AMERICAN CHORAL REVIEW

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN CHORAL FOUNDATION, INC.
VOLUME XXXI • NUMBER 1 • WINTER 1989

AMERICAN CHORAL REVIEW

The AMERICAN CHORAL REVIEW is published quarterly as the official journal of The American Choral Foundation, Inc. The Foundation also publishes a supplementary Research Memorandum Series.

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Administered by
Chorus America
Kenneth Garner, Executive Director
2111 Sansom Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103
(215) 563-2430

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Third-class Postage Paid — Philadelphia and additional mailing offices
Postmaster: Send address changes to American Choral Review,
2111 Sansom Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103
ISSN 0002-7898

AMERICAN CHORAL REVIEW

Winter 1989

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In Memoriam

Ifor Jones

1900 – 1988

When the editor of this journal took over his duties thirty years ago and faced the task of commissioning his first article, he turned to the conductor of America's oldest Bach Choir — Ifor Jones. The choice seemed logical, because the work of the Bach Choir of Bethlehem is doubtless one of the most historic achievements on the American choral scene.[1] While the Handel & Haydn Society, almost by a century its senior, was established "with a chorus of ninety male and ten female singers, whose treble was strengthened, according to the custom of the time, by a few falsetto voices,"[2] Bethlehem's Bach Choir has represented since its founding the typical mixed choir of nineteenth-century choral societies, but at its inception in 1900, it also took on the range of developing twentieth-century challenges. Earlier than its venerable sister organization, it came to grips in its performances with the questions of original texts, the change from piano to harpsichord, and the need for producing reliable editions for its own use.

When Ifor Jones assumed the direction of the Choir in 1939, he gave it "what it indeed needed: a new era."[3] In the thirty years of his inspired, dynamic guidance, he enlarged the scope and international stature of the country's first Bach Choir, made it the model of innumerable similar organizations, and initiated G. Schirmer's series of Bach cantata editions. He is remembered as a musician and leader of unusual gifts.

Born the son of a Welsh coal miner, he entered, by family tradition, work in the mines at an early age. But his evident talent soon called him to different assignments. He won a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music, and, during the years of his formal studies, became assistant conductor to Sir Henry Wood at the Queen's Hall Orchestra, assistant

[1]Ifor Jones, "The Bethlehem Bach Festivals: Known and Unknown Repertory," *American Choral Review,* Vol. IV, No. 1, October 1961, p. 1.

[2]See *American Choral Review,* Vol. XXX, No. 3, Summer 1988, pp. 17–18.

[3]Paul A. Willistein, Jr., *Bethlehem Pilgrimage: The Bach Choir Past and Present,* Bethlehem, Pa., 1979, p. 17.

choirmaster at St. Paul's, and coach at Covent Garden. A concert tour took him to the United States where he promptly received a university appointment. He remained in the country, founded his own Handel Choir, and became one of our earliest specialists in the choral music of the Baroque.

It was at the occasion of one of his Handel performances that the course of his life work was decided. The Bach Choir of Bethlehem — whose early history is dealt with in another article in this issue — had arrived at a crisis. Having lost its founder, who had remained its director for a third of a century, the Choir was involved in a difficult interregnum, and the need for strong new leadership had become obvious. Members of the Choir's Board attended one of the concerts given by Ifor Jones with his Handel Choir and engaged him on the spot.

What followed in the next third of the century forms one of the most rewarding chapters in American choral history. We mourn the passing of Ifor Jones. We owe him much.

— A.M.

The Choral Music of Thea Musgrave

by CATHERINE ROMA

Thea Musgrave, British composer of international reputation, is well recognized through her contributions to opera and instrumental music. Less is known about her choral works, yet throughout her life she has consistently turned her attention to choral music. The development of Musgrave's choral writing reflects her compositional technique in the instrumental and operatic works. She has written fifteen choral works, spanning the thirty-five year period from 1953 to 1988. While they vary in difficulty, forces used, and length, they are all highly accessible and appealing to audience and performer. Lyricism and idiomatic handling of the voice are of basic importance to the composer. She is meticulously economical with her material: underlying all her works is a careful choice of text, fine detail of articulation, critical judgment in highlighting dramatic content, and integrity of expression. While aware of tradition, she is innovative and genuinely contemporary though maintaining sensitivity to vocal requirements. Her writing is demanding, but technical challenges remain within natural limits; they are not taken on for their own sake, and they always produce an idiomatic result.

Thea Musgrave was born in Barnton, Midlothian, near Edinburgh, Scotland, on May 27, 1928. Music was an essential part of her childhood. Yet it was not until after she had begun a pre-medical course at Edinburgh University in 1947 that she chose to devote her life to music.

> These were the molding years — in many ways known best only to her: the formative twenty years along the strip adjacent to the Firth of Forth, the incubation in a very conservative town such as Edinburgh; the cosmopolitanizing encounter of Paris, which in the early 1950's was assessing the impact of the second Viennese school, the place of pioneering experiments in *musique concrète,* the return from imprisonment of Olivier Messiaen, and his potent role as a teacher and composer (*Turangalîla,* for example) against the whole backdrop of a France losing its empire, savagely engaged in a desperate moral, political, and military struggle; and the startup of a flow of composing opportunities, commissions, festivals, fellowships and the like. All these times and places helped to catalyze a steady flow of musical compositions beginning in 1952 and continuing on to the present with a latent but discernible force.[1]

[1]Allen Sapp. "Thea Musgrave: A Perspective," paper delivered at the College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati, Ohio, January 1986.

The early period of Musgrave's style spans the years 1953 to 1957. Her studies with Nadia Boulanger (1950–54), which proved to be an artistic awakening, reinforced the concern for detail and economy that is apparent in the works of these years. The harmonic language is clearly tonal, the melodic lines move principally in conjunct motion in a lyric, singable manner. Her choice of rhythmic and metric structures is very flexible. Her music of this period also displays her concern for clarity in setting texts. In addition, these early works indicate a total familiarity with compositional styles of the past.

