

CHOIR OF CLARE COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE

Timothy Brown Conductor
Stephen Farr Organ

BACH: Motet "Fürchte dich nicht" BWV 228

Bach's motet "Fürchte dich nicht" is the least known of the six major works in this form. All Bach's motets were written for special occasions, probably burial services, although there is only documentary evidence for this supposition in the case of "Der Geist Hilft". On the occasions for which the motets were composed, Bach had larger forces at his disposal than normal and so he was able to use up to eight vocal parts.

"Fürchte dich nicht" (Fear not, for I am with Thee) is set out for double choir but reduces to four parts in the final section when the sopranos sing the last two verses of Gerhard's hymn "Warum sollt ich mich denn grämen" whilst the lower parts work out the subject on a fugato.

LISZT: "Via Crucis" S.53

Liszt began work on "Via Crucis" when he was living at Santa Francesca Romana, near the Colosseum, in 1875. He laid it aside however until 1878 when, in a half-jocular way, he wrote that he was continuing the piece "for want of something better to do". He went on:

"These last two weeks I have been completely absorbed in my Via Crucis. It is at last complete and I still feel quite shaken by it. Day after tomorrow I will go back to writing letters, a task impossible for me to undertake so long as music torments my brain."

The "Via Crucis" in religious usage refers to the 14 main incidents in the last hours of Christ's life on Earth from the Judgement Hall to the Sepulchre. Liszt's work is written for SSATB choir with small solo parts for Pilate (bass), Christ (baritone), and a mezzo-soprano. The accompaniment is written for organ or piano, and so important is the keyboard part that Liszt intended that the work could be performed without voices. Liszt also made a piano duet version of the work (S.583).

The 14 stations of the cross are all separate sections, and are prefaced by an Andante Maestoso introduction to the words "Vexella regis". Unlike much of Liszt's dramatic music, Via Crucis is an extremely reflective work.

BYRD: Two Motets

O Admirabile Commertium
Hodie Christus natus est

William Byrd is undoubtedly amongst the greatest of English composers and his musical legacy is rich and varied. He was born probably in Lincoln and became organist of the Minster at the tender age of 20. Seven years later he moved to London to become a Gentleman, and later organist, of the Chapel Royal. His major compositional force was inevitably spent in writing music for the church, but for a church to which he paid lip service only. Byrd was a devout Catholic in an uncompromisingly Protestant country, and if Queen Elizabeth I had not regarded him so highly and been prepared to overlook his recusancy, Byrd would probably have suffered an earlier demise.

Amongst Byrd's major collections were two books of "Gradualia". These were collections of Latin music for the Church year published in 1605 and 1607 respectively. The two motets in tonight's programme come from Book 2 and are Christmas motets scored for four-part choir.

PETER MAXWELL DAVIES: O Magnum Mysterium

Peter Maxwell Davies composed "O Magnum Mysterium" in 1960. It consists of a sequence of unaccompanied carols broken up, in the complete version, by instrumental "sonatas" and rounded off by an organ fantasia. But the composer has said that "the carols and sonatas may be performed separately, or as a small group together, in any combination". In tonight's performance we shall hear the sequence of carols by themselves. The text Peter Maxwell Davies sets are medieval and the carols are as follows:

1. O Magnum Mysterium (soprano solo)
2. Hayle, comly and clene (SATB)
3. O Magnum Mysterium (soprano and alto)
4. Alleluia, pro virgine Maria (SATB)
5. The Fader of Heven (SATB)
6. O Magnum Mysterium (SATB)

BRITTEN: Te Deum in C

Britten wrote a number of works for the church, all of which have found a regular and affectionate place in the repertory. The C major Te Deum was written in 1934 for Maurice Vinda and the choir of St. Martin's Church, North Audley Street, London. It was first performed at the Mercury Theatre, London, in 1936.



OUNDLE PARISH CHURCH

Sunday 20 July at 10.00

FESTIVAL EUCHARIST

FESTIVAL CHORUS conducted by **Martin Freke**

Rite A

Celebrant: The Rev'd Dr L R Caddick

Preacher: The Rev'd Dr Alwyn Pettersen, Chaplain of Exeter College Oxford

Service: **HAYDN** *Missa brevis St Joannis de Deo* (Little Organ Mass)

Haydn's Mass is known by two titles: "Missa brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo" and "Small organ (solo) mass". The first is authentic as in the MS and the second is appropriate, as the organ is used in a quite florid "concertante" role in the Benedictus.

It is thought that Haydn wrote the Mass during the winter of 1777-1778 for performance in the Chapel of the Brothers of Mercy at Eisenstadt, the small size of which restricted the scoring to 2 violins, continuo and organ.

The Mass sets the standard texts, but in a very condensed fashion; so much so that throughout much of the Gloria and Credo, different lines of the text appear simultaneously in different voices. This practice was widespread at the time, though forbidden by the authorities. Robbins Landon suggests that this "pernicious habit" was the result of singing short masses at Advent-tide "when the churches were freezing cold".

Most of the work is full choral, with only one definite soprano solo in the Benedictus.

Closing Voluntary Prelude and Fugue in G (S541) J S Bach
Organist **JAMES PARSONS**