AMERICAN CHORAL REVIEW

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN CHORAL FOUNDATION, INC.
VOLUME XXX • NUMBER 3 • SUMMER 1988

AMERICAN CHORAL REVIEW

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Administered by
Chorus America
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2111 Sansom Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103
(215) 545-4444

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Postmaster: Send address changes to American Choral Review,
2111 Sansom Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103
ISSN 0002-7898

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Summer 1988

CONTENTS

Handel's *Coronation Anthems*

by JAMES JORDAN, JR.

Handel's four famous anthems were written for the coronation of King George II and Queen Caroline in October, 1727. Handel's relationship with English nobility assumed a special quality through his well-known reconciliation with George I, former Elector of Hanover, where Handel had held the post of *Kapellmeister* and court composer. Having been entrusted with this task was an obvious honor as well as a very particular challenge to which Handel proved more than equal. In fact, one might say that the design of the *Coronation Anthems* shows Handel developing an extended choral and dramatic scope which contributed substantially to the rise of English oratorio.

The wide variety of paraphrased Biblical texts from which Handel selected the verses for the *Coronation Anthems* was used in earlier coronation rites, with certain portions dating from as early as the tenth century. Handel was well acquainted with the tradition of the coronation ceremony, and he conveyed this through these works in an extraordinary manner. He was also well studied in scriptural texts, as he himself stated when the Archbishops of Canterbury and York attempted to choose the Coronation Anthem texts for him: "I have read my Bible very well and shall chuse for myself."[1]

It is important to remember that the texts he did select represented a traditional service according to which they should be considered in the following sequence:

1. Let Thy Hand Be Strengthened
2. Zadok the Priest
3. The King Shall Rejoice
4. My Heart is Inditing

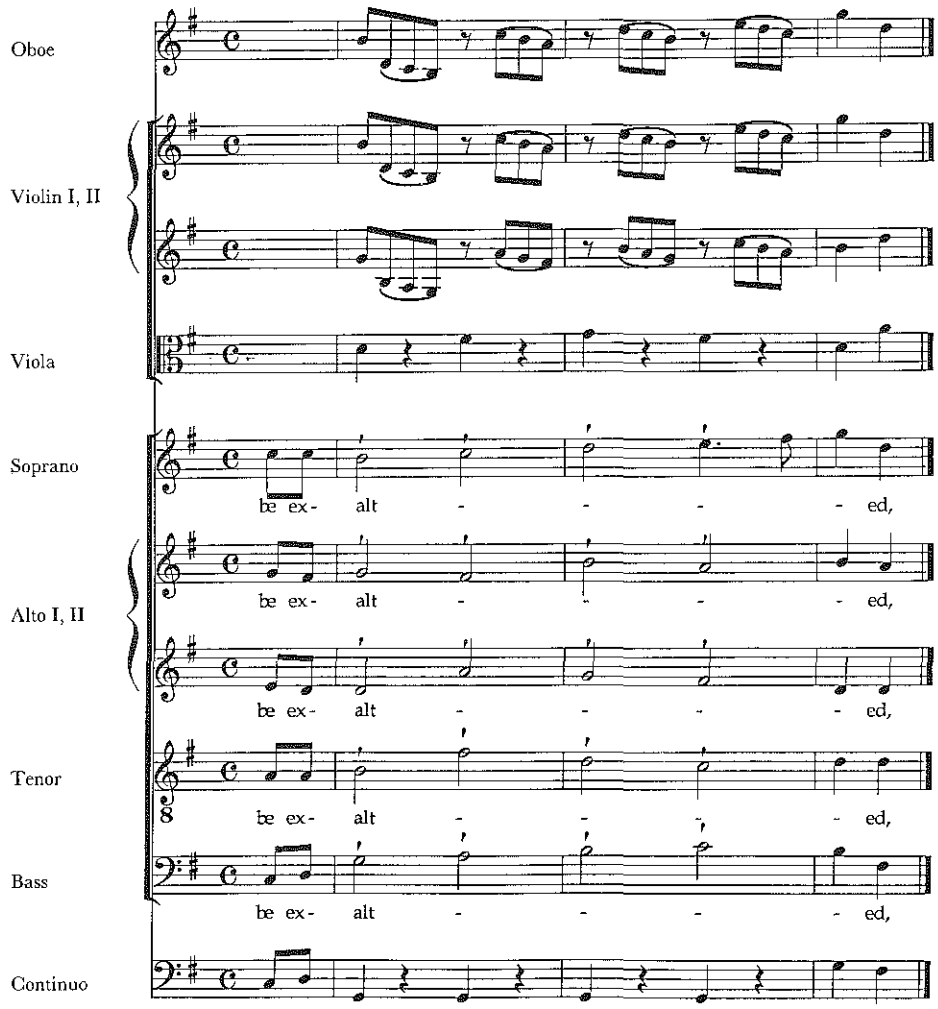
Handel's autograph places them in the order of 2-1-3-4 — the order we know and which with unquestionable logic puts the most impressive

[1]Charles Burney, *An Account of the Musical Performances in Westminster-Abbey*, London 1785, reprint with an introduction by Peter Kivy (New York: Da Capo Press, 1979), p. 34.

anthem first. But this arrangement, whatever its intent, was due to an afterthought. It evidently does not constitute the sequence in which the works were performed or, indeed, conceived. When heard in the original order — which seems understood in the order and context of the coronation service — they convey to the listener a surprising and compelling sense of continuity and integration.

It was not the text for the anointing ceremony — "Zadok the Priest" — that marked the formal beginning of the service but a prayer, taken from Psalm 89:13–14, for the Lord's help and guidance in the new monarch's reign; and the prayer "Let Thy Hand Be Strengthened" may well have held special meaning for George II who even as Prince of Wales had remained a true Hanoverian and a foreigner in his country.

EXAMPLE 1

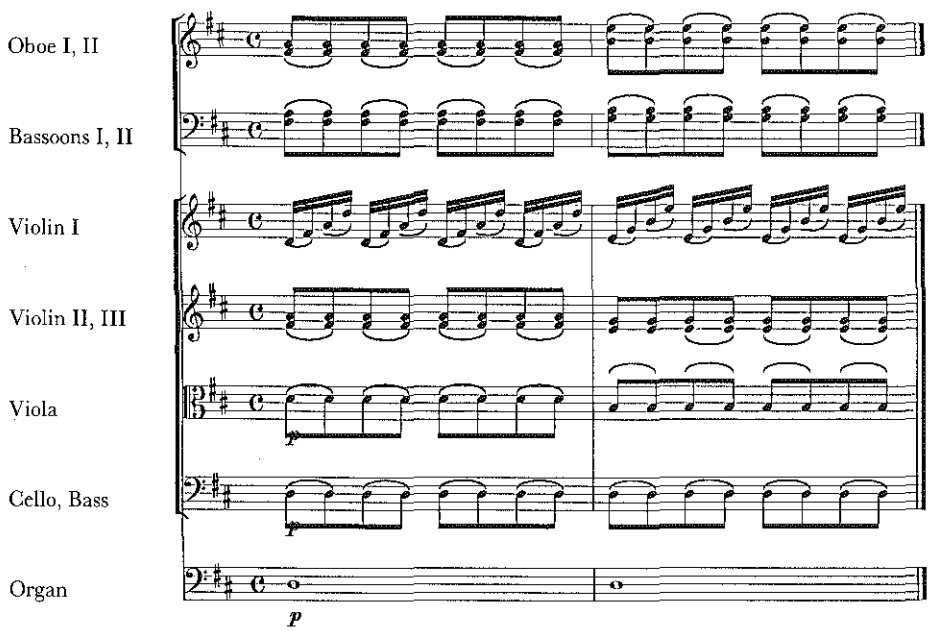


Handel's music nobly highlights the text. A striking element in his setting is the lack of brass and timpani customarily associated with festive occasions. It might have provided a deliberate change in mood because it is likely that brass and timpani had just been used to announce the entrance of the royal pair. Yet the scene is now focused on the solemnity of the occasion. It is stressed by the setting of the word "exalted" in harmonic blocks which interrupt the surrounding polyphony and draw the listener's attention to a majestic gesture (Example 1).

Conversely, the introspective character of the text comes into sharper focus by the turn to E minor in the second movement. Handel uses the minor mode quite sparingly in the *Coronation Anthems,* and its pensive quality as well as the repeated suspensions on diminished intervals add to the solemnity of the work. The closing "Alleluia" fugue recaptures the royal nature of the event and rounds out the tripartite form. It should be pointed out that Handel added this "Alleluia" to the text — it is not part of the scripture. Not only does it create formal balance but it also redirects the listener's perception from the devotional tone of the service to it's festive exuberance which fully unfolds in the anthem "Zadok the Priest."