> Everything's been done before. The thing about tradition is to use it. Naturally as a composer you don't want to copy something because it's been done successfully, but you can take what you need from the past and rethink it in an entirely fresh way.[2]

Musgrave's choral music may be divided into four categories: works for unaccompanied chorus, works for chorus with organ, works for chorus with chamber ensemble, and works for chorus with orchestra. *Four Madrigals,* her earliest choral compositions, belong in the first category and show her general sensitivity to text setting as well as her particular interest in the Renaissance madrigal. As in many of her sixteenth-century models, the subject matter of these madrigals is love — suitors speaking of their loves, posturing and teasing. Musgrave chose four poems by Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503–42), an Englishman who was fascinated with the writers of the Italian Renaissance.

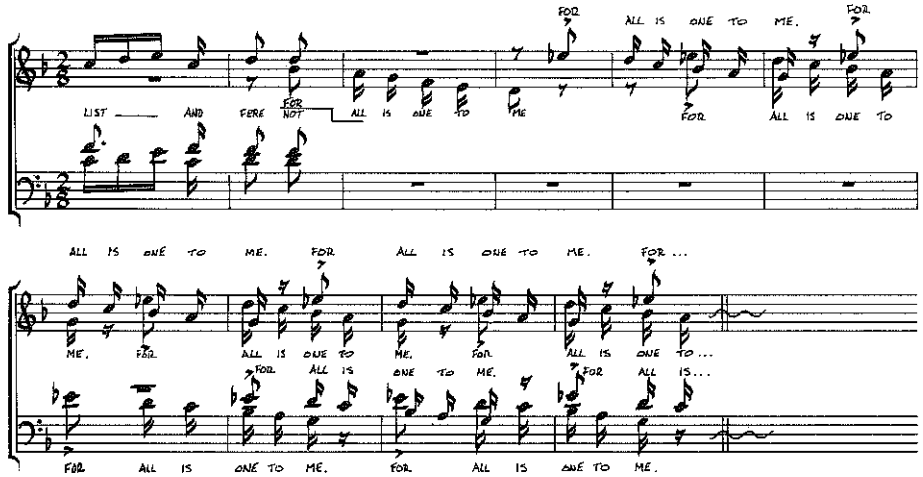
In the second madrigal of the set, "Tanglid I was in love's snare," only two of the poem's six stanzas are set strophically. In the manner of the chanson, alto, tenor, and bass voices are subordinate to the main melodic line. The ornamented soprano part, with "word painting" at descriptive points —"Tanglid," "pain," and "grief" — delivers the expressive content of the text. This work differs from others in the set particularly in its use of tempos to underscore the lover's obsession. Languid, legato lines are used to create a doleful, despairing mood at the beginning of each stanza, while the *vivo* sections, also marked *leggiero,* are light and sprightly, using a recurrent, homophonic "ha-ha" refrain to demonstrate the suitor's new-found freedom, "for now I am at libertye." Different modes are consistently combined in the opening section, as each individual vocal line retains its independence. E Phrygian, in particular, plays an important role in the *vivo* section. In the contrapuntal sections, the chords are a by-product of the melodic phrases, as in Renaissance practice.

[2]Interview with Thea Musgrave, College-Conservatory of Music, Cincinnati, January 15, 1986.

While "Hate whom ye list," the fourth madrigal in the set, contains typical sixteenth-century devices, it also brings certain twentieth-century techniques to the fore. In this poem, the lover at first feigns indifference: "Hate and love whom ye list — I care not; do and think what ye wish — I care not." He gives his beloved free reign, but his commitment is apparent. In capturing this text in music, the composer emphasizes rhythmic vitality, accent, and articulation. The first phrase is set homophonically in a driving rhythm. In the opening measures, chromaticism and dissonance add bite to the chords.

Once again, contrasting textures appear at appropriate points in the piece. The section "for all is one to me" (actually a musical quote from the preceding madrigal), marked *vivo,* resembles an imitative fa-la refrain (Example 1). While only two melodic ideas are involved, interest is maintained through tempo, changing meters, metric accents, and dynamic intensity. Musgrave has often acknowledged an appreciation for the music of Monteverdi, and she displays in these earliest choral pieces the same predilection for contrast and dramatic elements as is evident in the madrigals of Monteverdi's middle period.

EXAMPLE 1

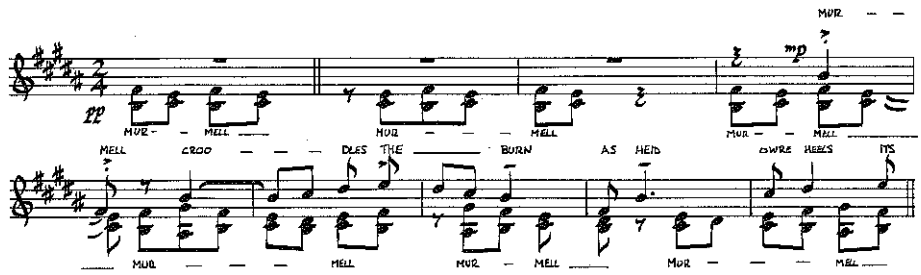


A second example of her early style is the *Cantata for a Summer's Day,* completed in 1954 for BBC Scotland radio and dedicated to the memory of Lili Boulanger. The work is scored for vocal quartet or chamber chorus, speaker, string quintet (including double bass), flute, and clarinet. The part of the reciter and the words of the coda are by Alexander Hume (1550–1609). All other poems are by Maurice Lindsay, friend of the composer and well-known Scottish poet who has collaborated with her on several works since. In a series of solo and ensemble numbers linked by short accompanied dialogue, the cantata conjures up the sultriness of a Scottish summer's day.

