

30.3.85



PRESENTS ON

SATURDAY 30th MARCH AT 7.30 PM IN

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, MAPLE ROAD, SURBITON

PURCELL : COME YE SONS OF ART

BRITTEN : REJOICE IN THE LAMB

BACH : MAGNIFICAT

Conductor: ROBIN PAGE

Organ: KENNETH LAWRENCE

with CLIVE STAPLEY: Oboe

Soloists:	HELEN ASTRID	Soprano
	FIONA LAMONT	Soprano
	NATANYA HADDA	Mezzo-soprano
	NICHOLAS HILLS	Tenor
	ANDREW MAYOR	Bass

PROGRAMME 10p

Affiliated to the National Federation of Music Societies

## HENRY PURCELL (1659 - 1695) : COME YE SONS OF ART

Like Bach, Purcell was born into a musical family. Like Bach he never travelled (his short but prodigiously creative life was spent entirely in London); and like Bach--and Britten--he wrote all kinds of music well. Purcell was lucky: the restoration of the monarchy and the established church a few months after his birth revived the need for occasional and liturgical music, from which he derived a comfortable living. He was a chorister at the Chapel Royal, an excellent place to attract high patronage, Charles II encouraging the boys to write music for performance. The King apparently preferred these pieces to the work of older composers. The highpoint of Purcell's uneventful life was his appointment as organist of Westminster Abbey in 1680, at the age of 21, where his easy-going personality assured him the affection and cooperation of his contemporaries. We know this not by any testimony to that effect--but because he could not otherwise have escaped the scandal-mongering of the many diarists then in London, Samuel Pepys among them.

"Come ye sons of art" was the last of 6 Birthday Odes Purcell wrote for Queen Mary, wife of William III. She was 33 and died the same year. The author of the words remains, deservedly, anonymous. In order to make the words scan, poetically, Purcell often repeats words, as in the opening "Come, come ye sons of art". The piece is in D major and seldom changes key, relying on changes of tempo and mood for its variety. For example, note in No. 6 how Purcell moves from polyphonic writing, where each part has an independent melody, to homophonic writing, where the parts move together. In No. 3, the well known "Sound the Trumpet", the whole duet is built over a "ground bass", that is, a repeated phrase in the bass.

1. OVERTURE
2. ALTO SOLO & CHORUS Come, come ye sons of art
3. DUET Sound the trumpet
4. SYMPHONY & CHORUS Come, come ye sons of art
5. ALTO SOLO WITH "FLUTES" (RECORDERS) Strike the viol, touch the lute
6. BASS SOLO WITH CHORUS The day that such a blessing gave
7. SOPRANO SOLO WITH OBOE Bid the virtues, bid the Graces
8. BASS SOLO These are the sacred charms that shield
9. DUET WITH CHORUS See Nature, rejoicing, has shown us the way

## BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913 - 1976) : REJOICE IN THE LAMB

Britten greatly admired the music of Bach and Purcell. He edited many of Purcell's songs, and his own music is similarly vocal in conception. He hated London however, remaining a Suffolk countryman at heart: "Ultimately it is to me the local things that matter most", he once wrote. This apparent provincialism belies his extremely professional approach to music: he was, by all accounts, a hard task-master.

"Rejoice in the Lamb" was commissioned in 1943 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the consecration of a Northampton church. It was war-time, and Britten was then giving concerts with Peter Pears as a condition of his "conscientious objector" status. The piece was in fact orchestrated, at Britten's request, by Imogen Holst, daughter of the composer Gustav Holst, for the 1952 Aldeburgh Festival, and it won her the job of Britten's musical assistant. He chose the text from "Jubilate Agno" by the 18th-century poet, Christopher Smart: only half the poem had survived and it was published in the 1930s. Smart wrote it in a lunatic asylum which he retired to periodically, being of unstable temperament. Despite

the poet's undoubted suffering, he seems to bear no malice to his Maker, the poem praising God wholeheartedly. Britten sets it sympathetically, the music ranging from the rhythmic complexity of "Let Nimrod, the mighty Hunter", to the simple grandeur of "Hallelujah". There are echoes of Purcell too: the canonic entries of the voices over a static bass line at "For I am in 12 hardships" is similar to his use of the ground bass.

1. CHORUS Rejoice in God, O ye Tongues
2. TREBLE SOLO For I will consider my Cat Jeoffrey
3. ALTO SOLO For the Mouse is a creature of great personal valour
4. TENOR SOLO For the flowers are great blessings
5. CHORUS For I am under the same accusation with my Saviour
6. RECITATIVE (BASS SOLO) AND CHORUS For H is a spirit
7. CHORUS Hallelujah

## JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685 - 1750) : MAGNIFICAT

It is hard to see Bach as a minor musical talent--yet that is what he was to his contemporaries. Handel, born within one month and 80 miles of Bach, knew of him as a competent organist but never met him. Very little of Bach's music was published during his lifetime; indeed, his larger choral works were forgotten for nearly a century after his death. He never held any prestigious post, working as organist and choirmaster in fairly provincial towns. He never travelled far, although he eagerly kept abreast of musical developments when he could. An orphan at 10, he was raised by a strict elder brother, who decided that Bach should make his own way in the world and enrolled him, aged 15, as a choral singer in Luneberg. Here he learnt his craft, and various appointments as organist followed, until in 1723 he became Cantor of St. Thomas' School in Leipzig.

The Magnificat was written for a Christmas performance in St. Thomas' Church. It may have been presented dramatically, with extra movements portraying the Nativity interpolated. The chorus is used for descriptive, realistic effects: notice how it leaps in with the words "Omnes generationes (all generations)", and the literal dispersal of the voices at the word "dispersit" in No. 7. In the traditionally joyous key of D major, it is a vivid hymn of praise.

1. CHORUS Magnificat (My soul doth magnify the Lord)
2. AIR Et exultavit spiritus meus (And my spirit hath rejoiced)
3. AIR Quia respexit (For He hath regarded)
4. CHORUS Omnes generationes (For behold, all generations)
5. AIR Quia fecit mihi magna (For He that is mighty)
6. AIR Et misericordia (And His mercy is on them)
7. CHORUS Fecit potentiam (The Lord hath shewed strength)
8. AIR Deposuit potentes (He hath put down the mighty)
9. AIR Esurientes implevit bonis (He hath filled the hungry)
10. TERZETT Suscepit Israel (His servant Israel)
11. CHORUS Sicut locutus est (Even as He promised)
12. CHORUS Gloria Patri (Glory be to the Father)

Janet Roots, B.A.

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We hope you have enjoyed this performance. Our next concert will be on SATURDAY JUNE 15th at 7.30 pm in KINGSTON PARISH CHURCH, when we shall be performing BERNSTEIN : CHICHESTER PSALMS and ROSSINI : STABAT MATER.

NEW SINGERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

Rehearsals of this Society are held on Thursdays at 7.45 pm in Surbiton Library Hall (Rehearsal Pianist: Mary Fuller). Please speak to any member of the Society during the interval if you would like to find out more about us, or telephone our Membership Secretary, Mrs Gene Butt, on 546 9226, for more information.

The National Federation of Music Societies, to which this Society is affiliated, gives support towards the cost of our concerts with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain.

We are also grateful for the financial support we receive from the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.



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