

inal work in tonight's concert has a peculiarly English charm, although it is derived the traditional music of Southern Germany. The first song introduces the dancing s that permeate the collection of six songs. Elgar collected the songs during a to Bavaria, and dedicated the collection to Mr. and Mrs. Slingsby Bethell of sch, Bavaria. The texts are transliterations of the original Bayerische poems: the , False Love, Lullaby, Aspiration, On the Alm and The Marksmen. Their sentimental has assured them a place in the popular choral repertoire.



HOLY TRINITY CHURCH COOKHAM

MILLENIUM CELEBRATIONS

CANTORUM CHOIR IN CONCERT

Friday 17th June 1988
at 8.00p.m.



CANTORUM

Friday June 17th, 1988

PROGRAMME

CONDUCTOR - JEREMY BACKHOUSE

Elizabethan Madrigals: Now is the month of maying (Morley)

Weep O mine eyes

Fair Phyllis (Farmer)

Pearsall: Lay a Garland (Victorian Madrigal in 8 parts)

As torrents in summer

The Shower

Hymn to St. Cecilia

INTERVAL

Bertram Tenby: Three Shakespeare Songs

Madrigal

Cantique de Jean Racine

Songs from the Bavarian Highlands

CANTORUM has presented over 40 concerts in almost 6 ½ years, each one of them conducted by Jonathan Miall. Jonathan has decided to take a sabbatical during which time he will pursue his musical ideas for the choir's long term future.

Jeremy will remain involved in Cantorum's general artistic policy, tonight's concert being conducted by Jeremy Backhouse.

JEREMY BACKHOUSE began his musical education at Canterbury Cathedral Choir School, where he was Head Chorister. He then won a Music Scholarship to Dover College, moving on to Liverpool University where he gained a B.A. (Hons.) degree in Music.

Jeremy spent six years at the Royal National Institute for the Blind as the Music Editor, revising the transcription of print music into Braille. He now works as an Editor in the International Classical Division of EMI Music.

Jeremy has sung all over the country with many different choirs, including the London Philharmonic Chorus, the English Chamber Choir, Pegasus and he is a member of the choir of St. Peter's, Eaton Square. He has conducted many choirs and orchestras and until recently was the Musical Director of the Hanwell Gilbert and Sullivan Society. He directs the Ori Singers, a chamber choir based in South London, whose varied repertoire takes them to many parts of the country, most recently to Canterbury and Winchester cathedrals, and Fairfields Halls in Croydon; they have recently broadcast a 30-minute programme on Radio 3.

PROGRAMME NOTES

Written in the last two decades of the 16th century, the first 3 madrigals in tonight's programme epitomise the flowering of the English Renaissance. Like many other cultural achievements of this period, the madrigal was an imported musical form, strongly based on the light-hearted Italian part-songs. The first of these madrigals Now is the month of maying is in this tradition, with its famous fa-la-la chorus. Weep, O mine eyes, by contrast, is suffused with a romantic melancholy, common in the lute-songs of the time. The last of these three madrigals is in the popular pastoral style; a shepherd is addressing his Fair Phyllis. This contains chordal elements of Now is the month and the imitative style of Weep, O mine eyes, to form one of the best examples of the English madrigal school.

The madrigal became an unfashionable genre in the early 17th century, and for 200 years the music was scarcely performed. Robert de Pearsall (1795-1856) played an important role in the Victorian revival of the English madrigal. His work of 1840, Lay a Garland is one of Pearsall's finest achievements in the madrigalian style. Already familiar with the idiomatic writing of the late 16th century, Pearsall extended the style to create expressive effects not to be found even in the works of Wilbye or Monteverdi.

The two part-songs by Elgar are in a more conventional Victorian style. The texts are set simply, but with a great sensitivity to the metaphysical message of the poetry by Longfellow and Henry Vaughan.

Benjamin Britten's Hymn to St. Cecilia written in 1942 builds on a long tradition of unaccompanied English choral music. The text was written by W.H. Auden, and is in three sections linked by a refrain invoking the patron of music, St. Cecilia. This melody is re-harmonised each time it appears, giving a sense of progression and development to the work. Each of the three poetic sections is treated in a different musical style: the first, which introduces the legend of St. Cecilia, is built around a very simple, lyrical melody. The second section is written, like a canon in imitation, over a distant 'cantus firmus'. The third also uses a traditional formal device - a ground bass - to unify the complex, almost madrigalian textual structure. In this final section, voices from the choir are called upon to imitate the instruments of an orchestra - a violin, flute, timpani and trumpet. The work closes with a final invocation of the creative spirit of St. Cecilia.

INTERVAL

Henry Vaughan wrote his three Shakespeare songs as test pieces for a choral competition. Each of the poems is based on a magical theme; two from The Tempest and one from A Midsummer Night's Dream. These deeply evocative are as much a test of the choir's expressive range as its technical ability. The dramatic writing needs no further introduction.

Gabriel Fauré is best known for his Requiem, but his choral music includes a number of very beautiful shorter works. Madrigal is a term used in its loosest sense to describe one of Fauré's most lyrical choral works. The piece builds up to a full texture from a quiet opening. The slow, elegant vocal parts are supported by a poignantly beautiful piano part. The 'Canticle de Jean Racine' also flowers from a quiet melodic opening to blossom into one of Fauré's most beautifully contemplative works. One of his earliest mature works, the piece was composed for a competition at the Paris Conservatoire. The competition was for secular works, and this work was banned, until Saint-Saëns intervened persuading the judges to consider it. Needless to say, the Canticle de Jean Racine won first prize.