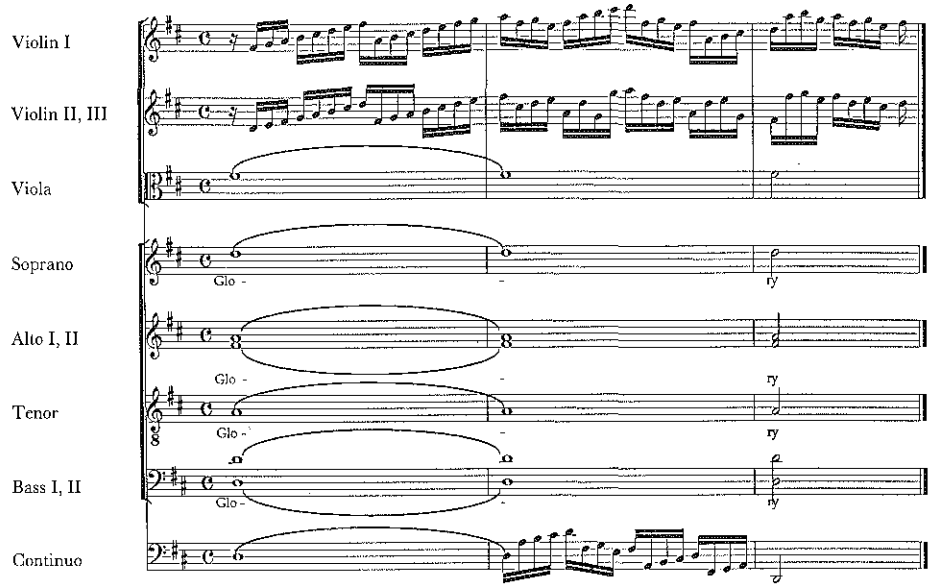
The breathtaking extended introduction for this anthem has its roots in one of Handel's early works, the Latin Psalm *Nisi Dominus,* written during his sojourn in Rome. The original version in the Psalm setting is of deceivingly modest proportions, which, in fact, led the Handel biographer Friedrich Chrysander to speak of the "uninspired" string writing. Yet it

EXAMPLE 2



inspired in the mind of the composer the well-known opening for "Zadok the Priest" whose solemn grandeur is probably unmatched in Handel's works (Example 2). Its harmonic tension develops into a "grand crescendo" leading to a veritable explosion at the word "Zadok" with the entrance of the voices, brass, and timpani. The text, "Zadok the Priest and Nathan the Prophet anointed Solomon king" (I Kings 1:45), declaimed in glorious eight-part chords, completes the transition from introspection to jubilation. It continues "and all the people rejoiced," and the word "rejoiced" is singled out both in correspondence with and fine contrast to the setting of "exalted" in the first anthem. What follows is the series of exultant exclamations "God save the King" (adapted from I Kings 1:39) — the text that Handel thus bequeathed to the English nation for all times. A totally new style of choral writing which raises the ceremonial to a "dynastic" tone[2] was perfected in the *Coronation Anthems;* it was later adapted in oratorios such as *Judas Maccabaeus* and *Messiah.*

EXAMPLE 3



Its function is fully confirmed in the next anthem. "The King Shall Rejoice," which was performed at the time of highest national excitement — the crowning ceremony. Handel's sure grasp of this text reflects the magnitude of the climactic moment, yet there is little stylistic difference between "Zadok the Priest" and "The King Shall Rejoice" as both highlight the same mood of exuberance.

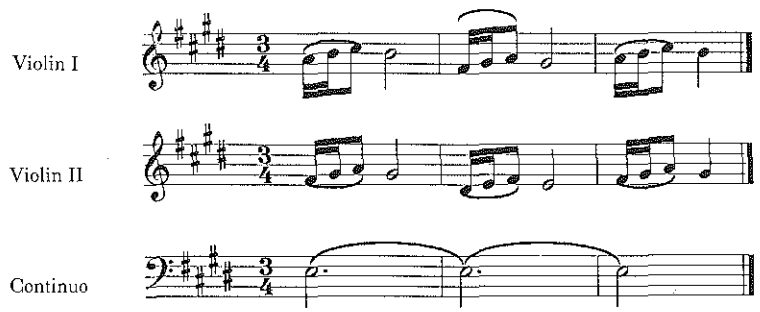
[2]See Paul Henry Lang, *American Choral Review,* April/July 1985, p. 6.

The central text portion, "glory and great worship," may be understood as the guiding concept of these works, the characteristic merging of sacred text and state occasion. For the setting of the word "glory" Handel reaches back to his composition of the Doxology in his *Utrecht Jubilate,* written fourteen years earlier. Into a lively introduction of the string orchestra are placed the mighty choral entrances that present the text in block chords (Example 3). A similar setting underlies the essential words of the ceremony: "and hast set a crown of pure gold upon his head." A closing extended "Alleluia" links this work to the previous two anthems, though not to "My Heart is Inditing," the last of the *Coronation Anthems.*

The coronation of Queen Caroline, the conclusion of the ceremony, provided a striking change from the previous events. Elegance and tenderness are now the pervading ideas. "My Heart is Inditing" reflects this gentle elegance.

Most obvious throughout is the differentiation of the vocal texture arising through the use of solo voices. It creates a welcome contrast to the full choral sound and highlights the text in yet a different manner. However, it is the third section that captures this spirit above all. Cast in E major, it begins as a duet for soprano and alto with strings and continuo. The texture is transparent, and a characteristic rhythmic figuration serves as a traditional symbol of courtly grace (Example 4).

EXAMPLE 4



As in a special gesture of homage, Handel seems to recall with the lively concerted string accompaniment emerging from the very start of this anthem the chamber music atmosphere of the Hanoverian court and the music he used to write in those days for Caroline, his patron and friend. It develops after touches of unadorned continuo accompaniment for the text "Upon thy right hand did stand the Queen in vestures of gold" into a resplendent finale, an epilogue which summarizes the impression of the ceremony's noble character.

Handel achieved that which was the most obvious yet epochal creative challenge for him: the structure of a unified work consisting of various scripture settings. One need not have an order of service for the coronation ceremony to understand the dramatic continuity, for the story of the coronation is told in the greatest of detail by the *Coronation Anthems* themselves.

Haydn's *The Seasons*

AN UNJUSTLY NEGLECTED MASTERPIECE

by LEONARD VAN CAMP

Why is it that *The Creation* is performed so much more frequently in America than its "sister oratorio" *The Seasons*? It cannot be that the music of the latter is of lesser quality; there are wonderful moments for the chorus, for the trio of soloists, and for the total ensemble. There are striking orchestral preludes introducing each of the four seasons. The combination of soloists from *The Creation* reappears in *The Seasons* — the soprano, tenor, and bass roles of angels (Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael) are here those of rustic farmers (Jane, Luke, and Simon). The orchestral score is as effective, and the pictorialism so marvelously applied in *The Creation* is matched or even surpassed in *The Seasons*. Musical considerations cannot account for the neglect of *The Seasons*.

While there may be a number of reasons for the preference of one oratorio over the other, there seem to be two major ones: The English translations currently available for *The Seasons* are, to various degrees, not suitable for today's singers and audiences; and the work is apt to be too long for modern listeners.

Before discussing ways of dealing with these problems, we must look at some other facts and features of this masterpiece.

While the work does not represent the dramatic oratorio literature, it exceeds the genre of the cantata in length and scope. It might be considered four cantatas, somewhat comparable to the six cantatas of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*. Because of the independent nature of the four sections it would be possible to perform each — Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter — separately and yet achieve an effect of completeness.

The work is scored for full orchestra (2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, triangle, tambourine, strings, as well as piano for recitatives),[1] chorus (variously divided up to eight-part texture), and soprano, tenor, and

[1]It is to be taken into consideration that the harpsichord, as the typical continuo instrument, had given way to the pianoforte in Haydn's day, though the word *cembalo* had remained in use.

bass soloists. It was composed between the years 1799 and 1801, and the first performance was given on April 24, 1801 in the Schwarzenberg Palace in Vienna. The text is evidently based upon the Scottish poet James Thompson's huge epic poem. Yet just how drastically the libretto differs from the original poem is startling to discover. Thompson (1700–1748) first published the four independent sections between 1726 and 1730 but brought them together for the first time in 1730.[2] The poem was immensely popular at that time, and it remains well known to lovers of eighteenth-century English poetry to this day.

