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Ensemble Concerts: A Commemorative Concert of Choral Music, October 22, 1973

Donald Armstrong Conductor

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**T H E
W E E P E R**

A COMMEMORATIVE CONCERT OF CHORAL MUSIC

JOHN F. KENNEDY
November 22, 1963

FRANCIS POULENC
January 30, 1963

WILLIAM BYRD
July 4, 1623

THE UNIVERSITY CONCERT CHOIR

Donald Armstrong, Conductor

Monday, 22 October 1973

8:15 p.m.

University Union Ballroom

Department of Music

College of Fine Arts

Illinois State University

PROGRAM

IN MEMORIAM JOHN F. KENNEDY

- A SHEPHERD'S CAROL Benjamin Britten
b. 1913
Poem by W. H. Auden - 1907-1973
- FIVE MOTETS, OPUS 37 Edmund Rubbra
b. 1901
Composed in 1937
- Eternitie—Robert Herrick, 1647
Vain Wits and Eyes—Henry Vaughan, 1655
A Hymne To God the Father—John Donne, 1623
The Search—Henry Vaughan, 1650
A Song—Richard Crashaw, 1648

INTERMISSION

- QUATRE MOTETS POUR UN TEMPS DE PENITENCE Francis Poulenc
1899-1963
Composed in 1938-39
- Timor et Tremor
Vinea mea Electa
Tenebrae factae sunt
Tristis est Anima mea
- MASS FOR FIVE VOICES William Byrd
1543-1623
Published in 1594
- Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison
Gloria in excelsis Deo
Credo in unum Deum
Sanctus
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domine
Agnus Dei

NOTES AND TEXTS

A SHEPHERD'S CAROL

One of Britten's small gems for unaccompanied choir, this piece was composed for a B.B.C. program in 1944, *A Poet's Christmas*. The delicate poem by Auden presents the bravery of man in the face of inevitable time and death in the words of four characters, with the choral refrain hymning the melancholy but comfortable hopefulness of humanity as described in naive, pastoral language.

FIVE MOTETS, OPUS 37

Rubbra is one of the most successful British composers of this century, and yet singularly unsung outside England. The musical language of these secular motets is heavy, intense, and highly chromatic. The poems are typical of most renaissance sacerdotal/poetic utterances, dealing with the abject sin and humility of base man, seeking always for God and forgiveness as he moves toward death.

ETERNITIE

O Yeares! and Age! Farewell:
Behold I go, where I do know
Infinitie to dwell.

And these mine eyes shall see
All times, how they are lost
I'th'Sea of vast Eternitie.

Where never Moore shall sway
The Starres; but she, and Night
Shall be drown'd in one
Endlesse Day.

VAIN WITS AND EYES

Vain Wits and eyes leave, and be wise:
Abuse not, shun not holy fire,
But with true tears wash off your mire.
Tears and these flames will soon grow
Kinde, and mix an eye-salve for the blind.
Tears cleanse and supple without fail,
And fire will purge your callous veyl.
Then comes the light! which when you spy,
And see your nakedness thereby,
Praise Him, who dealt His gifts so free
In tears to you, in fire to me.

A HYMNE TO GOD THE FATHER

Wilt thou forgive that sinne where I begunne
Which is my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt thou forgive those sinnes through which I runne,
And do them still: though still I do deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done, for I have more.

Wilt thou forgive that sinne by which I wonne
Others to sinne? and, made my sinne their doore?
Wilt thou forgive that sinne which I did shunne
A yeare, or two: but wallow'd in, a score?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done, for I have more.

I have a sinne of feare, that when I have spunne
My last thred, I shall perish on the shore;
Swear by thy selfe, that at my death thy Sunne
Shall shine as it shines now, and heretofore;
And, having done that, Thou hast done, I have no more.

LEAVE, LEAVE, THY GADDING THOUGHTS

Leave, leave, thy gadding thoughts;
Who pores and spies still out of doores
Descries within them nought.

The skinne, and shell of things
Though faire, are not thy wish, nor pray'r
But got by meer despair of wings.

To rack old Elements,
Or dust and say sure here he must
Needs stay is not the way nor just.

Search well another world;
Who studies this, travels in clouds,
Seeks manna, where none is.

A SONG

Lord, when the sense of thy sweet grace
Sends up my soul to seek thy face.
Thy blessed eyes breed such desire,
I dy in love's delicious Fire.

O love, I am thy Sacrifice.
Be still triumphant, blessed eyes.
Still shine on me, fair suns! that I
Still may behold, though still I dy.

Though still I dy, I live again;
Still longing so to be still slain,
So gainfull is such losse of breath,
I dy even in desire of death.

Still live in me this loving strife
Of living Death and dying Life.
For while thou sweetly slayest me
Dead to my selfe, I live in Thee.

QUATRE MOTETS POUR UN TEMPS DE PENITENCE (FOUR MOTETS FOR A TIME OF PENITENCE - LENT)

The first thirty-seven years of Poulenc's life included little music of a religious or liturgical nature. The death of a close friend in 1936 prompted his first choral work in this genre, the Litanies a la Vierge Noire for treble voices and organ. The four penitential motets came three years later. Indeed, Poulenc is today primarily famous for his choral and vocal music, including such large scale works as the Mass of 1937, the Stabat Mater, and Gloria. The formal and structural method is somewhat reminiscent of the renaissance polyphonic motet, but the musical language is that blend of austerity and glamour so familiarly belonging to Poulenc.

TIMOR ET TREMOR

Fear and trembling have overcome me,
And darkness descends upon me.
Be merciful to me, Lord; for my soul
Has trusted in Thee.
Hear my prayer, O God, Thou who hast
Been by refuge and defense.
Lord, I call upon Thee;
Let me not be confounded.

TENEBRAE FACTAE SUNT

Darkness fell upon the earth,
When Jesus was crucified by the Jews;
And at about the ninth hour,
Jesus exclaimed in a loud voice:
My God, why have you forsaken me?
And bowing his head, he gave up his spirit.
Jesus exclaimed in a loud voice, saying:
Father, into your hands
I commend my spirit.

VINEA MEA ELECTA

Vine that I chose, and that I planted,
Why have you turned to bitterness,
To crucify me, and free Barrabas?
I protected you, took away the stones,
And built a fortress for you.

TRISTIS EST ANIMA MEA

My soul is sad unto death:
Stay here, and watch for me:
Now you see the crowd,
That comes to take me.
You Flee away, and
I go to suffer for you.
Now is the true hour, and the
Son of Man is betrayed to sinful men.

MASS FOR FIVE VOICES

The three Byrd masses—for three, five, and four voices—have fascinated musicologists and performers for three hundred years. Byrd himself was a fascinating character, being a practicing Roman Catholic in an Anglican land under an Anglican monarch. That he was able to produce music for both services is a tribute not only to the humanity of that monarch, but also to Byrd's stature as a composer and citizen of England.

The present edition of this mass was published in 1972 by Philip Brett. It incorporates two performance practices which serve to lift the music of Byrd out of the milieu of continental liturgical a cappella singing—which is largely an outgrowth of habits developed in the late nineteenth century. Like so many of Byrd's anthems, and those of his contemporaries, for the Anglican service, this performance presents the mass in alternating textures of verse (soloistic) and full (tutti choral) passages. More interesting though probably not as immediately discernible to the listener is an attempt to bring the pronunciation of the liturgical Latin more in line with probable vernacular practices of the time. Thus many Italianate customs are eschewed for a pronunciation which is much more colloquial and less "classical."