The sensitive use of vocal shades was to take on greater significance in later works.

Movement IVa, "Song of the Burn," has been published separately. In this ode to a stream, the poet Lindsay depicts wonderful sounds: the rush and roar of the stream as it goes on its way to the river, soft and loud, tumbling, foaming and splashing. The entire mood is one of joy. The music enhances the buoyant text in several ways. The undulating rhythm of an ever-changing pattern of rests propels the "murmell" motif, and there is a Debussyian interest in color (Example 2). The opening, gently rocking ostinato figure in the tenor and alto voices moves to other pairs of voices; throughout, the "murmell" motif is present. The dark sound of the bass voice does not enter until the "tumbling waterfall sings" — a brilliantly descriptive touch. The *Four Madrigals* and *Cantata for a Summer's Day* however, were to remain the only choral works from the composer's early period.

EXAMPLE 2



While she experimented with serial techniques during the years 1957–59, Thea Musgrave did not compose any choral pieces during this period. When asked why she had not, she responded:

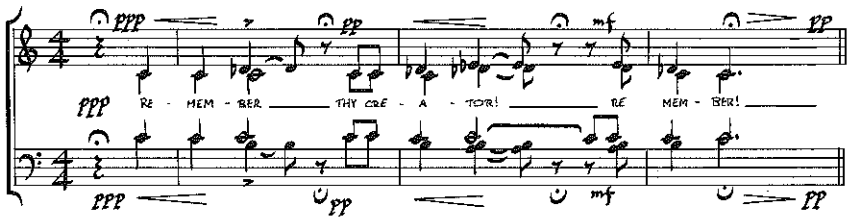
> It is difficult to write serial music for chorus with no pitch center, but I think that technically it can be done, and . . . I'm certain it can be done without making it extraordinarily difficult, that is to say, using nothing but major sevenths and tritones and intervals singers really don't like to sing much. . . .[3]

Memento Creatoris (1967), the first sacred choral piece, is an anthem scored for SAT soloists and SATB choir with optional organ. The text by John Donne exhorts us to remember that we owe everything to God the Creator. Different tonal centers, principally C and D-flat, are suggested at the beginning. In the opening measure all four voices start on middle C and fan out by half and whole steps. This coloristic effect, which is repeated several times in varied forms, always underscores the words "remember thy Creator" (Example 3). The dissonant cluster centered on C on the word

[3]Interview with Thea Musgrave, January 15, 1986.

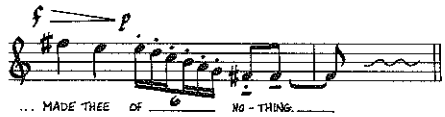
"Creator" in measure 2 conflicts with a tonal center of D-flat implied by the descending bass line in measure 4. This tonal ambiguity is eventually reconciled to A-flat in the conclusion of the piece.

EXAMPLE 3



The melodic lines, though singable, are fragmented and rhythmically highly varied. Voices are often paired, and the texture tends to change from homophonic to contrapuntal. The composer's interest in clarity and expressiveness of text-setting can once again be seen in Example 4. A recurring motif of descending sextuplets on the words "made thee of nothing" is stressed by reducing the choral texture; it seems to emerge out of nothing each time it appears. Numerology plays a role in the use of this sextuplet figure, suggesting the number of days in which God created the world.

EXAMPLE 4



"John Cook," the shortest choral work under discussion, is a product of the same period. This part-song for unaccompanied chorus is based on an anonymous text. With a short rhythmic ostinato, using the intervals of a minor second and a tritone, the composer again reveals her preference for tonal ambiguity. The ostinato is transposed each time it recurs and is passed between pairs of voices, a technique seen in earlier works — e.g., "Song of the Burn." In "John Cook" the texture is thin and sparse: rarely do all four parts sound at the same time. The melodic lines are angular, with careful attention given to articulation and dynamics.

In the 1970's, with her return to opera composition, Musgrave also established a more dramatic style in her choral writing. In general, she expanded her compositional palette: vocal color and effects are paramount. Going beyond the tonally ambivalent and chromatic language of earlier periods, Musgrave's style was what might be described as pantonal.

Rorate Coeli, a brilliant piece, is scored for SSATB soloists and a large SATB choir, often divided into eight parts. This work involves the

juxtaposition of two highly descriptive and complicated poems, "Rorate Coeli" and "On the Resurrection of Christ" written by the Scottish poet William Dunbar (1465–1520), which make use of recurring Latin phrases. The Latin text of "Rorate Coeli," from the liturgy for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, is made up of verses from Isaiah that prophesy the coming of Christ. The refrain "Surrexit Dominus de sepulcro" in "On the Resurrection of Christ" is a versicle that opens an anonymous hymn used in the Mass for Easter Day according to the Sarum Rite. The nativity poem asks all creation to join in the joyful hymn honoring Christ:

> Sinners be glad, and penance do,
> and thank your maker hairtfully;
>
> Celestrial fowl in the air
> Sing with your notes upon height

The companion piece to the nativity poem celebrates the victory represented by the resurrection. This hymn describes the triumph of life over death, spring over winter, and man over himself:

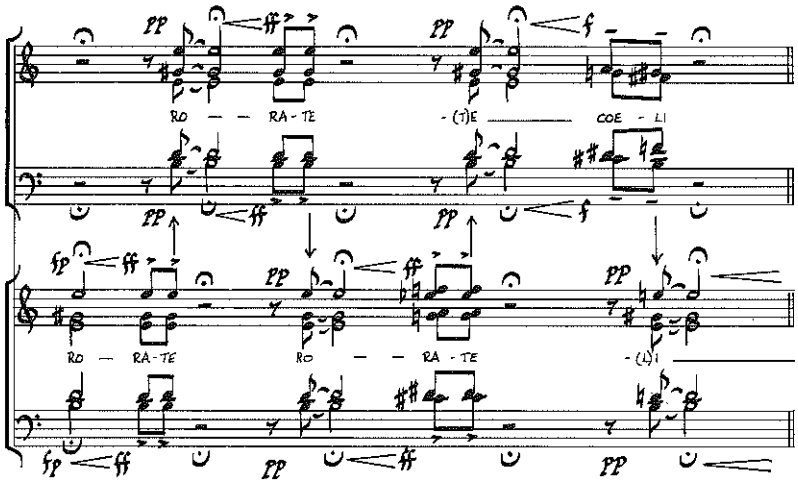
> Done is the battle of dragon black,
> Our campion Christ confoundit had his force;
>
> The foe is chased, the battle is done cease,
> The prison broken, the jevellouris fleit and flemit;

A rich opening sonority, to which the composer has referred in her own comments on the work, is a second-inversion major-minor seventh chord based on E. This chord is first heard in a broad introductory measure by the main chorus in five parts, then echoed by a solo ensemble in five parts (Example 5). In measure 3, soloists and seven-part chorus join forces in a full-bodied tutti statement of "Rorate coeli" before once again echoing one another and fading to a softer dynamic on an E ninth chord to end the introduction. These pillar chords recur in various guises as the piece unfolds.

In *Rorate Coeli* texture and timbre are not ends in themselves. Rather, they are geared toward a dramatic and coloristic interpretation of the text. As many as twelve different parts may sound simultaneously. The soloists function as a quintet and as individual voices. The choral lines are frequently divided, though rarely all at the same time. Where text delineation had been important earlier, here specific words are subordinated to over-all dramatic effect. Typical of the composer's vocal writing at this time is the mixture of improvisation and fixed melodic writing.

The Last Twilight (1980), Musgrave's most extensive accompanied choral composition since her dramatic works *The Phoenix and the Turtle* (1962) and *The Five Ages of Man* (1963), is scored for choir and twelve brass instruments: four horns in F, four trumpets, three tenor trombones,

EXAMPLE 5



one bass trombone, and a battery of percussion instruments including a solo part for vibraphone. The text, "Men in New Mexico," is a poem written by D.H. Lawrence (1885–1930) in the early 1920's during his three-year stay in Taos, New Mexico. Musgrave was commissioned to write the work by the D.H. Lawrence Festival of New Mexico, which heard its first performance at the Paolo Solieri Theatre in Sante Fe on July 20, 1980.

Although imbued with metaphors of nature — mountains, desert, sun — the poem evokes a bleak picture of humanity's inability to transcend the omnipresence of the landscape or weight of culture and history. Mountains are "blanket-wrapped, they can't wake." These images are compared to the plights of the Indians and Whites, both paralyzed in sleep: "A membrane of sleep, like a black blanket, . . . a dark membrane over the will, . . . born with a caul, a black membrane over the face, and unable to tear it, though the mind is awake." They long for something or someone to wake them, but these desires are, in reality, illusions.

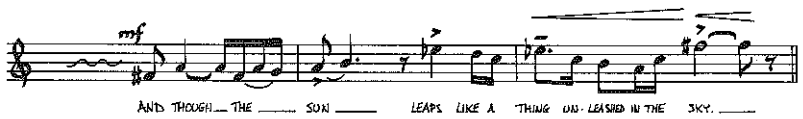
The large performance forces are divided into two groups: a main chorus, representing the white men, and a semi-chorus, representing the Indians. Intended as a theatrical piece, *The Last Twilight* also features speaking roles for actors, including torchbearers, *penitantes* (a religious sect of flagellants from the Sangre de Christo mountains in New Mexico), and a gunman. Stage directions and lighting are suggested in the score, though a non-staged version of the work is possible.

Throughout the work, the composer makes effective use of timbre and texture, as well as evocative harmony. The opening section, for example, is given to brass and percussion; the brass sounds in a low, dark register, symbolizing "blanket-wrapped" and "sleep." These colors, combined with hushed dynamics, create a veil of uneasiness, an emotion that is heightened

as the piece progresses. In measure 6, the Indians (semi-chorus) murmur the word "sleep" *pianissimo;* while the tonality centers on D, the consistent use of half-steps and tritones conveys a sense of restlessness. The full chorus enters in measure 20 with the main body of the text. The layering effect of both instrumental and vocal writing is symbolic, again, of the layers of sleep, inertia, and fear. The tessitura of all vocal parts is low.

The opening section reappears in the final forty-six measures of the piece, representing a circular conception of time in which there is an eternal cycle of paralysis. There is a brief but significant moment of animated expression on the line "and though the sun leaps like a thing unleashed in the sky" toward the end (Example 6), but otherwise sixteenth-note motion is rarely used. Gradually the number of dissonant sonorities is increased to underscore the smoldering paralysis. Pitch clusters are used for purposes of color; tonal centers shift constantly. The work features various synthetic scales, including octatonic and whole tone patterns, as well as the traditional harmonic minor scale.