The idea of writing an oratorio on this text was suggested to Haydn by Baron Gottfried van Swieten who had also presented the text of *The Creation* to Haydn. Director of the Imperial Library, van Swieten was the central figure in a society of aristocrats whose purpose was the private performance of oratorios. Sir Donald Francis Tovey has few kind words for him in connection with either text:

> I have read Thompson's *Seasons* in the critical edition of Dr. Otto Zippel, "a reproduction of the original texts, with all the various readings of the later editions, historically arranged," and have failed to find in it more resemblance to Haydn's text than *Paradise Lost* shows to the text of *The Creation*.[3]

In many ways van Swieten actually improved upon the often disorganized and lengthy Thompson poem and it is interesting to discover that Thompson's poem has remained known chiefly because of van Swieten's adaptation for Haydn. But van Swieten so altered the style and structure of the English poetry in adapting and translating it into German that it can no longer be considered the work of Thompson.

Haydn took up the composition immediately after the completion of *The Creation* (in 1799), but he was most reluctant to do so and was never happy with the final results. He even blamed the composition of *The Seasons* for his poor health in his last years. It was only through the persistent nagging of van Swieten that Haydn finally undertook to write the work, for he felt the poem was not of first quality and feared the criticism of the imitation of nature called for in the music, criticism of which he had had quite enough in connection with *The Creation*. When the indefatigable van Swieten ultimately convinced Haydn to take up the work, it proved a formidable task to complete, and the composer's unhappiness with the final result did not help its popularity in posterity.

[2]See H.C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: The Late Years, 1801-1809* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p. 93.

[3]*Essays in Musical Analysis, Vol. V, Vocal Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 147.

One reason for Haydn's displeasure was that van Swieten made many detailed suggestions as to how the words (van Swieten's own, for the most part) ought to be set. While Haydn used some of his suggestions with good effect, he was uncomfortable with many others. It is difficult to imagine a librettist telling a composer of Haydn's stature, in his "golden years," how to write appropriate music, but van Swieten did exactly that. At one point they almost had a complete parting of the ways, but we are fortunate that they were sufficiently reconciled to bring their collaboration to fruition.

The libretto that Haydn used was a curious mixture of different translations, and van Swieten modestly but correctly does not take credit for the finished product. What we have here is a poem written in English, translated into German and set to music, and then badly translated back into English (and French) for the first edition (by van Swieten himself). His attempts to match English words to Haydn's German-inspired musical setting are frequently inadequate, sometimes ludicrous, and often unusable in today's concert hall. Seeing, for instance, the word "globe" set as a two syllable word helps us realize why *The Seasons* is often overlooked by conductors who lack either the time or inclination to make a new translation.

Having become aware of the problem, this is precisely what I have done — make a complete new translation. I made no attempt to return to the original text of Thompson in doing so, for van Swieten did not follow the poem conscientiously in creating the German verison. What I found necessary was to bring the text to the contemporary chorus and audience in a way that retained the expressive and descriptive flavor of the original German text with which Haydn had worked, but that was representative of English as we use it today. Thus it is by necessity an adaptation.

What editions and translations are available, and why was I not satisfied with the existing translations? There are three English versions available in this country: the original C.F. Peters, another used in both the Novello and G. Schirmer editions (basically the translation used in the Colin Davis recording of the work on the Phillips label), and a new translation published by Lawson-Gould.

The C.F. Peters edition contains the German text and van Swieten's original published translation. The latter is unusable from the modern point of view. Example: "Behold! On yonder edge of the mountains high in sultry, stagnant air ascend with vapors charg'd a fallow dusky fog." Or—"Now to the wonted stable back fulludder'd and refresh'd the milky drove returns." Or, yet again, "His pleased looks surveying err he tries th'accumulated mass to count, and joy pervades his grateful breast."

The Novello and G. Schirmer version, while an improvement, is also dated and in many ways fails to comply with contemporary English. It

contains too many attempts at returning to Thompson's original and thus becomes stilted and difficult for the listener to comprehend. The translation by Alice Parker and Thomas Pyle published by Lawson Gould is considerably better than the earlier ones and has much to recommend it. But it seemed to me that a fresh start might offer even more vital and singable solutions. I referred to all existing versions, but, while I may have leaned in the direction of one or another here and there, I tried to find new ways of rendering Haydn's music, set to his native tongue, in present-day usage.

As samples of the four translations, I offer a passage from the beginning of the final section, "Winter":

Gottfried van Swieten (C.F. Peters)

By frost cemented stands the lake,
arrested is the stream in his course,
and in his precipitous fall o'er the cliff
there stopt and dumb the torrent hangs.

Version for the Colin Davis Recording
(G. Schirmer and Novello)

A crystal pavement lies the lake;
Arrested stands the rapid stream;
And o'er the lofty cliff the torrent hangs
with idle threat and seeming roar.

Parker-Pyle version (Lawson-Gould)

By icy chains the sea is held,
the rushing stream is stopp'ed in its course.
The torrent that falls down the mountain hangs,
now white and cold and motionless.

New translation

The lake is frozen hard with ice,
the stream no longer flows in its course.
The once bold sparkling waterfall now hangs,
a frozen statue, white and mute.

The C.F. Peters edition gives the following performance times: Spring, 33 minutes; Summer, 35 minutes; Autumn, 26 minutes; Winter, 35 minutes. This totals two hours and nine minutes, not including any pauses or an intermission. The Colin Davis recording of the work covers six full long playing sides amounting to even more time than this. While one resorts to cuts in the work of a master like Haydn only with great trepidation, cuts

in *The Seasons* may be advisable for all but the most sophisticated of audiences. Suggestions for a choice of possible cuts were published together with my translation.

Haydn's work is on a level with his greatest and more than deserves to be heard in concert. If my new edition can contribute to a growing appreciation of *The Seasons* among American choral organizations, its labors will be richly rewarded.

The author's edition is published by Laudamus Press, 1810 S. Broadway, St. Louis, Missouri 63104.

Nineteenth-Century Choral Societies

CONTEMPORARY AND MODERN COMMENTS

by NINA GILBERT

The nineteenth century saw the rise of choral societies in England, on the European continent, and in the United States. Their organization, purposes, and even choice of repertoire reflected the social dynamics of the era.

> Their activities epitomized the bourgeois ideals of self-improvement (through disciplined musical training), moral uprightness (through performance of religious music), and philanthropic benevolence (through the dedication of concerts to charitable purposes).[1]

In addition to amusing, entertaining, and diverting nineteenth-century Americans and Europeans, choral societies, as described by their members and contemporary critics, were serving the causes of private scholarship, public performance, social community, and charity. German and Austrian *Singvereine* emphasized the first three purposes; British choral societies proudly added the fourth.

Four types of sources provide information about nineteenth-century choral societies. Best and rarest are guides for founders and directors. While no literal "how-to" guide is available, there are useful philosophical writings by contemporary musicians who led choral groups. Additional information comes from records by society historians. Passing references to choral performances or meetings appear in memoirs by some of the literary musicians of the century. Finally, of course, music dictionaries offer articles and bibliographies.

Perhaps the most detailed contemporary discussion of nineteenth-century choral societies is in a treatise called *Purity in Music* by Anton Friedrich Justus Thibaut (1772–1840). A lawyer in Heidelberg, mentor of Robert Schumann, and founder of the Heidelberg Choral Society, Thibaut

[1]William Weber, *Music and the Middle Class: The Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris and Vienna* (London: Croom Helm, 1975), p. 101.

is remembered today as the leader of a musical Renaissance movement of the early nineteenth century. Among the various applications of "purity" in Thibaut's book is its references "simply to the ancient vocal music, which, in Thibaut's opinion, first became 'impure' through instruments."[2]

Thibaut's most practical comments contained in *Purity in Music* appear in his final chapter, "Choral Societies." His discussion of purpose, organization, and repertoire of *Singvereine* makes interesting comparison with other documents on choral societies in Germany, Austria, England, France, and the United States. Essentially prescriptive for leaders and members of private choral societies, Thibaut's closing chapter clearly draws upon his experiences with his own *Singverein*. While his recommendations for repertoire and organization methods reflect abstract aesthetic principles, his two pages of "several other things, often considered as of secondary importance" show the lessons of experience.

