soloists: tenor and (later) answering soprano.

The last work to be heard in this all-British programme is by the English composer GERALD FINZI (1901-1956). The anthem, God is Gone Up, was composed for St. Cecilia's Day Service at St. Sepulchre's Church, Holborn in 1951, to words from "Sacramental Meditations" by Edward Taylor (1646?-1729). It is written in an A-B-A form (with some tonal variations towards the end), the A-section being distinguished by an opening unison statement which contrasts with the more pastoral quality of the "piu animando" (the central section).

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