

HYMN TO ST. CECILIA (W. H. Auden)

Britten and Auden met while they were both working with a film unit of the British Postal Service. Their collaboration on the *Hymn to St. Cecilia* grew out of a need felt by both men to create a worthy hymn of praise to the patron saint of artists and musicians. The work consists of three movements, corresponding to the three verses of the poem. The first compares the saint to an earlier mythical figure who was also an inspiration to poets and artists, "Blonde Aphrodite". The second symbolizes the elusiveness of inspiration, as its rising theme is tossed about from one section of the choir to another. The third depicts the fall of humanity.

O SACRUM CONVIVIVM

(Sung in Latin)

O sacred feast, in which Christ is consumed; the memory of his passion; the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us. Alleluia.

SUPER FLUMINA BABYLONIS (Psalm 137)

(Sung in Latin)

By the rivers of Babylon — there we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung our harps. For there our captors asked for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, "sing us one of the songs of Zion!"

How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember Jerusalem and set her above my highest joy.

Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites, the day of Jerusalem's fall; how they said, "Tear it down! Down to its foundations!" O Daughter of Babylon, you devastator! Happy shall they be who pay you back what you have done to us, who take your little ones and dash them against the rock!

(As translated in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*)

I LOVE MY LOVE (Traditional)

Gustav Holst was a dedicated teacher, and sought to produce a body of both choral and instrumental works that amateurs could learn and perform with confidence. *I Love My Love* is one of several traditional English texts that he set to music for the community choir of the town of Thaxted, in Essex.

DEEP RIVER

The rich body of spirituals from the African American tradition has been an inspiration for many composers and arrangers. The theme of looking forward to death, as symbolized by crossing the River Jordan, appears frequently in these songs. Songs such as *Deep River* held great power for the people who originally sang them, since the prospect of a happy life after death was virtually the only solace for a destitute and enslaved people. Spirituals continue to carry a highly emotional and potent message, as they express so eloquently the eternal human longings for deliverance from suffering, for justice, and for spiritual peace.

IN PRAISE OF APOLLO (John Keats)

Dominick Argento's setting of Keats' paean to Apollo provides an interesting symmetrical foil to Britten's setting of Auden's *Hymn to St. Cecilia*, with which the second half of the program began. The ancient Greeks attributed mastery of music to Apollo, which went hand in hand with his position of great power and prestige in the pantheon. Among his duties on Mount Olympus was master of the chorus of muses, the sound of which was reputed to be able to heal the sick and bring peace to the most troubled among gods of men.

Concerts at the National Gallery are broadcast live on Radio Station WGMS, 103.5 FM. The use of photographic or recording devices during the performance is not allowed.

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

at the

National Gallery of Art



1991-1992 Season

Celebrating Fifty Years of Free Concerts
in the Nation's Capital

George Manos
Director of Music

Sunday Evenings at Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

2038th Concert

March 8, 1992

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
CONCERT CHOIR

ROBERT FOUNTAIN, *Conductor*

PROGRAM

I

Orlando Gibbons O Clap Your Hands
(1583-1625)

Melchior Vulpius Ascendite Jesu in naviculum
(1570-1615) (Sung in Latin)

II

J. S. Bach Jesu, meine Freude BWV 227
(1685-1750) (Sung in German)

INTERMISSION
(*Twelve minutes*)

III

Benjamin Britten Hymn to St. Cecilia
(1913-1976) (1942)

Olivier Messiaen O sacrum convivium
(B. 1908) (1937)

Ero Sipilä Super flumina Babylonis
(1918-1972) (1963)

IV

Gustav Holst I Love My Love
(1874-1934) (1916)

Traditional, arr. Robert Fountain Deep River

Dominick Argento In Praise of Apollo
(b. 1927) *from A Nation of Cowslips* (1968)

The UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON CONCERT CHOIR consists of sixty-eight undergraduate and graduate students from the School of Music, as well as from other schools on the Madison, Wisconsin, campus. The group rehearses daily to perfect choral literature spanning five centuries. In addition to meeting the demands of the most difficult choral repertoire in English, the choir performs in many other languages, including German, Latin, Italian, French, and Hebrew. It tours regularly throughout the Eastern and Midwestern United States, and has a highly successful tour of Venezuela to its credit. The ensemble's most recent honor was an invitation to sing at the 1990 National Conference of the American Choral Directors' Association.

Conductor ROBERT FOUNTAIN directs the choir with a warm discipline, drawing from his choir members an unusual dedication to both the music and their director. He has been director of choral activities at the University of Wisconsin-Madison since 1971, where he heads the graduate program in choral conducting and directs the Concert Choir and the 250-voice Choral Union. Professor Fountain received his musical training as a voice major at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. After serving on the faculties of Ohio's Mount Union College and Ohio State University, Fountain became professor of singing and director of choral activities at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. During his twenty-two years there, he taught singing and choral conducting, and directed the Oberlin College Choir, which during his tenure further enhanced its reputation as one of the world's finest *a cappella* choirs. Since arriving at the University of Wisconsin, Fountain has enabled that school's Concert Choir to achieve an equally impressive reputation for outstanding choral performance, and has established degree programs in choral conducting at the master of music and doctoral levels. With alumni of his choirs and choral training programs all over the world, Robert Fountain and his approach to choral singing have set the standard for an entire generation of singers and conductors.

NOTES ON THE MUSIC AND TEXT TRANSLATIONS

O CLAP YOUR HANDS

Orlando Gibbons belonged to the transitional generation of English church musicians who received their training while that institution was still solidly in the Roman Catholic tradition, but were called upon later in life to provide music in English for the rites of the newly separated Church of England. *O Clap Your Hands* comes from Gibbons' mature years, and is a magnificent example of English cathedral music. The text, drawn from the Forty-seventh Psalm, is treated in the highly imitative manner which characterizes the choral music of the late Renaissance.

ASCENDENTE JESU IN NAVICULUM (Matthew 8:23-26)
(*Sung in Latin*)

And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm.
(As translated in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*)

JESU, MEINE FREUDE (Chorale texts by Johann Franck; texts of the choruses from *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*, Chapter 8)
(*Sung in German*)

Chorale: Jesus my joy, treasure of my heart, Lamb of God, I love thee more than anything on earth.

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

Chorale: Beneath thy shelter I confront the storm, free from all foes. Let thunder roll and lightning flash, let sin and hell terrify, Jesus will protect me.

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

Chorale: In spite of the old dragon, in spite of the yawning jaws of death, though the world rageth and explodeth, I stand here and sing in complete peace. God's power holdeth me. Earth and the great abyss must be silent, much as they would rumble.

Chorus: But ye are not of the flesh, rather in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.

Chorale: Away with earthly treasures; Jesus, thou art my delight! Begone, vain glories; I no longer need you. Though I must suffer misery, distress, burdens, disgrace, and death, none of these shall part me from Jesus.

Chorus: And if Christ be in you, the body is dead to sin; but the spirit is alive to righteousness.

Chorale: Farewell, ways of the world! Ye no longer please me. Farewell pride and vanity, life of sins, farewell forever!

Chorus: But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, then he that raised up Christ shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit, even that which dwelleth within you.

Chorale: Begone, Spirit of sadness, for the Lord of My Joy, Jesus, steppeth forth. To them that love God, all troubles become pure sweetness. Here I endure mockery and scorn, but thou remainest with me in my suffering, Jesus, my joy!