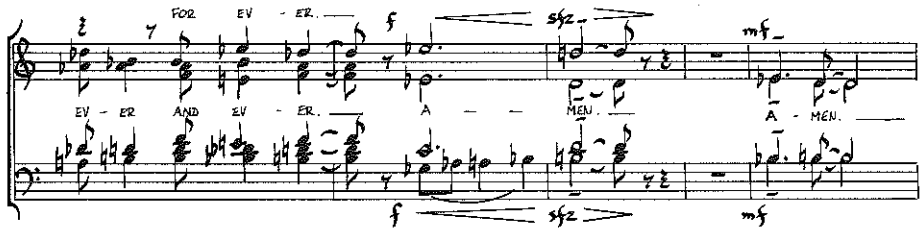
EXAMPLE 6



"O caro m'e il sonno," a brief, unaccompanied madrigal for STB soloists and mixed choir, suggests a return to the style of text and music of the *Four Madrigals.* The poem is by Michelangelo. In this piece Musgrave reverts to her earlier style in creating a genuinely contemporary Italian madrigal. Yet her approach differs from that in the English madrigals written more than twenty years prior to the work. The melodic lines are marked *espressivo* and are lyric as they are also extremely chromatic. As if in the manner of Gesualdo, chromaticism and dissonance are used for dramatic effect. In his text, the poet yearns for oblivion — stone-like sleep. The music pictures this yearning by leaving suspensions unresolved: the piece contains not one moment of rest nor a single cadence.

"The Lord's Prayer" for chorus and organ, written in 1984, shows a more traditional presentation of the text. Clusters and coloristic effects in the organ contrast with the harmonies heard in the choral parts. A certain sense of unity is achieved through use of a recurring half-step, E-flat to D (sometimes expanded to a whole step, E-flat to D-flat), which changes through different registers in the organ part as the work progresses. References to the same motif are apparent in the choral parts (Example 7). Thus techniques typical of her most recent compositional style are combined with devices the composer has used throughout her career.

EXAMPLE 7



In 1986, Musgrave completed *Black Tambourine* for women's chorus, piano, and six percussion parts to be performed by singers in the chorus. The seventeen-minute work is in six sections and uses poems by Hart Crane from his last collection *White Buildings.* Her most recent choral work, *For the Time Being,* commissioned by the BBC Singers, is Musgrave's longest unaccompanied choral work. The poem by W.H. Auden was published in 1945. Subtitled "A Christmas Oratorio," it was written with the wish (never fulfilled) that it be set to music by Benjamin Britten. The whole first section of the poem, "Advent," is covered in a continuous twenty-five-minute span; in Part II, a narrator speaks the text, accompanied by the chorus singing fragments of text from Part I.

When responding to an interviewer's question, "What is your music like?" Musgrave replied:

> I hope my music is dramatic, that it is accessible if given a little time to get to the listener, that it has warmth, perhaps a certain amount of humor, some comedy elements — rather than saying I am a serial or romantic composer, I use many elements of music, even some aleatoric passages, and try to draw them all together. I hope I have a style that is recognizable and individual.[4]

[4]Hans Heinsheimer, "Mistress Musgrave," *Opera News* 42 (September 1977), pp. 44–45.

The Revival of the St. John Passion

HISTORY AND PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

by ROBIN A. LEAVER

Among last year's choral events was the centennial of the first American performance presenting Bach's St. John Passion. It was an occasion of more than passing interest because it offered the student of choral music a perspective from which to review the remarkable development of a century's choral practice.

In New York, on Wednesday, June 13, 1888, the following notice appeared in *The Musical Courier:*

> The Bethlehem Choral Union gave the Saint John Passion music of Bach, June 5, in that city, and, to the best of our knowledge, for the first time in America. J. Fred Wolle was the conductor.[1]

It was twelve years before the first American performance of Bach's B Minor Mass, in 1900, by the then newly-formed Bach Choir of Bethlehem, that the first American performance of the St. John Passion was presented in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Just how complete the performance was is open to question, as will be discussed below. However, it was certainly an historic performance — as was the performance in 1900 — brought about by the enthusiasm for Bach which the organist of Bethlehem's Moravian Church, John Frederick Wolle, still in his mid-twenties, infectiously passed on to others.

Before this performance can be investigated, the basic facts regarding the revival of Bach's Passion music in the nineteenth century need to be briefly reviewed.

Karl Friedrich Zelter, an alumnus of the Thomasschule in Leipzig who had studied under Cantor Johann Friedrich Doles, inherited a substantial amount of Bach's music from Bach's students Johann Philipp Kirnberger and Johann Friedrich Agricola, including the manuscript of the St. Matthew Passion. During 1815 Zelter rehearsed sections of the St. Matthew Passion with the Berlin *Singakademie,* which he had founded, but

[1] *The Musical Courier,* No. 435, New York, Wednesday, June 13, 1888, p. 404.

no public performance of the work was given since he was not convinced that it was either desirable or practical to do so. Zelter, however, allowed a copy of the manuscript score to be made in 1823 for Mendelssohn, his pupil, who spent some considerable time studying the score. After almost two years of rehearsals, the following announcement was made in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* on February 21, 1829:

> An important and happy event is before the musical world in general but is especially close to that of Berlin. In the first days of March *The Passion According to St. Matthew* by Johann Sebastian Bach will be performed under the direction of Herr Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. This greatest and holiest work of the great composer comes out of retirement of nearly a hundred years as a high festival of religion and art.

The performance itself took place on March 11, 1829, and caused quite a stir in Berlin and elsewhere. Edward Devrient, actor, opera singer, and close friend of Mendelssohn, who had sung the part of Jesus in 1829, chronicled some forty years later a personal account of that historic performance. Somewhat more objective evidence can be found in Mendelssohn's manuscript performing score and orchestral parts, which are now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. These reveal that it was not a complete performance: eleven arias, four recitatives, and seven chorales were omitted, and the part of the evangelist was severely curtailed. Further, instruments that Bach had written for but which were then obsolete, such as oboes d'amore and oboes da caccia, were replaced by the somewhat different sounding clarinets. No organ or harpsichord was used for the continuo; instead Mendelssohn himself directed the whole performance from a piano.

