

TUESDAY 14TH JULY

The 'Nonet' was just one of a staggering amount of music that Martinů wrote in his final year - perhaps it was the knowledge that he was dying of cancer that prompted this flurry of compositional activity. The 'Nonet' was completed at the beginning of March 1959 and first performed by its dedicatees, the Czech Nonet, at the Salzburg Festival on 27 July the same year, just four weeks before Martinů's death on 28 August. One of his finest chamber works, the 'Nonet' shows no signs of pessimism about his illness nor of haste during that last feverish year of writing. There is no jazz in the 'Nonet' but plenty of Bohemia; its three movements radiate joy, warmth and serenity throughout.

Programme notes by Derek Warby © 2007-09

In this concert the New London Chamber Ensemble unite with members of the Dante Quartet. For details of the NLCE, see page 24.

Founded in 1995, and winner of the prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Chamber Music in 2007, the **Dante Quartet** is known for its imaginative programming and the emotional intensity of its performances. It enjoys a special association with King's College, Cambridge, including master-classes, collaborations with the renowned King's College Choir and quartet concerts including poetry readings. The quartet has taught at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, at Dartington and Cadenza Summer Schools and in Spain, and worked in association with the pioneering Cavatina Chamber Music Trust. Concert engagements are often combined with open rehearsals or workshops, and the Dante Quartet also offers special programmes to children in schools who might never otherwise hear live classical music.

In 2004 the Quartet launched the Dante Summer Festival in Cornwall, offering an eclectic mix of quartet concerts, folk music, open rehearsals and workshops for children in the Tamar Valley. In 2008 the Quartet launched its Divine Comedy Project - an invitation to composers to write music inspired by Dante's epic trilogy. Premieres of works by Roxanna Panufnik, Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Dmitri Smirnov and Elena and Alissa Firsova took place in Cambridge, Cheltenham and Liverpool, paired with quartets by Haydn and Beethoven. The Quartet's recordings include Janáček's string quartets, song cycles by Gurney and Vaughan Williams with tenor Andrew Kennedy, and Rubbra's complete quartets, as well as their recent award-winning disc of string quartets by Franck and Fauré.

Refreshments available before the concert and during the interval.

The concert ends at 9.30pm.

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TUESDAY 14TH JULY

Twilight Organ Recital DAVID SANGER

Oundle
FOR ORGANISTS

9.45pm Church of The Most Holy Name of Jesus, Oundle

Bach in the Dark

Prelude & Fugue in A, BWV 536

J S Bach (1685-1750)

Four Duetti, BWV 802-5

I in E minor – II in F – III in G – IV in A minor

Fantasia & Fugue in C minor, BWV 537

(from 'Das Orgelbüchlein'):

Nun komm' der heiden Heiland, BWV 599

(Now come Thou Saviour of the Gentiles)

Das alte Jahr vergangen ist, BWV 614

(The old year has passed away)

In Dir ist Freude, BWV 615

(In Thee is gladness)



O Mensch, bewein' dein' Sünde gross, BWV 622

(O mankind, bewail thy grievous sin)

Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten, BWV 642

(If thou wilt but let God guide thee)

Fugue in G ('The Jig Fugue'), BWV 577

The Performer's Perspective

Whenever one is invited to play a Bach recital, a weight of responsibility hangs heavily on one's shoulders. However, it is also a privilege to live with music of this quality for the time of preparation, and it is entirely motivating to have this challenge. Bach left us such riches for the organ, so it is a fine feeling to have the opportunity of presenting to the public a selection from one's own, best-loved repertoire.

I have long felt that 'Prelude and Fugue in A' (and many other of Bach's free works) have connections with Chorale melodies. I spoke to Jacques van Oortmerssen (leading Bach exponent and a friend of Oundle) about this last week in Finland, saying that I had connected this piece with either 'An Wasserflüssen Babylon' ('By the waters of Babylon, we sat down and wept ...'), or 'O Lamm Gottes unschuldig'. He said he was certain it was linked with 'An Wasserflüssen...', but no more. I can imagine the waters of Babylon flowing throughout the piece and there could even be a backwards glance over the shoulder at the fall of Jerusalem with the final pedal 'fall' at the end, and the diminished seventh chord reminiscent of the pain of that loss.

The 'Duetti' are from Bach's 'Clavierübung III'. According to David Humphreys (in his book 'The esoteric nature of Clavierübung III') Bach links each Duet with a paragraph in Luther's 'Lesser Catechism'. A duet has a didactic dimension: teacher plays first, followed by pupil. The E minor duet surely 'follows the leader' through all the vicissitudes of life. The G major could represent 'father and mother in its two abrupt gestures at the start, and then perhaps it's all about a 'land flowing with milk and honey'. The final duet could be representing those who have gone astray running back to the altar (all in Humphreys's book).

'Fantasia and Fugue in C minor' is, I find, just wonderfully moving. The elegant contours of the Fantasia seem drawn from string writing, whilst the vigour of the Fugue 'reminds one' (if one can turn the centuries on their head!) of Elgar's theatrical orchestration of this very piece.

Bach's 'Orgelbüchlein': what a treasure! I have heard recently that it might have been influenced by Frescobaldi, JSB having copied out 'Fiori Musicali' prior to composing some of the preludes. 'Nun komm ...' is like Frescobaldi's 'Toccata Avanti la Messa della Domenica',