

CANTEMUS

NEWBURY

Director: **Robert Ascott**

Accompanist: **Ian Westley**

Saturday 6th November 2004
Church of St Peter & St Paul
Wantage

In aid of the Butler Centre

Entrance by Programme £7



Cantemus thanks the Wantage PCC for kind permission to use this Church.

Programme

Tonight's programme will be performed in 4 sections (3 before and 1 after the interval). Applause is welcomed; it would be appreciated if this were kept until the end of a section.

1

North Country Songs
(solo: Heather Sims)

arr. Malcolm Williamson

1. Captain Bover
 2. Bonny at Morn
 3. Derwentwater's Farewell
 4. Adam Buckham-O!
-

2

Beati Quorum Via

Charles Villiers Stanford

Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.

Ave Maris Stella

Edvard Grieg

Hail, O Star of the ocean, God's own Mother blest, ever sinless Virgin, gate of heav'nly rest. Break the sinners' fetters, make our blindness day, chase all evils from us, for all blessings pray. Keep our life all spotless, make our way secure, till we find in Jesus joy for evermore. Praise to God the Father, honour to the Son, in the Holy Spirit be the glory one. Amen.

Ave Maria

Sergei Rachmaninov

Be glad, O Mother of God, Blessed Mary, God is with you. You are blessed in marriage and in the flesh from your womb. Indeed a saviour and spirit is born.

Ave Maria

Giuseppe Verdi

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Christus Factus Est

Anton Bruckner

Christ became obedient for us, even unto death, death upon the cross. Because of this, God raised him and bestowed on him the name which is above all names.

3

Organ solo (Ian Westley):

Three Preludes founded on Welsh Hymn Tunes

Ralph Vaughan-Williams

1. Bryn Calfaria
 2. Rhosymedre
 3. Hyfrydol
-

Interval

Refreshments are available in the North Transept

4

Venite ('O Come let us sing unto the Lord')

Donald Swann

Te Deum in C ('We praise thee O God')
(solo: Sheenagh Dernie)

Benjamin Britten

Jubilate ('O be Joyful in the Lord')

John Rutter

Gloria ('Glory be to God on high')

Herbert Howells

(from the Collegium Regale Holy Communion Service)

Programme Notes

Malcolm Williamson (1931-2003) was born in Sydney and from 1953 studied under Elizabeth Lutyens in London. In 1975 he became Master of the Queen's Music, a post he held till his death. He had a particularly fine output during the sixties, which was when he wrote these arrangements of songs. His works also include Piano Concertos Nos.1 and 2, the concert overture *Santiago de Espada*, and much music for the theatre including *Our Man in Havana* after Graham Greene and *English Eccentrics* after Edith Sitwell.

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924) was born in Dublin. He played a major role in the renaissance of English music in the late 19th/early 20th centuries as composer, conductor and teacher. As Professor of Composition at the Royal College of Music and at Cambridge for some forty years, he taught such notable students as Ralph Vaughan-Williams, Gustav Holst and Herbert Howells. While his late-Romantic style found expression in every musical medium, Stanford's voluminous sacred music had perhaps the most lasting appeal, and continues to be the foundation of the Anglican tradition.

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) studied at the Leipzig Conservatory before moving to Copenhagen where he met the young composer Rikard Nordraak, an enthusiastic champion of Norwegian music and a decisive influence on him. Grieg's own performances of Norwegian music, often with his wife, the singer Nina Hagerup, established him as a leading figure, bringing subsequent collaboration in the theatre with Bjørnson and Ibsen. He continued to divide his time between composition and concert-giving until his death.

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943) studied at the St Petersburg and Moscow Conservatories before embarking on a career as a composer, pianist and conductor. Exile from Russia after the 1917 Communist revolution forced an increased concentration on performance, as one of the most distinguished pianists of the day; activity that enabled him to support his family but left less time for his work as a composer. He eventually based himself in Beverly Hills, California, though keeping a villa in Switzerland.

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) dominated the world of Italian opera throughout the 19th century. In 1888, a music journal in Milan published what it called an 'enigmatic scale' of unusual intervals, and invited composers to harmonize it. Verdi took up the challenge by using the scale as the basis for a 16th-century style motet on the *Ave Maria* prayer. The ascending/descending scale is set in long notes in the bass, alto, tenor and soprano parts in turn, while the other voices weave around it with chromatic lines and harmonic progressions. Though intended by the composer primarily as a technical exercise, this *Ave Maria* still manages to communicate a sense of great drama and religious integrity.