First among the "other things" is unity of expression: "It is well nigh incredible how such a piece gains by the simultaneous observance of its fortes, pianos, crescendos, and diminuendos." Second, Thibaut pleads for clarity of text: Latin and Italian should be sung "in the original, the meaning . . . made clear to the singers." Other languages, suggests Thibaut, should be translated, because the original would be neither understood nor "even properly pronounced." In earlier context Thibaut complains about Klopstock's translation of Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*: "Only the 'Amen' is faithfully rendered." Finally Thibaut has two recommendations for copyists: first, to number the measures, and second, to assign clefs consistently — altos, for example, should always read alto clef or always read treble clef. "No benefit can come from using at one time one clef and at another time a different one."

Thibaut mentions two possible objectives for choral societies: "light entertainment," and "the enjoyment of classical [i.e., sixteenth- through eighteenth-century] music, for edification and elevation of the mind and its diversion from the things of everyday life." Significantly, he continues: "I shall only here speak of the latter class."

Various modern observers mention the conflict and compromise of social and intellectual interests. The urban upper class sang in mixed choirs dedicated to the cultivation of classical music and oratorio, and the middle class, in men's choirs dedicated to four-voiced folk-style *a cappella* songs, often on the subjects of sociability and friendship. Franz Schubert wrote extensively in the latter genre.[3] Within the men's-choir movement, there

[2]Willie Kahl, in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart,* article on Thibaut.

[3]Cf. Otto Rüb, *Die Chorischen Organisationen (Gesangvereine) der bürgerlichen Mittel- und Unterschicht im Raum Frankfurt am Main von 1800 bis zur Gegenwart,* 1964, p. 22. See also "A Survey of Schubert's Part-Songs," *American Choral Review,* Vol. XXII, No. 3, p. 3.

were two trends: the North German *Liedertafel* or "song table," emphasizing sociability over song, and the South German or Swiss *Liederkranz* or "song gathering," emphasizing song over sociability. "In principle, it is only a minor difference."[4]

August Böhm defined the purpose of his own choral society simply as "the cultivation of music."[5] Böhm was vice president of the Viennese *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* and head of its *Singverein* in 1908, when he recorded its history as a *Festschrift* for the *Singverein's* fiftieth anniversary. He listed three means of achieving the *Singverein's* purpose: choral assemblies (singing sessions rather than performances), participation in all public performances of the *Gesellschaft* that called for a chorus, and independent performance of fine musical works. "The elevation of music in all its branches is the main purpose of the *Gesellschaft,*" he concluded. "Self-service and self-enjoyment are actually only subordinate purposes. Let it here be expressely made prominent and emphasized that the above-mentioned performance of classical works also belongs to the main purpose of the Society."[6] Yet the society also sponsored Musical Evening-Entertainments, whose purpose was "self-service and enjoyment of music, and the promotion of sociability among the lovers of art in our city of residence."[7]

Louis Spohr summarized contemporary German choral conditions in his announcement of a new work intended for performance by amateur choruses. He assured his readers, on the basis of his travels, that "a small number of cultured friends of art have formed societies which through expedient action are working most positively against the complete decay of taste, and can gradually reawaken a sense for the finer things."[8]

To the three goals of private scholarship, public performance, and social entertainment professed by German and Viennese organizations, British choral societies added charity.[9] Charles Burney, the eighteenth-century music historian, had stated: "The most honorable eulogium that can be bestowed on the power of music is that, whenever the human heart is wished to expand in charity and beneficence, its aid is more frequently

[4]Ibid., p. 20.

[5]*Geschichte des Singvereins der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien* (Vienna: Adolf Holzhausen, 1908), p. 27.

[6]Ibid., p. 9.

[7]Ibid., p. 27.

[8]"Einige Bemerkungen über die deutschen Gesangvereine, nebst Ankündigung eines neuen für sie geschriebenen Werkes." *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 49 (December 5, 1821), p. 817.

[9]Charity concerts were not absent in Germany. Robert Schumann reviewed a performance of Hiller's oratorio *The Destruction of Jerusalem* "for the benefit of the poor [of Leipzig]." *Music and Musicians,* trans. Fanny Ritter (London: William Reeves, ca. 1907), p. 24.

called in than that of any other art or advocate."[10] The account of the York charity festival, in which Burney's works are quoted, advocated the formation of local groups to study Haydn's oratorios with a view towards future charity performances. It praised the value of the ensemble experience that results from thorough acquaintance with a work as well as the social experience of "private performance of classical music," and it engaged in some controversy with parents who expressed "apprehension . . . respecting the effects of musical accomplishments on the morals and temporal interests of their sons."[11]

The professed goals of the prominent vocal organizations of London varied. That of the Glee Club (1783–1857) was primarily social whereas the Vocal Society (1833–1852) and the Choral Harmonists' Society (1833–1852) were interested in an expanding repertoire, the latter reflecting the trend of the time in moving from *a cappella* music to works with orchestral accompaniment. The Sacred Harmonic Society (1832–1882) stressed the moral and spiritual aspects of choral performance.

Thibaut lists five organization requirements for a choral society. "The primary and most essential requisite of a choral society," he says, "is that its members be judiciously chosen from genuine lovers of art, that pains are taken to cherish to the utmost the love and enjoyment or real art, and that an equal distribution of voices is secured." Distribution of voices poses a difficulty in most choral societies, reports Spohr from his journeys. "I found nearly everywhere a very unequal distribution of voices, usually as many sopranos again as altos, more basses than tenors, so that, even with otherwise excellent execution, nonetheless all effect was necessarily lost."[12] Thibaut laments the "dearth of full deep altos and basses, which are greatly needed for numbers of the older masterpieces, especially those of Josquin, Senfl, Lasso, and Palestrina." In 1814, the *Singverein* in Vienna consisted of 69 sopranos, 46 altos, 77 tenors, and 80 basses. For the York festival, Crosse records "principal vocal performers — solosists and section leaders — as five sopranos, two altos, two tenors, and three basses. The full chorus included 62 trebles (38 listed as "Mrs.," 11 as "Miss," and 13 as "Master"), 55 altos (all "Mr."), 75 tenors, and 79 basses.[13] In 1815 the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston gave its first concert, "with a chorus of

[10]Quoted in John Crosse, *An Account of the Grand Musical Festival, Held in September, 1823, in the Cathedral Church of York; for the Benefit of the York County Hospital, and the General Infirmaries at Leeds, Hull and Sheffield* (York: John Wolstenholme, 1825), p.16. The classical impetus to musical charity events had, of course, been given through Handel's *Messiah* performances.

[11]Ibid., p. 14.

[12]Spohr, p. 817.

[13]Crosse, p. 6.

ninety male and ten female singers, whose treble was strengthened, according to the custom of the time, by a few falsetto voices."[14]

Lovers of art, according to Thibaut, must be willing to commit three hours a week to choral meetings. Spohr also stresses the importance of regular attendance. "One should accept no one as a member who could not make it obligatory to attend every assembly, barring extremely extraordinary obstacles."[15] Both Thibaut and Spohr mention the frustration wreaked by the absence of members. "While in other assemblies the absence of one is not much missed," explains Thibaut, "here the omission of one voice may cause a total deadlock, and this may occur in choruses where a single trained voice may be an indispensable aid to the others."

Thibaut's "second great requirement of a good choral society is an extensive musical library. . . . A point should . . . be made of giving side by side a variety of masters from the earliest down to the present times." A practical reason for this variety is that if a choir includes only "a few voices of real excellence," an ample library can ensure "full use of individual talent."

A third responsibility that Thibaut lists is the "practising of the several parts," i.e., sectional rehearsals. Böhm gives some details of rehearsal procedure for Society concerts: "For each Society concert, special printed invitations to participate were sent to the members involved, on which the days of the rehearsals were specificed. The concerts took place on Sunday at the noon hour. On the Monday before was the singing rehearsal, on Tuesday singing rehearsal with quartet accompaniment, then in the concert hall on Thursday vocal and instrumental rehearsal and on Saturday dress rehearsal."[16]

Thibaut's fourth requisite for a choral society, carefully couched in about two pages of defensive argument, is "privacy." "Frequent appearance in public," he says, "would be as paradoxical as to invite educated and ignorant alike, without distinction, to listen to the rendering of a sublimely conceived poem." "Frequent" is a relative term: Thibaut's *Singverein* performed publicly about four times a year. As a further organization detail of the early *Singverein* in Vienna, Böhm lists the three classes of membership: "practicing members with a monthly contribution of 30 *Kreuzer,* supporting members with a monthly contribution of at least twice that amount, and honorary members."

Fifth, but described as "the principal thing" among Thibaut's requirements, is "the choice of conductor; one versed in classical music, able to

[14]Charles C. Perkins and John S. Dwight, *History of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston, Massachusetts,* vol. 1 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977), p. 44.

