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Margaret Biery Payne

THE PARK CHURCH

The Rev. Robert F. Lester, Pastor

Albert J. Zabel, Jr. — Organist & Choir Director

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ADMISSION CHARGE, BUT ARE DEPENDENT LARGELY UPON YOUR CON-
TRIBUTIONS AT EACH CONCERT.

THE CANTATA SINGERS

THE PARK CHURCH
Elmira, New York

Sunday, February 20, 1977

8:00 p.m.

A SACRED CHORAL CONCERT

Organ Prelude

4:48 Te Deum Jean Langlais

Choral Introit

2:50 CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART Jean Berger

Processional

All Creatures of Our God and King No. 64

Cantata

21:15 MIRIAM'S SONG OF TRIUMPH Franz Schubert
Janice Strain, *Soprano*
Judith Feitner, *Pianist*

Recessional

For All The Saints No. 306

Organ Offertory

O, THAT I HAD A THOUSAND VOICES Paul Manz

20th Century Hungarian Mass

34:30 MISSA BREVIS Zoltan Kodaly

- Introitus
- Kyrie
- Gloria
- Credo
- Sanctus
- Benedictus
- Agnus Dei
- Ite Missa Est

Janice Strain, *Soprano*
Leslie Constanzer, *Soprano*
Kay Wack, *Soprano*

Gloria Kirk, *Contralto*
Paul Holland, *Tenor*
Thomas Strain, *Bass*
Richard Wack, *Bass*

Geoffrey Kelafant, *Organist*

SOLI DEO GLORIA

THE CANTATA SINGERS

William O. Payne III, Musical Director

SOPRANO

Diane Baker
Patty Campbell
Leslie Constanzer
Susan Feavearyear

Carol King
Sister Juliana O'Hara
Betsy Roll
Judith Sheasley

Hilda Shepard
Janice Strain
Mary Lou Strong
Kay Wack

ALTO

Eunice Bowers
Gwendolyn Egan
Judith Feitner
Betty Grant
Claudia Hamlin
Patricia Hauser

Wendy Roe Hovey
Gloria Kirk
Cora Range
Cindy Roe
Lou Sand

Sister Mary Sayles
Beth Seybold
Florence Suffern
Janet Ty
Helen Vincent

TENOR

Robert Badertscher
Thomas Barker

Paul Holland
Bernard Schreiber

Richard Sheasley
Richard Wack

BASS

Richard Bauer
Stuart Finch
David Hauser

Geoffrey Kelafant
Sidney Reed

Thomas Strain
Michael Wald

ORGANIST

Albert J. Zabel, Jr.

REHEARSAL ACCOMPANIST

Judith Feitner

PROGRAM NOTES

Franz Schubert composed Miriam's Song of Triumph in March of 1828, his final year and the month in which he completed his great C Major Symphony. The text of the work is from Exodus, Chapter XV, and the poetry of Grillpanzer. The work, scored for soprano solo and chorus with piano accompaniment, exhibits frequent Handelian traits, for at the time of its composition Schubert was deeply engrossed in the study of the scores of Handel's oratorios.

Miriam's Song opens with a majestic and chordal C Major introduction in which the soprano soloist and chorus alternately sing phrases praising and extoling the Lord. The second section begins more tranquilly in another key, F Major, with the soloist, chorus, and piano all growing increasingly more agitated as the narrative unfolds, telling of the Jew's flight from Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea. A series of piano tremolos vividly portrays the "floods congealing." An allegro agitato follows, heralding the arrival of Pharaoh's army and the ensuing pursuit. The piano employs chromatic passages and a driving rhythmic pattern to punctuate the recital of the drowning of the Egyptian forces, and an Andantino brings the narrative to a close. The finale begins with a restatement of the introduction. The basses, however, digress to begin a fugue and are joined by the other three voices in ascending order. Complex and ingenious counterpoint ensues, bringing the work to a jubilant close.

MISSA BREVIS

Zoltan Kodaly, the venerable composer, musicologist, and patriot and authority on the music of his native Hungary, first composed the Missa Brevis in 1942 as an organ mass. In 1944, he re-worked the composition and scored it for solo voices, four-part mixed chorus, organ, and orchestra. It was first performed in Pecs, Hungary, in 1945. The mass's wide-spread appeal can be attributed to its open lyricism and direct and outspoken simplicity, free from the confines of nationality or denomination.

The composer begins the work with an organ prelude, here called the Introitus, which in its modest length of fifty-one measures, employs all the primary thematic material to be heard throughout the course of the mass.

In the Kyrie, Kodaly uses the traditional form of A - B - A. He achieves a remarkable contrast between the A sections (Kyrie eleison) and the B sections (Christe eleison) by scoring the former for the lower voices and then scoring the latter for the sopranos and higher middle voices. The result is all the more striking due to the brevity of the entire Kyrie section. For in a mere seventeen measures, the composer transports the listener from the dark and almost plodding intoning of the Kyrie eleison to the light and almost transparent floating of the Christe eleison.

Following the traditional intoning of the "Gloria in excelsis Deo," the full chorus enters singing the jubilant "et in terra Pax!" The use of the purely chordal structure of the chorus which is set against the continually flowing organ scoring creates a feeling of almost uncontrollable joy. This happy out-pouring soon gives way, however, to the somber "qui tollis.... miserere" which reminds the listener, most poignantly, of Him, "who takest away the sins of the world." The entire section closes with a return to the opening thematic material which accompanies the text "Quoniam tu Solus Sanctus."

Of the five major sections of the Missa Brevis, the Credo is probably the most romantically programatic. Kodaly treats the text with the utmost deference, taking great care that every word and its meaning is properly conveyed. At no point in this section is the beauty of the music permitted to interfere with the text which is the re-affirmation of Man's supreme belief.

The composition of the Sanctus and the Benedictus sections is so closely interwoven that the two must really be considered as one large section, conceived once again in the traditional A - B - A form. The Sanctus opens with the single word "Sanctus" scored for four-part women's voices and set in counterpoint. These voices are soon joined by the male voices, however, and this A section closes with a treatment of the exclamation "Hosanna." The harmonic meanderings of these last few measures are ingenious and are worthy of a Richard Strauss in their conception. These same harmonic changes serve to introduce the tonality of the Benedictus, B Major, and permit the composer a much freer use of harmonic progression than he has enjoyed up to this point. The Benedictus is actually conceived here almost as a simple song with each phrase being carefully tailored to every nuance of the text. With a return to the material of the A section, we hear the traditional re-statement of the "Hosanna."

The thematic material of the Agnus Dei is derived directly from that of the Gloria. In this treatment, however, the material is developed much more intricately and completely. The solo voices are used once again, but this time they are used in collaboration with the full chorus.

The composer was apparently not completely delighted with ending the Mass on such a subdued scale when first he scored it for organ; for the original version includes a postlude which he entitled "Ite, missa est." This closing organ solo states, most nobly, the motives first heard in the "Introitus" and serves to bring the work to a brilliant close.

Margaret Biery Payne