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The Cantata Singers

THOMAS J. FOLAN III, Director

Dr. Kent Hill, Organist

Sunday, February, 11, 1990
 8:00 p. m.

First United Methodist Church
 Horseheads, New York

PROGRAM

Festival Te Deum Jubilate Deo	Benjamin Britten 1913-1976
Nunc Dimittis	Gustav Holst 1874-1934
Te Deum and Jubilate	Herbert Howells 1892-1982
- pause -	
Take Him, Earth, For Cherishing	Herbert Howells
Benedictus (1931) Kent Hill, organ	Alec Rowley
Festival Te Deum O Clap Your Hands	Ralph Vaughan Williams 1872-1958

* S O L I D E O G L O R I A *

AN OFFERING will be gratefully received during the pause. The Cantata Singers take pleasure in presenting their concerts without admission charge, and this practice depends a great deal upon your contributions. To be added to our mailing list for future events, please leave your name and address in the collection plate.

NEW MEMBERS are welcome to audition for the Cantata Singers' Bach Festival in May. Please contact Tom Folan, 1-272-9385, or Jane Kerber, 732-0060.

THE CANTATA SINGERS

SOPRANOS

Ruth Bruning
Deborah Courtney
Andrea Folan
Linda Harrison
Dorothy Hoos
Nancy Husisian
Kathy Lovell
Jane Kerber
Judy McFarland
Laura McGrath
Frances McLaren
Judith Edson Sheasley
Kay Kennedy Wack
Rebecca L. Wald

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David Hauser
Jeffrey Husisian
Marc Lovell
David R. Mix
Richard Schockner
Michael K. Wald

Frances McLaren, Rehearsal Accompanist

MANY THANKS to First United Methodist Church for their hospitality, especially to pastors Gilbert Mitchell and Nancy Parr, choir director Joseph Crupi, and organist David Peckham.

A RECEPTION, hosted by First United Methodist, will be held in the church hall after the concert. All are welcome!



This program is made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts Decentralization Program administered locally by the Chemung Valley Arts Council.

Program Notes

English choral music finds many of its roots in the traditions established by England's colleges, universities, and church schools, many of which date back to medieval times. England's musical influence was first felt in the European continent sometime during the twelfth century. This influence continued for some time and reached its peak approximately at the time of composer John Dunstable's death in 1453. Although English music never again achieved such a high international stature, England continued to contribute to the list of great composers. Some of these included the Tudor composers Robert Fayrefax (1464-1521) and John Taverner (1495-1545). They were followed by the Elizabethans William Byrd (1543-1623), Thomas Weelkes (1575-1623), and Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625), only three of the many attracted to Queen Elizabeth I's court.

This list of England's finest continues to grow during the Baroque and Classical eras, the most famous British son of this time being, of course, Henry Purcell (1659-1695), known as the Orpheus Britannicus (British Orpheus).

The sacred music of these masters found expression and purpose as part of the curricula of the numerous choir schools and universities which continued to flourish. The Church of England diligently preserved the choral tradition, despite periods of religious dissent and upheaval. Some of the most famous schools and cathedrals, such as those in Oxford, Cambridge, and Westminster continue to highlight their choral traditions through recordings, television and radio broadcasts, and concert tours.

However, the music presented this evening projects a relatively contemporary vision of the English Choral School tradition, featuring some of England's best known 20th century composers, who are the most recent link in this grand succession.

Three Te Deums serve as the central pillars of our concert. Benjamin Britten's *Festival Te Deum* dates from the 1940's, having been commissioned for the centenary celebration of St. Mark's, Swindon. Britten's writing contains surprisingly little counterpoint, instead building up tension through rather static sonorities which finally explode into rhythmic exultations at the text "Thou art the King of glory, O Christ."

Howell's *Te Deum and Jubilate* was written specifically for King's College in Cambridge. The music suggests the scope and majesty of the famous chapel in which it was performed. Contrasts between solo, choral and organ sections carry the text toward a truly powerful conclusion at the words "Let me never be confounded."

Ralph Vaughan-Williams' *Festival Te Deum* is perhaps the most straightforward in composition. Based on traditional English themes, as is much of Vaughan-Williams' work, it restricts its material to motivic declamations rather than contrapuntal development. Especially exciting are juxtapositions of groups of triplets and duplets between the choir and organ. Unlike Howells, Vaughan-Williams chooses to expend the greater energy earlier on in the work, and closes with a more gentle, a cappella pleading.

Britten's *Jubilate Deo* and Vaughan-Williams' ever popular *O Clap Your Hands* have been coupled to each composer's respective Te Deum in the spirit of the Howells' pairing of his Te Deum with a Jubilate.

Gustav Holst's 1915 setting of the *Nunc Dimittis* reflects his love of counterpoint. The style is certainly reminiscent of such Renaissance masters as William Byrd and Thomas Tallis. The piece was written at the request of the director of music at Westminster Cathedral. It was first performed on Easter Sunday 1915, but was not published until some 60 years later. Its Latin text reads as follows:

Lord, now let your servant depart in peace according to
Thy word. For my eyes have seen Your salvation, which
You have prepared before the face of all people.
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of
your people Israel.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy
Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen.

Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing, an unaccompanied motet, was commissioned in commemoration of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in November 1963. It received its premiere performance in Washington D.C. in 1964. The complexity of the work increases with each successive section, a grand depiction of the struggle between life and death. It is full of musical descriptions of works such as "serpent" and "wandering". A pedal point in the bass, along with the notation "quasi alla marcia" (like a march) represents the carrying of the casket to its final resting place. The piece closes, however, in the major mode, as the fearsome nature of death gives way to eternal life.