[15]Spohr, p. 818.

[16]Böhm, p. 20.

grasp the score, and inexorable towards the self-conceit or the vanity of others." The Handel and Haydn Society of Boston chose a President, whose duties, according to the Constitution of the Society, were "the naming of tunes to be performed, the assigning a place to each member, and that of 'keeping time' (conducting)."[17]

Thibaut offers both positive and negative recommendations about repertoire for a choral society. He suggests four kinds of music: "genuine old chorales of various churches, compositions in the strict church style, compositions in the oratorio style, and lastly, select national songs of all lands."

He recommends "the entire exclusion of operas. . . . Germany is now flooded with theatres; the music played in them is studiously reproduced at concerts, and social assemblies always draw their musical pleasure from opera." Spohr also takes a strong stand against opera, for several reasons: "not only because music intended for the stage is less suited for chamber music, but chiefly because through opera the sense for more serious types is too easily suffocated."[18] Opera choruses, Spohr continues, are not meaningful enough to justify the effort needed to learn them. Opera solo sections do not require a large group of voices, and the assignment of solos would arouse jealousy among the singers. If one insists on performing operatic works with a choral society, both Spohr and Thibaut suggest avoiding any new Italian or French opera, and restricting the choice to "at least classics by Mozart, Gluck, and others."[19]

Hector Berlioz, in his memoirs, recounts hearing operatic music in a parish church at Subiaco. "At Mass on Palm Sunday [the organist] treated us to the overture to *La Cenerentola.* This so discouraged me that I decided to steer clear of his choral union for fear of betraying my revulsion and thus hurting the feelings of those excellent *dilettanti.*"[20]

Spohr and Thibaut endorse *a cappella* music, and Ignaz Mosel, court secretary at the founding of the Vienna *Singverein,* agrees: "In order to encourage those singing and to stimulate their self-respect, it might be decided, that at each Society concert at least one vocal piece, without instrumental accompaniment, would be performed."[21] Choirs should not substitute piano for orchestra in accompanied pieces, advised Spohr, for the result is dry and feeble. Robert Schumann mentions that practice of substitution in his concert reviews but does not criticize it.

[17]Perkins and Dwight, p. 32.

[18]Spohr, p. 819.

[19]Ibid., p. 818.

[20]Hector Berlioz, *Memoirs,* trans. and ed. David Cairns (London: Victor Gollancz, 1969), p. 177.

[21]Böhm, p. 13.

Thibaut discourages conductors from writing music for their choral societies. "Do as you like," he advises, "but spare us your own compositions." Other writers are more heartening. Spohr, for example, wishes "that our now living composers wrote more pure vocal music for the use of the choral societies."[22] He presents his own new five-voice Mass as an example. Members of the *Liedertafel* often wrote their own poetry and music, perhaps in the manner of the ancient German *Meistersinger* guild, or sang sentimental or nationalist music by Weber, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Wagner, Schubert, and others.

Only one documented choral society reinforced at least in part, Thibaut's recommendation to sing "genuine old chorales": the Massachusetts Musical Society, possibly a forerunner of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston, listed Protestant hymn tunes and anthems to be sung at its meetings. More universally taken up among Thibaut's causes was the Palestrina revival. Berlioz, for example, mentions the "charm" of hearing Palestrina's music sung by a small choir.[23] In France the Society of Concerts of Vocal Music specialized in sixteenth-century sacred repertoire; the group had 72 singers in 1845. Eduard Hanslick, a self-confessed champion of nineteenth-century music, refers to "old Thibaut of Heidelberg" as "a strict purist."[24] Still, Hanslick admits, "To get to the untarnished, unworldly purity of Catholic church music we would have to go back to Palestrina, or even to the Gregorian Chant — for Palestrina himself is not above reproach from the strict churchly point of view."[25]

Choral societies in the nineteenth century were not abundantly documented in primary sources, perhaps because the phenomenon of choral singing verged on folk culture. When contemporary writers such as Thibaut and Spohr wrote about choral societies, it was because they wanted to change them to their own purposes. Yet it is clear that nineteenth-century choral societies, like many today, were created to serve the goals of community, scholarship, art, religion, and charity. The result of each society's work was some balance of those goals. Relegated to the background of Thibaut's and Spohr's writings, and slightly less closeted in the annals of the Viennese *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* and of the Boston Handel and Haydn Society, were the popular causes of amusement, entertainment, and diversion.

[22]Spohr, p. 818.

[23]Berlioz, pp. 182–83.

[24]Eduard Hanslick, *Vienna's Golden Years of Music 1850–1900,* trans. and ed. Henry Pleasants III (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950), p.90.

[25]Ibid., p. 180.

Choral Conductors Forum

THE YOUNG TENOR VOICE

by DONALD NEUEN

There are many young boys whose voice quality may be light in nature, suggesting a true tenor timbre, but whose upper range cannot comfortably endure the tenor tessitura. The conductor may think: 1. the boy *sounds* like a tenor; 2. this light quality will really be of little value to the bass or baritone section; and 3. tenors are *needed.* Thus, the boy is assigned to the tenor section with the hope that it will work out. It won't. The boy's voice will be harmed. He will not *enjoy* singing, because it will be uncomfortable, and in addition, he will not be able to do it *well.* There will not be one positive aspect to this situation.

Conversely, there is a multitude of adult "baritones" in church and community choirs who, had their voices been given proper care in high school days, would still be tenors. There are no words to adequately describe the delicacy of the young tenor voice. It is, in most cases, the last to fully mature, and it is the easiest to damage.

The importance of a true concept of the "ideal" sound for young tenors is paramount. This concept must encompass lyricism at its purest with energy and animation at its highest. One without the other will be fruitless.

Let us first discuss the lyric aspect. A very tangible comparison would be that to the unison sound of girls' voices, singing mezzo-piano, in the range of middle C up to approximately A-flat above middle C. The following exercise usually proves effective: if there is a high passage in which the young tenors seem to be straining, reaching a top note that sounds both forced and under pitch, have all the *girls* sing it alone (in *tenor* range), mezzo-piano, but with abundant energy, (not loudly!). Have the tenors listen carefully to this several times, thus fixing the quality of sound in their own minds. Then have the girls *sustain* the highest tone. Tell them to take additional breath as needed. While the girls are sustaining this tone, have the tenors, one at a time, join in, imitating the relaxed tone quality of the girls' voices so perfectly that the listener — you — cannot distinguish the entrance of the tenors from the sustained tone of the female voices. Sustain

the tone of the tenors, blending its unison quality, while releasing that of the girls. The sound should be the same. Then have the tenors sing the whole passage. This will, in most instances, produce a free and relaxed tenor sound . . . if, indeed, the boys are true tenors, not baritones struggling to help the tenor section.

The energy aspect of this concept is equally important. The tone must be alive, communicative, and "lifting," with a projection that literally sends it sailing to the back row of any concert hall . . . even though it is soft and light. The face is animated, the eyes are sparkling, and the sound is immensely exciting! It will balance soprano, alto, and bass sections of much larger numbers. Seven to ten young tenors with this lyric yet energetic quality can easily hold their own in a choir of fifty to sixty. This is due to the unique "color" and purity of sound, combined with its proper projection.

Substituting vitality for volume means that tenors do not sing loudly! . . . not until they mature to the age of twenty to twenty-five, depending upon the individual voice. Most college freshmen and sophomores are, in fact, not ready to sing high passages in forte dynamics.

Encourage young tenors to use falsetto freely. Young tenors and basses alike should develop the ability to move into and out of falsetto range unnoticeably, and without any problems. Try to achieve this by simply *doing* it, using the full extent of the range when vocalizing, from the lowest tone to the highest falsetto (softly!). Once this is practiced, there are few passages that will prove too high for young male singers to be handled comfortably. (Head tone, as a replacement for falsetto, will be discussed below.)

Tenors who have trouble with high notes often tend to stick their chins up and out in an effort to help them reach the high pitch. This is a subconscious act in which the singer calls upon some extra physical effort to assist in a difficult task. All it does is to detract through added tension in the neck and jaw. It is the conductor's job to spot this and stop it. A relaxed and — again — lyrical tone, based on energy and proper breath support, should totally eliminate the need for such a device.

The female singer, if singing properly by bringing the "upper" voice down throughout the lower range, will use basically the same voice quality throughout the total range. Not so the male. The male singer is apt to produce an offensive, "yelling" sound if he ascends (without softening) to the top range with the same voice in which he normally and naturally deals with the lower register. As the male voice matures, softening down and the use of falsetto can be replaced by the development of head tone, sometimes referred to as "cover" or "hook." (This is usually at age seventeen to nineteen for basses and eighteen to twenty for tenors.)