The performance may not have been what Bach had in mind when he composed the work, but it is undeniable that it began a growing sequence of performances of Bach's music in general, and the Passions in particular. The following year, vocal scores of both the St. Matthew and St. John Passions were published in Berlin, which were soon followed by the publication of the full score of the St. Matthew Passion. In 1833 the Berlin *Singakademie* performed the St. John Passion for the first time, and this led to the publication of the full score by the same Berlin publisher in 1834. Other editions of the St. John Passion appeared later, notably the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition, edited by Wilhelm Rust and issued in 1863. This became the authoritative edition used by other editors for their own versions of the work. Yet these followed in the tradition of Mendelssohn's revival of the St. Matthew Passion, that is, with much music omitted, rearranged or curtailed in some way, and with the instrumentation altered and augmented. Some movements were re-scored in the fashion of Mozart's version of Handel's *Messiah,* performed in Vienna in 1789 with independent and

newly-composed wind and string parts — except that the nineteenth-century arrangers did not have Mozart's gifts, and the result was a thickening of the orchestral texture. Such a treatment was, of course, often necessary if the orchestra was to be balanced against a large chorus of several hundred voices.

In England there was an announcement in 1832 that both Bach Passions were to be presented in a season of oratorio concerts at the King's Theatre in London. For whatever reason, the works were never performed. A generation later, two leading musicians who had studied with Mendelssohn, Sir William Sterndale Bennett and Otto Goldschmidt, respectively Principal and Vice-Principal of the Royal Academy of Music, London, furthered the cause of the Bach Passions. The former founded a Bach Society in 1849 and five years later, on April 6, 1854, conducted the first performance of the St. Matthew Passion in England — in an English translation — at the Hanover Square Rooms, London. The latter, about ten years after the demise of Sterndale Bennett's Bach Society in the 1860's, began, with the help and support of his wife, Jenny Lind, the Swedish soprano, a series of small concerts featuring the music of Bach.

Early in 1872 an English version of the St. John Passion, translated by John Troutbeck, was published in the "Novello Octavo Edition." The first English performance of the Passion took place shortly thereafter at Hanover Square rooms, on March 22. The performance, from which several movements were omitted, was conducted by Joseph Barnby and the proceeds benefitted the restoration fund of St. Anne's Church, Soho, in London.[2]

Another early performance of the St. John Passion took place a few years later, on Good Friday 1875, this time in the church of St. Anne, Soho, with Otto Goldschmidt conducting. Shortly after this performance, Goldschmidt brought together a group of around eighty singers with a view to performing Bach's B Minor Mass. Six months of rehearsal followed and on April 26 Goldschmidt recorded in his diary: "First [complete English] performance of Bach's Mass before an enthusiastic audience." But the performance was not without its problems. The critic in *The Musical Times* applauded it in general but took exception to the substitution of clarinets for trumpets in the *Gloria*, although he noted the current opinion that the parts were probably unplayable by contemporary trumpet players. The critic was somewhat ahead of his time, since he went on to make an observation that was prophetic of the "early music" movement of the twentieth century:

> Supposing that Bach's music should find such an acceptance with an English public as to warrant the frequent performance of his works, it

[2]*The Musical Times* 15, 1872, p. 433.

becomes a question whether a resuscitation both of the oboe d'amore and the viola da gamba would not be advisable.[3]

The direct result of this performance of the B Minor Mass under Goldschmidt's baton was the founding, within a month, of the Bach Choir.[4] There is, therefore, an interesting parallel between Goldschmidt in London in the 1870's and Wolle in Bethlehem about twenty years later. They both followed a similar sequence, conducting first the St. John Passion, then the B Minor Mass, and founding a Bach Choir: Goldschmidt, the Bach Choir of London, and Wolle, the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, choral societies that continue to flourish today.

Both the German and the English traditions of Bach performances were to influence, in different ways, this historic first American performance. The immediate influence was from the German tradition and was largely inspirational rather than anything else.

For a number of years the teenager Fred Wolle had worked in Simon Rau's drugstore in Bethlehem and played the organ at Trinity Episcopal Church — scrimping and saving all the time in order to pay for organ studies in Germany. In June 1884, when he was twenty-one, his ambition was fulfilled and he left for Munich to study with Joseph Rheinberger at the State Academy of Music. Wolle was in Germany for about a year and a half and was fortunate to be there in 1885 for some of the celebrations of the bicentenary of Bach's birth. In the spring of that year he was present at a performance of the St. John Passion given in Munich with soloists from the Royal Munich Opera company. This performance made a deep impression on the young man, so much so, that on his return to America he planned to perform the St. John Passion, before tackling the other major choral works of Bach. However, it would take him another two years before he was able to realize his plans.

[3]*The Musical Times* 17, 1876, p. 500.

[4]The first performance of the St. John Passion by the Bach Choir of London took place under the direction of Goldschmidt's successor, Charles Villiers Stanford, in 1896. It was Stanford who took seriously the question regarding original instruments that the critic of *The Musical Times* had raised twenty years earlier in connection with Goldschmidt's performance of the B Minor Mass. For the Bach Choir performance of the St. Matthew Passion in 1895 Stanford engaged Arnold Dolmetsch to play the harpsichord, and his daughter, Hélène Dolmetsch, the viola da gamba. Similarly, for the performance of the St. John Passion the following year Stanford arranged for a new, low pitch, oboe d'amore to be purchased for £30.

Stanford's 1895 performance of the St. Matthew Passion was in German but incomplete; as was customary at the time, various cuts were made. It was not until 1952 that a complete performance of the St. Matthew Passion in German was given in England, in the Priory Church of St. Bartholomew-the-Great, London.

The first requirement was an adequate choir. Early in 1883 — more than a year before he left for Germany — Fred Wolle had founded the Bethlehem Choral Union. He and his father's cousin, Theodore F. Wolle, who took Fred's place while he was in Germany, had conducted concerts of the Choral Union which consisted mainly of an amalgam of short pieces and excerpts from larger works by such composers as J.S. Hatton, Henry Smart, A.J. Caldicott, and others, although Parts One and Two of Haydn's *Creation* formed the second part of the first Choral Union concert on March 28, 1883. If rigorous works of Bach, such as the St. John Passion, were to be performed, it was clear to Wolle that he could not begin right away but rather would have to build up to it by performing other, more accessible, works first.