Anton Bruckner (1824-1896) was born in Ansfelden, Austria, and studied organ, piano, and music theory at the church school at St Florian (some ten miles from Linz). He became the cathedral organist there in 1848. *Christus Factus Est* (Philippians 2: 8-9) is the gradual for the Mass of Maundy Thursday. This is Bruckner's third setting of the text, completed in 1884 just after his seventh symphony and *Te Deum*. It was dedicated to Father Otto Loidol of the Benedictine Monastery of Kremsmünster, to whom the *Locus iste* gradual was also dedicated. It is the most symphonic of Bruckner's motets, and a prime example of the way that he gradually develops harmonic tension and memorable climaxes.

Donald Swann (1923-1994) was in a very similar position to Arthur Sullivan. Both of them achieved immense success with their light music, but dearly wished to succeed with their serious music. Swann made several attempts to 'break through' on the serious side; in particular, he composed a complete opera and he wrote a set of excellent songs to poems of Betjeman. The *Venite* comes from a complete 'Festival Matins' for choir and piano. Swann was moved to write this after hearing Rossini's *Messe Solenne*, much admiring the sound of the piano with a choir in a church.

Herbert Howells (1892–1983) was born in Lydney, Gloucester. During World War 2, the organist of St John's College Cambridge was called up for military service, and Howells was asked to look after the college music throughout the war. Towards the end of this period, King's College asked him to compose for them settings of the *Te Deum* and *Jubilate*. These were so excellent that they soon asked for settings of the *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*. These too were superb, and the four canticles immediately entered the repertoire of cathedrals and college chapels as firm favourites. A decade later King's asked Howells to add a setting of the Holy Communion service, and this he did, producing music of the same style and standard. The *Gloria* has melodic references to both *Te Deum* and *Magnificat*.

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) is generally regarded as the leading British composer of the 20th century - particularly for his operas and choral music. He began composing from the age of five. Devotional music, if not strictly liturgical, played an important part in his prodigious output of vocal works. Of his few liturgical compositions, he wrote two settings of the *Te Deum*, tonight's version in C being the earlier. It was written in 1935 for Maurice Vinden and the choir of St. Mark's, North Audley Street, London.

John Rutter (1945-) was born in London and educated at Clare College Cambridge, where he wrote his first published compositions and conducted his first recording while still an undergraduate. His compositions embrace large and small choral works, orchestra and instrumental pieces, a piano concerto, two children's operas, music for television, and writing for the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble and the King's Singers. His most recent choral works, *Requiem* (1985) and *Magnificat* (1990), have been performed worldwide. From 1975 to 1979 he was Director of Music at Clare College, whose choir he directed in a number of broadcasts and recordings. He formed the Cambridge Singers as a professional chamber choir dedicated to recording, and divides his time between composition and conducting.

Robert Ascott studied choral conducting under James Gaddarn. As a businessman, he has lived overseas for long periods of his life, and as a musician he has held organist and choirmaster posts in many cities of the world, including London, New York and Cologne. He is Treasurer of the Herbert Howells Society and has conducted opera and stage musicals in addition to chamber choirs.

Ian Westley studied music at Reading University where he specialised in piano and organ. He pursues a career as an instrumental and singing teacher, as well as acting as an accompanist and repetiteur. He conducts the Erleigh Cantors of Reading, and is Director of Music at St Peter's Church, Caversham.

'**CANTEMUS (Newbury)**' was formed in 1999 as a small mixed-voice chamber choir based in Newbury. The choir performs four concerts a year, featuring music from all ages. It is affiliated to the National Federation of Music Societies, a body representing amateur vocal and instrumental groups throughout the UK. The choir welcomes applications from competent singers (contact Ian Haslam 01635 820379 or cantemus.2003@ntlworld.com). We also have spaces in our concert calendar and welcome invitations from suitable venues in the Berkshire/Oxfordshire/Wiltshire area (contact Heather Sims, 0118 970 0001).

Sopranos

Deborah Cox
Sheenagh Dernie
Claire Hamilton
Joyce Refausse
Leanne Russell

Altos

Dinny Barker
Bridget Procter
Heather Sims

Tenors

David Ramsbottom
David Wilcox

Basses

Mike Ananin
Geoff Anderson
Andrew Blake
Stephen Blinman
Ian Haslam

Next Cantemus concert:

11th December at 7.30 pm, at St Saviour's Church, Mortimer West End, Reading:
a programme of Christmas music and readings under the direction of Ian Westley.