An exercise that may prove useful is to begin, an octave below middle C, with a shallow "ah" sung softly in a normal voice, almost as if spoken. Very quietly and slowly ascend, with a mere suggestion of a gradual glissando, to the third, fifth, and upper octave. In traveling from the fifth to the upper octave, let the tone "slide" into the head register. In doing so, gradually change the vowel to "oh." After holding the tone for a moment, descend in a similar manner, slowly, allowing the tone to return from head resonance to that of jaw and mouth. Change back to "ah" during the glissando down from the octave to the fifth. Begin the exercise with the head slightly tilted back, then leaning it slightly forward while approaching the head-tone placement. Do the reverse on the way back down. The head movement should be *very slight*. It is only to help focus the singer's attention upon the point at which the tone is to "exit." When this is mastered, add a slow crescendo once you reach the head tone and arrive at the top pitch. Then, gradually decrease the volume *prior* to descending to the fifth. This exchange of crescendo and diminuendo will prove the basis for complete control and development of head tone.

The young tenor voice is the most fragile of all musical instruments. Quality and vitality should at all times be substituted for volume.

Choral Performances

New York — The Sine Nomine Singers, under the guidance of their founder and director Harry Saltzman, concluded their second decade of activity on the New York scene. During these years the group has been known not only for its fine choral singing, but also by Saltzman's penchant for assembling ambitious, fascinating programs around special "topics." One recent concert, for example, consisted exclusively of settings of texts from the "Song of Songs"; another was devoted solely to works of Monteverdi; and Saltzman is now in the seventh year of a ten-year odyssey with the Singers in which all of Handel's oratorios will be offered. Appropriately, the occasion of the Singers' most recent concert, this past Valentine's Day in New York's Merkin Concert Hall, was marked with a program entitled "The Many Faces of Love" — a program so clever and thoughtful in design as to warrant a full report of its contents.

The evening's first group included seven pieces, listed on the program under the heading "Lovers." Each piece, in turn, was also listed under a simple heading that underscored the essential sentiment of its text, and the pieces were presented in an order that itself suggested the story of an *affaire de coeur* — beginning with an "Invocation" (*O Venus und Cupido blind* by Schein); leading to "Meeting" and "Promises" (two chansons by Lasso, *Bonjour mon coeur* and *Je l'aime bien*); "Consummation" (*Si ch'io vorrei morire* by Monteverdi); "Suffering" (Gesualdo's *Moro lasso*); "Parting" (*Adieu, Sweet Amaryllis* by Wilbye); and concluding with "Despair and Renewed Hope" (Schein's *Mein Schifflein lief*).

Saltzman designated the evening's second group, by means of a new program heading, as a commemoration of "Friendship" — specifically that of "David, Saul, and Jonathan," as expressed in Josquin's motet *Planxit autem David.* It merits special mention that the Singers presented not only the motet's well-known *prima pars,* but also its far less frequently performed second, third, and fourth parts. Hearing it thus in its entirety (the first time for this listener), one was even more greatly impressed by the freedom of structure that gives this motet so singular a place within the composer's output.

The texts of the three pieces comprising Saltzman's third group told of another kind of love — that of parent and child: "Jacob and Joseph"

(Schein's *Da Jacob vollendet hatte*); "Rachel and the Holy Innocents" (*Vox in Rama* by Clemens non Papa); and "David and Absolom" (Weelkes's incomparable anthem, *When David Heard*). Lighter in character was the fourth group on the program, entitled "Three Views on Virginity" and including *When Phoebus First* (Dowland), *Susanna Fair* (Byrd), and *Poor is the Life* (Michael East). Matrimony was the subject of texts in the program's fifth group, with works by Compère (*Lourdault, lourdault*), Lasso (*Quand mon mari vient dehors*), Haydn (*Die Harmonie in der Ehe*), and Hindemith (*Vom Hausregiment*). The program ended with three encores: William Walton's *Set me as a seal upon thine heart* with its text from the Song of Solomon; a chanson by Passereau, *Il est bel et bon,* and a selection introduced by Saltzman as "the greatest musical farewell of all time" — *Goodbye My Coney Island Baby,* performed by the male contingent of the Singers in barbershop harmony.

Several of the pieces presented on the program are, of course, well-known to students of choral music from their inclusion in the standard historical anthologies. Of generally greater interest, then, were the less familiar selections on the program. For instance, the three works by Schein (a composer of music far too infrequently heard or discussed, in my opinion) made an especially deep impression — not only for their beauty, but for their demonstration of the extrordinary range of styles embraced by the composer. The texture of *O Venus und Cupido blind,* a work published in 1624 as part of Schein's *Diletti Pastorali,* is predominantly homophonic and the ensemble is treated in the manner of a double choir. *Mein Schifflein lief* is from the same collection, but here it is rather Schein's skill as a contrapuntist that is in greatest view. *Da Jacob vollendent hatte* (taken from Schein's *Israels Brünnlein* of 1623), on the other hand, suggests with its expressive devices and declamatory writing the influence of the late Italian madrigal. (The three works by Lasso on the program formed a similar testimony of that composer's famed versatility.)

Works by Haydn and Hindemith made for a somewhat incongruous conclusion for a program otherwise consisting of works by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century composers. Yet, if anything, one wished for a greater representation of later musical styles throughout the evening. "Die Harmonie in der Ehe" is one of thirteen choral pieces grouped together by Haydn and published in his complete works as *13 Mehrstimmige Gesänge.* "Vom Hausregiment" is from Hindemith's *Lieder nach alten Texten,* Op. 33, published in 1923. With a text from Martin Luther and stylistic elements recalling the musical style of the late Baroque, the piece thus reflects those interests that, in 1924, initiated Hindemith's "neo-classical" period.

In all of this, the Singers performed with good diction and intonation; Saltzman commands a particularly impressive choral *pianissimo.* In lieu of

texts printed in the program, English translations were read aloud (by actors Rochelle Oliver and Fritz Weaver) preceding each selection. These readings brought considerable life to the texts, especially to those involving dialogue between characters, but of course did not allow one to examine carefully the details or the general structure of the composer's setting.

The Singers concluded their season with another program of unusual interest, "A Fusillade of Canons," which included works by Josquin, Mouton, Haydn and Brahms.

— Michael Nott

Boston — Handel and Haydn, the great names with which the opening sections of this issue deal, stand for the classics of the choral literature to which our choral societies have been traditionally devoted. "Handel and Haydn" stands for the American choral tradition in particular, because Boston's Handel and Haydn Society is the oldest choral organization on the continent, and it has held a foremost place on the American choral scene for the better part of two centuries. In a tribute to the Society and its conductor (*American Choral Review* Vol. XXVIII, No. 4), we had occasion to comment on the organization's remarkable feat of linking the venerable to the avant garde, and recently we were treated to a program that indeed bore witness to such vitality.

It was an all-Vivaldi program — probably the first ever heard in Boston's Symphony Hall which, with its own great tradition, remains one of the finest in the country — and it was doubtless the first instance in which the hall's admirable acoustics graced the sound of an ensemble made up entirely of period instruments and a choral sonority adjusted to it. The aural result was both gentle and gorgeous. Christopher Hogwood is a maestro eminently qualified to marshall such forces, and the featured instrumental soloist, Stanley Ritchie, was in every respect his equal.

The program combined three totally different aspects of the composer's work. It opened with the Psalm *Lauda Jerusalem* set in the time-honored antiphonal manner, though the texture of writing for two choirs and orchestras (placed well apart on the Symphony Hall stage) reminded the listener that Vivaldi's was the genius that most clearly foreshadowed the Viennese Classic style in his time. The concluding work was the well-known *Gloria,* a work apt to appear somewhat conventional — until one is absorbed by the profundity of the "Et in terra pax." Vivaldi's music is ever surprising. "It is well to remember how a few Baroque fanatics and scholars agitated for Vivaldi shortly after World War II and succeeded not only in bringing him out of history's shadows but enshrining him in the standard repertory," wrote Donald Henahan in *The New York Times* (May 15, 1988).

It was an especially well-conceived idea to have a gesture towards the "famous" Vivaldi forming the center of the program. Two concertos each of the *Four Seasons* were offered before and after intermission, and the exquisite sound of Stanley Ritchie's violin playing immersed the audience in the composer's erratic virtuosity and brilliant banalities — Vivaldi is always likeable but, unexpectedly, his music stirs the innermost. We encountered Ritchie's compelling artistry again during a Bach Festival shortly thereafter, for the Vivaldi program marked the eve of Bach celebrations that covered an entire month.