In December 1886, following his return from Germany, Wolle conducted the Choral Union in a performance of Handel's *Messiah*. The contralto soloist was Jeanne Wynne (Mrs. W.L.) Estes, who had the wisdom to collect and keep correspondence she received from Fred Wolle and others during the period 1886–1901. These letters are now in the archives of the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, and they supply the information that the performance of *Messiah* was originally planned for December 21, 1886; that the date was changed to December 14; that Wolle intended to use the Schirmer edition, which he regarded as the best; that movements, such as the recitative "Then shall be brought to pass" and the following tenor and contralto duet "O death, where is thy sting?", were omitted; and that Wolle was having difficulty in securing an adequate orchestra, a recurring problem in those early years.

The 1887–88 season for the Bethlehem Choral Union included a sequence of three substantial choral works. In the fall Mendelssohn's *Elijah* was performed; this was followed by an ill-fated repeat of Handel's *Messiah* in February 1888 and the premiere performance of Bach's St. John Passion. The unfortunate performance of *Messiah* needs to be investigated in some detail since it reveals the immediate background of the St. John Passion performance four months later.

The *Messiah* performance took place on February 7. The following day a report of the concert appeared in the *Bethlehem Daily Times*. It was highly critical, an unusual occurrence in local newspapers, which tend to be bland and supportive of local enterprise. For this reason alone it deserves to be quoted in full:

> Händel's "Messiah," as rendered by the Bethlehem Choral Union and Orchestra, assisted by Miss Nevins, Mrs. Estes, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Donnelly, Mrs. Wilson and several members of the Germania Orchestra of Philadelphia, under the directorship of Prof. Wolle, was, musically speaking, not a success, and, judging from the size of the audience, was financially no more

satisfactory.[5] Despite many and evidently painstaking rehearsals, despite the utilization of outside help, the *tout ensemble* was not up to the standard the Union set for this, its sixth season, when it gave us the "Elijah" last Fall.

To make matters short and place the blame where it rightfully belongs, let us jump *in medias res* and say that the failure is due to the organ of the Church of the Nativity. The fact that a large sum was paid for this instrument and the added fact that it was placed in the finest and most elaborate church of the Bethlehems does not in the least modify the opinion that it is an inferior instrument. In the first place, it is pitched outrageously low — about three fourths of a tone below concert pitch,[6] of itself an inexcusable fault — and secondly, it is voiced, especially in the middle and lower manual registers and in the pedals, in a most aggravatingly harsh and strident manner, so that the general effect is that it is entirely out of balance. It is totally unfitted for work of the character of the "Messiah." Mrs. Wilson is usually very acceptable as an accompanist, but her work of last night was so ragged and uneven that in a number of instances the effect was anything but agreeable.

In fact, Mr. Wolle should not have used the organ at all. Had the strings been given the entire accompaniment and at a proper pitch a great deal of uncertainty in the maintenance of pitch by the orchestra would have been avoided. A violin — or in fact any member of its family — will simply not submit to being lowered as much as the Nativity organ demands and keep the pitch throughout the entire evening.

As if to make up for this indignity, the strings were too loud by far in all the solo numbers, in several instances completely hiding the voice. The only really effective accompaniment work with a single voice were those numbers played *cum* [sic] *sordini.*

Mr. Roberts sang flat. With proper training Mr. Roberts's voice could be made a pleasing one, but with his present method and his persistent use of head tones he cannot succeed. This faultiness is most apparent in his high notes, his middle register being quite good.

Mr. Donnelly is an ambitious young man with a light, thin, baritone voice of no particular merit. Why he should have been selected to take the bass solo work, when there are at least three or four bass voices (not baritone) in the chorus that are so much superior in everything that pertains to an oratorio basso, is a conundrum. Mr. Donnelly seems to have given some study to the work in hand, but he is unfortunately handicapped in his efforts to win fame as a basso by a voice of puerile *timbre.*

[5]In the *Bethlehem Daily Times,* issued on the day of the performance, February 7, 1888, the advertisement carried the following information: "Reserved Seats, 75¢; On Aisle, $1.00; General Admission 50¢."

[6]This is probably a reference to orchestral pitch, usually somewhat higher than keyboard tuning, which in England was known as "Old Philharmonic" pitch, approximately A = 454; see Barbara Owen, "Pitch and Tuning in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century American Organs," *The Organ Year Book,* 15, 1984, p. 55.

Mrs. Estes filled the *role* of contralto more acceptably. Her voice shows careful training, she has good method, but she loses in impressiveness by not putting more soul in her work. A marked peculiarity of her tonality was brought out in her "He shall feed His flock." When with the strings played *cum* [sic] *sordini* her voice blended perfectly with the orchestral accompaniment and did not show any characteristic coloring. Her very evident musicianly appreciation of the text was unfortunately greatly marred by her voice being covered up by the orchestra so as to at times be indistinguishable.

To Miss Nevins, the soprano, belong the honors of the evening. It is a decided relief to notice her efforts. Miss Nevins comes to her work with a voice of good quality, sweet, flexible, true, well trained, and withal a musicianly understanding of her score. Her work was entirely worthy of the close attention with which the audience favored her. We confess to a little disappointment in her "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Prof. Wolle took it in a *tempo,* a shade too fast for impressiveness. The "I know" seemed to partake of a certain doubtfulness which would have been obviated by a somewhat slower *tempo.*

The chorus, while in many respects excellent, did not come up to its standard set in earlier efforts. Its work is as a rule so eminently satisfactory that we are prone to expect great things of it at all times. In the "All we like Sheep" they exhibited for a brief period unmistakable evidences of demoralization, but, by a firmness and coolness not often found in so young a man, Prof. Wolle soon had them in hand, and having lassoed the orchestra, which showed momentary symptoms of mutiny, led them through the majestic measures of the *finale* — "And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" — in good style. The "Lift up your heads" was rendered in good form. The "Hallelujah" was received — as it always should — by the audience standing. The grand *finale,* with its contrapuntal amen, was a test which the chorus stood nobly.

