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Elmira, New York

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THE CANTATA SINGERS

A SACRED CHORAL CONCERT

Organ Prelude

7:15 O Mensch bewein' dein' Suende gross J.S. Bach

9:55 I STABAT MATER DOLOROSA
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

14:55 II MOTETS FOR THE SEASON OF LENT Francis Poulenc
3:00 Timor et tremor venerunt super me
4:20 Vineam meam electam 7:20
4:15 Tenebrae factae sunt 1:35
3:20 Tristis est anima mea

Offertory

4:22 Toccata per l'Elevatione from Fiori Musicali
Girolamo Frescobaldi

11:55 III PSALM XXIII Randall Thompson
The Lord is my shepherd

10:05 IV SONGS OF WORSHIP Jean Berger
2:15 O Magnify the Lord
3:00 Create in me a clean heart
2:20 We bow our heads in reverence
2:30 Benediction

SOLI DEO GLORIA

THE CANTATA SINGERS

William O. Payne III, Musical Director

SOPRANO

Debbie Courtney	Sr. Juliana O'Hara	Hilda Shepard
Jean Doherty	Anna Rice	Janice Strain
Linda Harrison	Judy Sheasley	Mary Lou Strong
Carol King		Kay Wack

ALTO

Deborah Barton	Judith Feitner	Cora Range
Nancy Basil	Claudia Hamlin	Lou Sand
Eunice Bowers	Patricia Hauser	Florence Suffern
Diane Earle	Gloria Kirk	Helen Vincent
Gwen Egan		Charlotte Von Henty

TENOR

Robert Badertscher	Jonathan Guest	Richard Sheasley
Edmund Dana	Paul Holland	Richard Wack

BASS

Richard Bauer	Sidney Reed	Thomas Strain
Stuart Finch	James Sanderson	Michael Wald
David Hauser		

ORGAN

James Sanderson

REHEARSAL ACCOMPANIST

Judith Feitner

PROGRAM NOTES

It is generally agreed by performers and musicologists alike that the "Stabat Mater" of Palestrina ranks as one of the greatest of all settings of its text and is one of the major milestones in all of choral music. Proof of its enduring qualities lies in the fact that after over four hundred years, the work is still being performed not only in concert but also as part of the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church.

The work was not published until after the composer's death in 1572, but almost certainly it belongs with that group of motets and masses which were composed during the last few years of Palestrina's life. The majestic simplicity and straightforward treatment of the text almost seem to belie the composer's justly earned reputation of master polyphonist, for with the exception of the close of the work, the entire piece is homophonic, or chordal, in structure.

Sir George Grove says of the work, "no survey of Palestrina's motets, however brief, would be complete without some mention of the eight-part setting of the sequence known as the 'Stabat Mater,' which has justly earned the praise of most writers on music from Burney (who introduced it to England in 1771) onwards. It is music of surpassing beauty and significance from the dignified homophony at the beginning--a relentless succession of triads seeming to portray the tragic scene of Calvary--to the ineffable ending, where a simple motif (merely four ascending notes) moving from voice to voice at the final words 'paradisi gloria' evokes a celestial vision."

The "Quatre Motets pour un temps de penitence" date from the years 1938 and 1939 and are settings of the texts concerning the Crucifixion and Christ's last words from the cross. The texts of the four motets are apparently the composer's own compilations of various sections taken from the Gospels, for nowhere can they be found as an entity. The end result, however, is sheer creative genius. Not only is the true meaning imparted, but by paraphrasing some portions of the original text, the composer can also comment on its significance.

These motets are also an excellent example of Poulenc's long-held belief that the music should fully serve the word being sung. The composer employs every compositional technique and device to achieve this end. One example can be found in the ever-changing meter signatures. Relying on the age-old rule of strong and weak beats in any given measure, the composer merely changes the meter of the measure by adding or subtracting a beat and thereby makes the meter fit the text. Throughout these four motets, this technique is most effective when employed at the ends of phrases, for not only does the music fit the text, but the elongated measures also serve to add a sense of repose before a new theme or portion of text is introduced.

The choral works of the contemporary American composer, Randall Thompson, are becoming increasingly well known to the Cantata Singers' audiences. Thompson's music seems to have an immediate appealing quality which permits it to be appreciated on many levels--often on first hearing. Commissioned in 1962, the composer chose to set the text of the Twenty-Third Psalm to honor the memory of Dorothy C. Drake, the choral director at the Chapin School in New York City. The result of the commission is a rather extended work for S.A.T.B. chorus and accompaniment of either piano, harp, or organ. This evening's performance will be accompanied by Dr. James Sanderson, organist and choir director at Elmira's First Baptist Church, and also a member of the bass section of the Cantata Singers, who take great pleasure in introducing him to their audience.

The four songs of Jean Berger which close this evening's concert are from a cycle of six songs entitled "Songs of Worship" and are scored for S.A.T.B. *a cappella*. The texts of these songs are paraphrases of familiar prayers and hymns set to music which gives them a bright, fresh sound. Through the use of interesting rhythmic patterns and lush harmonies, the composer has created a setting for the texts which seems very new--as if the words were being sung for the very first time.