Harvard and Brandeis Universities had sponsored a three-day Bach Symposium, held at the occasion of the American Bach Society's fifth triennial meeting on the Harvard campus. Christoph Wolff and Robert Marshall were acting as hosts, and the latter chaired the central event — a Colloquium on Performance Practice with Don Franklin, Robert Hill, Christopher Hogwood, Frederick Neumann, George Stauffer, and David Schildkret as panelists. Hans-Joachim Schulze, Director of the Bach Archive in Leipzig, gave the keynote address, and the first paper of the Symposium dealt with its most interesting "novelty": D. R. Melamed of Harvard University offered convincing arguments that the motet *Ich lasse dich nicht* (BWV, App. 159), an old-time choral favorite traditionally ascribed to Johann Christoph Bach, is a work of the young Johann Sebastian.

It was a rewarding postlude to the Boston events to travel to the country's two oldest Bach Festivals, in Bethlehem, Pensylvania, and Berea, Ohio. The Eighty-first Bach Festival of the Bach Choir of Bethlehem saw the observance of the centennial of America's first *St. John Passion* performance in Bethlehem, with an excellent rendition of the work under Greg Funfgeld and a highly informative lecture by Robin Leaver; and the Fifty-sixth Bach Festival of Baldwin-Wallace College included, as a major departure from the established program pattern, a moving performance of Handel's *Theodora* under the direction of Dwight Oltman. Vivaldi, Bach and Handel could not have been better served.

— A.M.

* * *

John Oliver, one of Lorna Cooke deVaron's many distinguished students and the founder of the John Oliver Chorale, continued a tradition of innovative programming that dates back to 1971 when he began conducting his organization. He led the ensemble in the American premiere of Frank Martin's *Et la vie l'emporta* (And life won), Martin's final work, written in 1974. The orchestration of the last half of the third movement

was completed after Martin's death by his friend Bernard Reichel, and the work was first performed in Lausanne in June of 1975. This Chamber Cantata, as the composer called it, is scored for a small group of singers, with alto and baritone soli, and an ensemble consisting of two flutes, oboe, oboe d'amore, harpsichord, harp, organ, and strings. The texts, a fascinating and eclectic tryptych, were selected from "La Complainte du Malade" (The Sick Man's Lament) by the Swiss Roman Catholic theologian and poet Maurice Zundel, Martin Luther, in an unidentified French translation, and from a letter attributed to Fra Angelico (also in French).

Martin's theme here is the basic struggle between life and death, spirit and matter, and what seems so arresting about this work is the tremendous statement that such a short work (of twenty minutes) makes about such a large preoccupation of humankind. It was not, to be sure, entirely Martin's choice of subject matter: the work was commissioned by Zyma S.A. of Nyon, a Swiss pharmaceutical firm, to mark its seventy-fifth anniversary (certainly an enlightened corporate expenditure!), and Martin responded with a poetic musical allegory of the chemical age. Without knowing what texts would follow, he selected the Zundel poem for the first movement and began setting it. In the fall of 1973, Martin himself fell seriously ill, and his successive choices of texts seem to have been influenced by this affliction and subsequent recovery.

The first movement, "Imploration," is full of spiky, strident rhythmic and melodic tensions, mirroring the text "Entre le monde est moi l'alliance est rompue" (The alliance between me and the world has been broken), in an idiom familiar to those who know Martin's *Petite symphonie concertante* (1945). The second movement, "Combat" (Fight), uses the text of the fourth verse of Luther's hymn *Christ lag in Todesbanden,* known from Bach's Cantata 4. The comparisons that incidentally could be made with Bach throughout the work are many — here Martin writes a free fantasy not on the chorale tune proper to the text but on another old German melody, *Der grimmig Tod mit seinem Pfeil,* for men's voices alone with orchestra. The unaccompanied solo baritone sings the hymn verse and the orchestra plays a music of great contrapuntal clarity and rhythmic complexity in which violin, flute, harp, and organ represent "life," and the lower strings, harpsichord, oboe, and oboe d'amore represent "death." The men's voices in unison present the theme at intervals as a cantus firmus. The title of the work comes from the third line of this movement, "par l'esprit la vie l'emporta" (Das Leben behielt den Sieg). The final movement, "Offrande" (Offering), beginning with an extraordinary unaccompanied duo for oboe and oboe d'amore, offers consolation through a heightened direction of the composer's message in an alto solo.

Those who associate Martin's writing with a moody adaptation of Schoenbergian serial technique will be surprised at this work. The idiom is

more a re-evocation of Baroque conventions, somewhat in the style of Hindemith, but without his harmonic and melodic systematism. The singers under Oliver's direction handled the wordy texts with aplomb, Barbara Youmans, mezzo-soprano, sang the alto solos with great lucidity, and James Coelho had a fine reedy baritone to match the stern Lutheran chorale text in the second movement. The performance was deeply felt and well received by the audience in the recently and beautifully restored New Old South Church. For choruses willing to undertake a difficult and quietly passionate new work, *Et la vie l'emporta* cannot come too highly recommended from this listener.

— David Francis Urrows

Los Angeles — The Master Chorale of Los Angeles, under the direction of John Currie, presented as its season opener Sir Edward Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*. Composed for the 1900 Birmingham Festival, the work has long been included in the standard choral repertoire of British, Canadian, Australian, and European choirs, but despite its appeal abroad has curiously not caught on as a choral mainstay in this country. Perhaps this could be traced to its fundamental connection with Roman Catholic doctrine (the libretto is set to nearly all of Cardinal Newman's poem of 1865), but it might seem more likely that it could have lost favor in Great Britain where significant issues divide Catholics and Protestants to this day.

In order to avoid calling *The Dream* a sacred oratorio (which Elgar considered "that dreadful term"), he simply, and perhaps a little blandly, called it "a setting of the text." It is not at all organized according to the conventional oratorio format with distinct aria, recitative, and choral sections; rather it shows an influence of Wagner's music drama, particularly with its use of a kind of continuous melody, as well as the *leitmotif* technique. Before beginning work on *The Dream,* Elgar visited Bayreuth and was thoroughly impressed by a production of *Parsifal,* staying for a second performance during that particular trip. The debt to Wagner in *The Dream* is clear from the use of *leitmotifs,* which pervade the work and give it cohesion. Specific names were attached to them (such as Fear, Despair, Sleep, Judgment) by Elgar's friend August Johannes Jaeger (1860–1909) who made an extensive analysis of the work.

One of the most attractive characteristics of the choral portions of *The Dream* is the interesting variety of textures Elgar weaves into the total aural fabric. A large symphonic choir divides at one point into eight-part double chorus texture ("O loving wisdom of our God"); occasionally there is four-part male chorus writing; and there are sections for semi-chorus (representing the earth-bound penitents). At times the semi-chorus acts as a

sort of choral overlay, distinct in tone color and dynamic range from the large choir, or emerging from a dense choral-orchestral sound with a hushed unaccompanied pianissimo. Originally a choir of men and boys was assigned to this task, but a mixed group of singers will work equally well.

The choral climaxes that occur on the texts "Go forth in the name of God" and "O loving wisdom of our God" formed the high points of the evening. An excellent orchestra amply supported the Chorale, yet the total sonority lacked the important presence of a large cathedral (or concert hall) pipe organ. Elgar himself was convinced by the organist before the premiere to make several changes in the organ part to "forte," and occasionally "fortissimo" dynamics. The Chorale used an electronic instrument which rarely provided the necessary volume.

Much of the success of the piece hinges upon the strength of the tenor voice for the part of Gerontius. The veteran British singer John Mitchison proved remarkably successful in this respect, exhibiting great clarity of articulation and refinement of dynamic gradations. He was indeed able to deliver the big moments of the score. The role is a sort of Wagnerian vocal endurance test, and Mitchison's success was all the more striking for a singer apparently in his sixties.

Christine Cairns (mezzo-soprano), as the Guardian Angel, sang with an expressive voice though some thinness in the middle register, and with the poignant restraint inherent in the character of the part. The portrayal of the Priest and the Angel of Agony by Scott Henderson (baritone) lacked vocal and dramatic security.

The score of *The Dream* is riddled with meter changes and an even greater variety of tempi and dynamics. Consequently it presents a formidable challenge to the conductor. Currie's leadership, though often score-bound, nevertheless produced some admirable results in terms of sheer vocal sound, and the Los Angeles Master Chorale is to be commended for risking a potential financial loss in performing a choral masterwork unjustly shelved by most American choral organizations.

