

The Chantry Singers

A SUMMER POSY

Polovtsian Dances Borodin

and music by

Britten, Vaughan Williams and Seiber

Piano: Berendina Cook

Flute: David Smith

Conductor: Peter Coulson

Saturday 29th June, 1996
Tormead School, Guildford

Programme

Three Hungarian Folk-Songs

Mátyás Seiber
(1905-1960)

1. The Handsome Butcher
2. Apple, apple
3. The Old Woman

Fantaisie

Gabriel Fauré
(1845-1924)

Three Shakespeare Songs

R. Vaughan Williams
(1872-1958)

1. Full Fathom Five (*The Tempest*, Act 1, Sc. 2)
2. The Cloud Capp'd Towers (*The Tempest*, Act IV, Sc. 1)
3. Over Hill, Over Dale (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act III, Sc. 1)

Flute Sonata - 2nd movement: Scherzo

Sergey Prokofiev
(1891-1953)

Three Folksong Arrangements

1. Strawberry Fair arr. Donald James
2. Yarmouth Fair arr. Peter Warlock
3. Dashing away with the smoothing iron arr. John Rutter

Interval of twenty minutes

Five Flower Songs

Benjamin Britten
(1913-1976)

1. To Daffodils
2. The Succession of the Four Sweet Months
3. Marsh Flowers
4. The Evening Primrose
5. Ballad of Green Broom

Valse

Benjamin Godard
(1849-1895)

Polovtsian Dances (from *Prince Igor*)

Alexander Borodin
(1833-1887)

Mátyás Seiber was an Hungarian-born composer and cellist. He studied at the Budapest Academy from 1919 to 1924, where he was taught composition by Kodaly. Seiber had great influence as a teacher himself, and he taught at Morley College in England from 1942. His *Three Hungarian Folk-Songs* are full of rhythmic energy and rustic charm.

Fauré's *Fantaisie*, Op. 79, was written in 1898 for flute and piano; it was later orchestrated by Aubert in 1958.

The *Three Shakespeare Songs* were specially composed for the The British Federation of Music Festivals National Competitive Festival in June 1951. *Full Fathom Five* is introduced with the tolling of the bell by the sopranos (divided into four parts), altos, and tenors, and the haunting melody is sung by the basses. The second song, *The Cloud Capp'd Towers*, is an evocative setting of the words, and described by Michael Kennedy as a 'perfect miniature masterpiece'. The third movement takes us through a swift journey over hill and over dale until its quiet conclusion.

Prokofiev's Flute Sonata, Op. 94, was written in 1943. It was later transcribed for the violin by David Oistrakh.

Strawberry Fair is a west-country folk-song. It has been delightfully arranged by Donald James. *Yarmouth Fair* is a Norfolk folk-tune, with words by Hal Collins. The story is coloured effectively by the part-writing, with some delicious harmonic effects. *Dashing away with the smoothing iron* is a traditional song, arranged here by John Rutter. The piece moves through several keys until the last verse, when the bells are tolled by the accompanying voices, because the 'darling' is seen on a Sunday morning.

Britten's *Five Flower Songs* were written as a silver wedding anniversary present for two friends in April 1950. They show Britten's skill at writing for the part-song idiom, and his ability to match the words with the appropriate music. The first two songs are settings of words by Robert Herrick, *To Daffodils* and *The Succession of the Four Sweet Months*. The third song is a setting of *Marsh Flowers* by George Crabbe. Here Britten depicts the more unattractive aspects of nature with strong and forceful rhythms. The fourth song conjures the tranquil atmosphere of John Clare's poem, *The Evening Primrose*, and the group is completed by the lively *Ballad of Green Broom*.

Benjamin Godard was a French composer and violinist. His *Valse* from *Trois Morceaux* was written for flute and piano.

In 1969 a friend of Borodin's suggested an opera on the subject of Prince Igor. This appealed to Borodin's sense of nationalism. However the difficulties with the libretto and the interruptions from his scientific career made composition slow, and the work, which is considered to be his masterpiece, was never finished. The opera was completed by Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov. In the *Polovtsian Dances* one hears Borodin's melodic and harmonic originality at its best.

The sopranos begin with a lilting melody, which is then continued by the altos. The piano then plays a fast dance-like section, which is followed by the full choir's hymn of praise to Khan Konchak. The tenors and basses then declaim their praise over a fast and furious accompaniment. Respite from this comes when the sopranos enter with the opening melody. The final section races to the end with the piano becoming more animated, while the choir sings its devotion with held chords.

