

The Chantry Singers

BACH
Jesu Meine Freude
HOWELLS
Requiem

Conductor Andrew Wilson

Holy Trinity Church, Guildford
Saturday 21st March 1998

Jesu, meine Freude, BWV227

JS Bach

-Jesu, meine Freude

(1685-1750)

-Es ist nun nichts

-Unter deinem Schirmen

-Denn das Gesetz

-Trotz, dem alten Drachen

-Ihr aber seid nicht fleischlich

-Weg, mit allen Schätzen

-So aber Christus in euch ist

-Gute Nacht

-So nun der Geist

-Weicht, ihr Trauergeister

(Solo: Hilary Cotton, Kevin Jacot, Simon Brennan. Continuo: Sarah Baldock)

Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, BWV542

JS Bach

Hear my prayer, O Lord

H Purcell

(1659-1695)

Crucifixus

A Lotti

(1667-1740)

I N T E R V A L

Faire is the heaven

WH Harris

(1883-1973)

Requiem

H Howells

-Salvator mundi

(1892-1983)

-The Lord is my shepherd

-Requiem aeternam

Psalm Prelude, Op.32, No.1

H Howells

"Here is a poor man who cried and the Lord heard him, yea and saved him out of all his troubles" Ps.34 v.6

Requiem (cont'd)

-I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills

-Requiem aeternam

-I heard a voice from heaven

(Solo: Claire Rennison, Jane George, Kevin Jacot, Simon Brennan)

The music in this evening's programme is of a reflective nature to coincide with the Christian penitential season of Lent. Most of Bach's motets date from the period in his life when he was musical director and choirmaster of St. Thomas's school in Leipzig. Motets were sung at the start of special services (this one was written for the funeral of the postmaster's widow on 18 July 1723) and most are based on biblical texts. The performances usually involved more voices than the school choristers, so Bach was able to use between 5 and 8 vocal parts. *Jesu, meine Freude* is in five parts in the larger choruses but Bach uses a variety of textures in the other movements; soprano and altos only in *Denn das Gesetz*, no basses in *Gute Nacht* and no soprano part in *So aber Christus*. Bach's love of symmetry is seen in many of his later works (*Credo* of the B minor mass for example) and is apparent in this motet. The opening and closing chorale movements are identical, movements two and ten use the same material, and movements 3-5 relate to movements 7-9. The central movement is a fugue.

The German born Antonio Lotti is chiefly remembered for his 8-part motet *Crucifixus*, yet his output was much larger and he wrote over 20 operas, 7 oratorios and many solo cantatas and masses during his time in Venice. He took part in the music making at the famous St. Mark's basilica for most of his life, rising from singer to organist and then *maestro di capella* in 1736. He combined this with composing many operas for the Venetian theatres. Although his reputation now rests on only one very small motet, he was very highly regarded by his contemporaries and (unusually for the time) well into the latter part of the century. One critic at the end of the century wrote, "his style is simple and clear and no one in modern times has possessed, better than he, the art of having the voice sing in a natural manner . . . in his madrigals and church music he is at least the equal of A. Scarlatti, and his superiority over all other masters of his time is incontestable".

Like Lotti, Sir William Harris is remembered for only a handful of works. He won an organ scholarship to the Royal College of Music in 1899 before embarking on a teaching and playing career which culminated with him holding the position of professor of organ and harmony at the RCM in 1929, a position which he held until 1953. While he was in Oxford he founded the university opera club and conducted one of the first modern-day performances of Monteverdi's opera, *Orfeo*. His compositions were rooted in the conservative Anglican tradition, but his two double-choir anthems *Faire is the heaven* (text by Edward Spenser) and *Bring us, O Lord* are fine examples of his rich chromatic style and his ability to handle large and spacious textures.

Herbert Howells also spent much of his time composing solo organ and church music, but unlike Harris, he also composed some fine orchestral and chamber music as well. He studied at the Royal College of Music where his teachers included Stanford, who conducted the first performance of his Piano Concerto. He began teaching at the RCM in 1920, a job which he combined with Director of Music at St. Paul's Girls School in London where he followed Holst. His mature style is a fusion of many of his English teachers and contemporaries including Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Walton and Parry. He wrote six psalm preludes for organ and they are all written in an improvisatory manner as meditations on the spirit of the texts on which they are based. The *Requiem* dates from 1936 and was the first working of some of his ideas that were to find their way into the *Hymnus Paradisi* of 1938. This was a work for full orchestra and soloists which had its origin in the death in 1935 of the composer's only son, Michael, aged 9 from spinal meningitis. It was 12 years before *Hymnus Paradisi* received its first performance under Vaughan Williams in 1950, and not until 1980 was the *Requiem* first performed after the various manuscripts were pieced

together. There are 6 separate movements, all intended to stand alone. In the tradition set by Brahms, the text is a collection of contemplative bible verses, rather than a setting of all the Requiem mass text (like Verdi and Fauré for example). The final "they rest from their labours" has an air of blissful peace that sums up all that Howells must have wished for his child, now released from torment.

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Forthcoming Concerts

Saturday 27 June, 8pm, St Nicolas Church, Guildford.

Programme to include unaccompanied vocal music by Britten, Elgar and Stanford and clarinet music by Finzi.

Saturday 5 December, 8pm, Holy Trinity Church, Guildford.

Programme to include Handel *Zadok the Priest*, Parry *Blest Pair of Sirens*, Vaughan Williams *Five Mystical Songs*, Mathias *Ave Rex*.

Andrew Wilson was born and educated in Leeds. he went on to study at Edinburgh University where he gained a first in music and won the prize for organ performance. Since leaving Edinburgh, he has spent time at Cardiff University studying for an MA in Eighteenth Century Music and in particular, English oratorio of the period, and has continued to give recitals in various parts of the country. He is currently Assistant Director of Music at the Royal Grammar School in Guildford having previously held a similar position in Ipswich, and accompanies the University of London Chamber Choir, with whom he has made a number of recordings. At present he also conducts the Guildford Chorale and Sinfonia, a youth choir and orchestra based in Guildford with whom he undertook a succesful tour of Western France last summer, and examines for GCSE and A-level.

Jesu meine Freude

Jesu, my joy, my heart's repose. Jesu, my treasure, oh, how ceaselessly my fainting heart longs for thee. Lamb of God, my bridegroom, no-one on earth is dearer to me.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Protected by thee, I am free from the raging of all enemies. Let Satan thunder, let the fiend threaten, Jesus is my aid. Even though thunder and lightning rage, even though sin and hell terrify me: Jesus will protect me.

For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Defy the old dragon, defy the jaws of death, defy fear as well! Rage, oh world, and quake, here I stand, singing in perfect peace! The might of God protects me; earth and abyss shall be silent, however much they roar.

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of this.

Away with all earthly treasure, thou art my delight, Jesu, my joy! Away, vain glories, I will not listen to you, I want none of you! Grief distress, cross, shame and death, however much I may suffer, they shall not part me from Jesus.

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit of life because of righteousness.

Goodnight, oh being that has chosen the world, you do not please me!
Goodnight, sins, stay far behind me, do not rise into the light! Goodnight,
pride and vain glory! And to you, life of iniquity, a special goodnight!

But if the Spirit of him that raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that
raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his
Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Give way, you spirits of sadness, for Jesus, the King of Joy, is entering in.
Those who love God must accept even their sadness as pure delight. Though
I suffer mockery and derision here, yet even in grief shalt thou, Jesus, remain
my joy.