— Gary McKercher

Recent Books

HANDEL, HAYDN, AND THE VIENNESE CLASSICAL STYLE, by Jens Peter Larsen. Translations by Ulrich Krämer. Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1988 (xii + 332 pp., $49.95).

A major event in the publication history of *Studies in Musicology,* the excellent series issued under the editorship of George J. Buelow by UMI Research Press, presents us once more with the joined names of Handel and Haydn for a report in these pages. What singles out this volume at the outset is the stature of the author. Jens Peter Larsen is the senior scholar in both modern Handel and Haydn research, and his scholarship, invariably marked by directness, depth, artistic *engagement,* and unquestionable authority, stands as a model in modern musicology.

He established a new era of Haydn studies when, in the 1930's, he challenged a discovery of some seventy unknown Haydn symphonies, and his subsequent writings on the sources of Haydn's works have become basic texts. His search for a definitive version of *Messiah* produced, in later years, a comparable beginning for a reliable assessment of Handel sources. Thus his work has profoundly affected our understanding of key works of the choral literature.

The volume consists of essays many of which have not previously appeared in English. What makes Larsen's writing so interesting for a wide readership is that his discussion of sources has opened broad perspectives which have placed in a new light critical developments in music history, such as the evolution of Handel's choral style and the rise of Viennese Classicism. Thus the book is arranged in three major sections, dealing with Handel, Haydn, and the Viennese Classical Style. Larsen entered musicology as an active performer, and during more than sixty years of a scholarly career he witnessed changes in performance practice which he is able to evaluate from a historical vantage point unmatched by almost any writer on today's scene.

His Handel studies, a number of which have previously appeared in the *American Choral Review* (January, 1972), include such topics as "Problems of the Handel Tradition," "Changing Conceptions of Handel's *Messiah,*" and "G.F. Handel's Operas and Oratorios: Form, Typology, and Performance Practice." His Haydn studies contain fundamental essays on

Haydn's early and late Masses as well as categoric investigations, such as "The Challenge of Joseph Haydn" and "The Haydn Tradition."

The student of choral music will find himself stirred again and again by expressions of fresh insight: his view is suddenly illuminated in reading: "Haydn's Masses were black-listed for a long time," or, "It might seem questionable whether Haydn would have arrived at the wonderful expression of noble popularity in his two late masterworks, *The Creation* and *The Four Seasons,* without Mozart's *Magic Flute.* . . . In these works Haydn became Mozart's heir, adopting and continuing his heritage. These works transform the friendship of Haydn and Mozart into a musical symbol."

A novel perspective of eighteenth-century music arises before the reader, lending his choral favorites a radiant glow that only the spirit of true scholarship can impart to the classics of the literature.

— A.M.

As this issue goes to press, the sad news reaches us that Jens Peter Larsen has died. In a deep sense of bereavement we shall honor the memory of the great scholar with a new volume of his Handel Studies, including unpublished manuscripts he left, in our 1989 schedule.

Recent Scores

ARNOLD, DENIS. *Ten Venetian Motets.* SATB (many of the motets have divided parts). Oxford University Press, London. (99 p., no price given)

BAGENAL, ALISON and MICHAEL. *This Merry Company.* Four medieval plays with single-line melodies to be sung by children (some to be played on instruments). "Note to Teachers: The full 'text' of each play is printed in the Teacher's Book together with historical notes, dance instructions and notes on the music, including the sources of the tunes and instructions for making a psaltery, nakers, and a dulcimer. . . . If you do not have the exact instrumentation we suggest, please adapt our suggestions to suit your own resources." Instruments include recorders, xylophones, violins, etc. Oxford University Press, London. (vocal score, 32 p., $5.00; cassette available)

BESIG, DON. *Recipe for a Song.* Treble voices (SSA), piano, opt. string bass and trap set. Shawnee Press, Delaware Water Gap, Pa. (8 p., .45)

DECKER, BILL. *Fill with Kindness.* 2-part mixed voices (SA/TB), piano. Shawnee Press, Delaware Water Gap, Pa. (8 p., .45)

EHRET, WALTER, arr. *All Praise to God Who Reigns Above.* Hymn-tune by Melchior Vulpius. SAB, organ, opt. obbligato for 2 B-flat trumpets. G.I.A. Publications, Chicago, Ill. (7 p., .50)

FINE, IRVING. *Against Jealousy* (No. IV from the cycle *The Hour-Glass,* poems by Ben Jonson). SA, SATB, small SATB chorus. G. Schirmer. London/New York. (25 p., $1.00)

——. *Lament* (No. V from the cycle *The Hour-Glass,* poems by Ben Jonson). SATB. G. Schirmer, London/New York. (7 p., .70)

FRANK, MELCHIOR. *If God Be for Us (Ist Gott für uns).* Edited by Walter Ehret. Text in English and German. SATB. G.I.A. Publications, Chicago, Ill., (8 p., .50)

GARDNER, JOHN. *Sunny Bank Carol,* Op. 141. SATB. Oxford University Press, London. (15 p., .40)

GAWTHROP, DANIEL E. *Three Celtic Invocations.* SATB. Sacred Music Press, Dayton, Ohio. (11 p., .85)

GIBBS, C. ARMSTRONG. *Thee Will I Love.* Arr. by Richard Lloyd. SATB, organ. Banks Music Publications, York. (7 p., 40 pence)

HANDEL, GEORGE FRIDERIC. *The Ways of Zion do Mourn* (Funeral Anthem for Queen Caroline, 1737). Edited by Watkins Shaw. SATB, orchestra. Novello, Kent. (vocal score, 101 p., 60 pence; "Full score and instrumental material, including a complete keyboard continuo part, are available on hire.")

HOPSON, HAL. *21 Hymn Descants* (for festive and general use). G.I.A. Publications, Chicago, Ill. (21 p., $1.00)

LeFANU, NICOLA. *Verses from Psalm 90.* S and 2 SATB choirs. Novello, Kent. (4 p., no price given)

MOE, DANIEL. *Exhortation from Proverbs.* SATB, keyboard. (Opt. brass sextet — 2 B-flat trumpets, 2 trombones, F Horn, Tuba — available from publisher.) Carl Fischer, New York. (14 p., .50)

MÜLLER, GEORG GOTTFRIED. *You Are Precious to Him (Ihr seyd theuer erkauft).* Edited and arr. by Carol Brown and Karl Kroeger. SSAA, keyboard. Text in English and German. The Moravian Music Series. Carl Fischer, New York (10 p, .45)

POOLER, MARIE, arr. *Amazing Grace!* Early American Melody. An improvisation for SATB, treble unison choir, audience, organ or piano, handbells, opt. recorder or flute. Carl Fischer, New York. (15 p., .50)

POTE, ALLEN. *Prepare Ye the Way.* SATB or SB, piano, opt. guitar. Carl Fischer, New York. (8 p., .40)

POWELL, ROBERT. *Soldiers of Christ.* SATB, keyboard. Carl Fischer, New York. (7 p., .40)

ROLAND-ADAMS, GORDON, RALPH ALLWOOD, BRIAN BENNETT, arrs. *The Ballad of Saloman Pavey.* An historical play with music by Jeremy James Taylor and David Drew-Smythe. Lyrics by Jeremy James Taylor. Cast includes at least 6 male adults and 19 boys. "Ideally, the accompanying group should be an early music consort" — 6 players (or a modern group of 6 players). Parts and vocal scores on rental; libretto for sale, $12.00. Oxford University Press, London. (vocal score, 46 p., $15.20). Duration: 2 hours. (A phrase on the cover of the vocal score describes the work as "An Elizabethan ballad opera based on the children of the Chapel Royal.")]

SERMISY, CLAUDIN DE. *My Dearest Love.* SATB *a cappella.* Edited by Robert Campbell. Carl Fischer, New York. (7 p., .85)

TUUK, JONATHAN A. *Concertato on Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise.* Original hymn-tune by John Roberts. SATB, congregation, organ. G.I.A. Publications, Chicago., Ill. (6 p., .50)

WILLCOCKS, DAVID, AND JOHN RUTTER, editors and arrangers. *Carols for Choirs 4.* This is apparently vol. 4 of a series entitled *Carols for Choirs.* SSA and SSAA, most carols unaccompanied, some accompanied by piano or opt. organ, harp or other instruments. Oxford University Press, London. (208 p., no price given)

— Richard Jackson

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