Three Hungarian Folk-Songs

Mátyás Seiber

1. Seven locks upon the red gate,
Seven gates about the red town,
In the town there lives a butcher,
And his name is Handsome John Brown.

John Brown's boots are polished so fine,
John Brown's spurs, they jingle and shine,
On his coat a crimson flower,
In his hand a glass of red wine.

In the night the golden spurs ring,
In the dark the leather boots shine.
Don't come tapping at my window
Now your heart no longer is mine.

2. By a river there's a little orchard,
In the orchard stood the miller's daughter.
Apple, apple, fallen in the water,
By the stream I kissed the miller's daughter.

3. In the window, out the front door,
Throw old nanny from the top floor.
Pack her head into a basket,
Let her sell it in the market.

Come on, children, welcome each one,
At our party we'll have good fun.
Drink and eat and roister all day.
Farmer Johnny's bullock will pay.

For a coachman, we've a black dog.
For a footman, we've a roast hog.
On his back a loaf of white bread,
And a bottle on his big head.

Three Shakespeare Songs

R. Vaughan Williams

1. Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea change
Into something rich and strange;
Sea nymphs hourly ring his knell;
Hark now I hear them: ding dong bell.
2. The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded, leave not a rack behind:
We are such stuff as dreams are made on,
And our little life is rounded with a sleep.
3. Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,

I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moone's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.

The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:

I must go seek some dew drops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

Five Flower songs

Benjamin Britten

1. (Herrick)

Fair daffodils we weep to see
You haste away so soon:
As yet the early rising sun
Has not attained his noon;
Stay, stay, until the hasting day
Has run but to evensong:
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you.
We have as short a spring,
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.
Fair daffodils you haste away;
We die, as your hours do,
And dry away like to the summer's rain
Or as the pearls of morning's dew
Ne'er to be found again.

2. (Herrick)

First, April, she with mellow showers
Opens the way for early flowers.
Then after her comes smiling May
In a more rich and sweet array;
Next enters June and brings us more
Gems than those two that went before;
Then (lastly) July comes and she
More wealth brings in than all those three.

3. (Crabbe)
Here the strong mallow strikes her slimy root,
Here the dull nightshade hangs her deadly fruit;
On hills of dust the henbane's faded green
And pencilled flower of sickly scent is seen;
Here on its wiry stem, in rigid bloom
Grows the salt lavender that lacks perfume.
At the wall's base the fiery nettle springs
With fruit globose and fierce with poisoned stings;
In every chink delights the fern to grow
With glossy leaf and tawny bloom below.
The few dull flowers that o'er the place are spread
Partake the nature of their ferny bed.
These with our seaweeds rolling up and down,
Form the contracted flora of our town.

4. (Clare)
When once the sun sinks in the west,
And dew drops pearl the evening's breast,
Almost as pale as moonbeams are,
The evening primrose opes anew
Its delicate blossoms to the dew;
And hermit-like, shunning the light,
Wastes its fair bloom upon the night;
Who, blindfold to its fond caresses
Knows not the beauty he possesses.
Thus it blooms on while night is by;
When day looks out with open eye,
'Bashed at the gaze it cannot shun,
It faints and withers and is gone.

5. (Anon.)

There was an old man lived out in the wood,
And his trade was a-cutting of broom, green broom.
He had but one son without thought, without good
Who lay in his bed till t'was noon, bright noon.
The old man awoke one morning and spoke.
He swore he would fire the room, that room,
If his John would not rise and open his eyes
And away to the wood to cut broom, green broom.
So Johnny arose and slipped on his clothes
And away to the wood to cut broom, green broom.
He sharpened his knives, and for once he contrives
To cut a great bundle of broom, green broom.
When Johnny passed under a lady's fine house
She called to her maid: 'Go fetch me' she said,
'Go fetch me the boy that sells broom, green broom.'
When Johnny came in to the lady's fine house,
And stood in the lady's fine room, fine room,
'Young Johnny' she said, 'will you give up your trade,
And marry a lady in bloom, full bloom,
And marry a lady in bloom?'
Johnny gave his consent and to church they both went,
And he wedded the lady in bloom.
At market and fair, all folks do declare,
There's none like the boy that sold broom, green broom,
There's none like the boy that sold broom.

The next *Chantry Singers* concert will be with orchestra, and will take place on Saturday 7th December 1996 in Holy Trinity Church, Guildford. The programme will be Haydn's *Te Deum in C*, Mozart's *Vesperae de Dominica* and Mozart's *Great C Minor Mass*.