We trust that the third and last oratorio of the series for the current year may, by its excellence, undo in large measure the impressions made by the "Messiah" last night.[7]

The final sentence, of course, refers to the projected performance of the St. John Passion. The challenge it issued was accepted by Fred Wolle and the Bethlehem Choral Union since, in the event, many of the details of the American premiere performance of the St. John Passion appear to have been either conditioned by, or made in reaction to, this negative review of the performance of the *Messiah.*

Particular criticism in the review of the *Messiah* performance was levelled against the organ in the Episcopal Church [now Cathedral] of the Nativity, South Bethlehem. It was a large three-manual and pedal instrument, built by Johnson & Son, Westfield, Mass., and installed the previous

[7]*Bethlehem Daily Times,* February 8, 1888.

year, 1887.[8] The question of standardized concert pitch was becoming an issue in the 1880's and the *Bethlehem Daily Times* reviewer was acutely aware of it. Organ builders tended to tune their instruments to a somewhat lower pitch, some as low as C = 447.1 cycles-per-second, compared with the international standard C = 517.3 cycles-per-second. If the Nativity Church organ was pitched this low, then it is not surprising to discover that the strings of the orchestra had pitch problems during the performance. The reviewer was also critical of the harsh voicing of the instrument, particularly the lower and middle manuals — that is, the great and swell — and the pedals, which did not blend at all well with the orchestra. It is also possible that the organist made matters worse and that, in addition to accompanying in a "ragged and uneven" manner, her registrations were inappropriate.

It is clear that Fred Wolle and the Bethlehem Choral Union had many problems to solve before they would be ready to perform the St. John Passion.

Towards the end of April, Wolle wrote to Mrs. Estes:

Bethlehem Pa. April 25th. '88

My dear Mrs. Estes:

The Bethlehem Choral Union has been working hard ever since its last concert at Bach's Passion Music according to St. John, trying to conquer some of its almost insurmountable difficulties. It is with much hesitancy that I again venture to trouble you with a request, but I cannot help writing to ask you whether you would not be willing to help us once more. There is very little work for the Alto in the Passion Music, but there are two beautiful solos in which we should be delighted to hear you. The first is "From the bondage of transgression"; the other, "It is finished," which "follows the last words of the Saviour, is such a piece of pathos as has rarely been equalled." Notwithstanding the unjust and even ridiculous criticism which followed our recent concert, I hope you will find it within your power and inclination to give us your consent, as it is a long time since you have favored an audience on this side of the river.

The concert will be given in Parochial Day School Hall, in about five weeks from date.

I remain
Very sincerely
J. Fred Wolle.

The letter reveals that the performance of the St. John Passion would not be in the Church of the Nativity. There may have been other reasons, but in light of the criticism of the organ at the performance of *Messiah* in February, it seems that they were obliged to find another venue that had a

[8]See further my article "Two Pupils of Rheinberger and the Use of the Organ in Performances of Bach's St. John Passion," forthcoming in *The Tracker*.

less problematical instrument. A smaller hall would also be an advantage, in view of the poor attendance at the *Messiah* performance. The decision was to use the hall on the fourth floor of the Parochial Day School, later known as the Academy, situated in the complex of buildings behind the Moravian church. It was here that the Choral Union had given its first concert in 1883. The organ in this hall was the instrument originally built for the Moravian church in 1806 by John Geib of New York. "Geib's organs can be seen to have manifested the same philosophy of tonal design as the Snetzler and Holland organs built for Trinity Church [New York] during the previous century. The *plenum* of the Great division was invariably built upon a foundation of a stopped and open pair of unisons, over which could be drawn harmonic-reinforcing stops."[9] In the Parochial Day School hall, therefore, Fred Wolle and the Choral Union had a conveniently sized room with a less stridently-voiced organ, presumably at a higher pitch, for the first American performance of the St. John Passion.

Wolle's letter to Mrs. Estes also indicates that the performance was to be in English. The text for the two alto arias he mentions is obviously the translation of Troutbeck found in the Novello Octavo Edition of the St. John Passion (1872). That this was the version used is confirmed by Wolle's citation in the letter — the contralto aria that "follows the last words of the Saviour, is such a piece of pathos as has rarely been equalled" — which is a quotation from George Macfarren's introduction to the Novello edition.

On April 30, 1888 Wolle sent a copy of the vocal score to Mrs. Estes and took the opportunity to express his gratitude at her willingness to perform with the Choral Union once more. Three weeks or so later he wrote again to confirm the date of the performance, now set for Thursday, June 5, and to explain that "we were obliged to postpone it somewhat on account of our accompanist," presumably Mrs. Wilson, the organist at the ill-fated performance of *Messiah*.

From Wolle's letter to Mrs. Estes dated April 25, quoted above, it can be determined that the Choral Union rehearsed the St. John Passion for about four months, following the *Messiah* performance at the beginning of February. At these rehearsals Wolle may have used the idiosyncratic method of learning new material that he is known to have employed later. Wolle's idea was that if one starts at the beginning of the chorus, the singers are faced with enormous difficulties, especially if it involves one of Bach's contrapuntal intricacies. Inevitably the read-through will break down, and having to stop and correct the problem destroys the effect of the music. Therefore Wolle began at the end of a piece — the last three or four measures. When the climax had been mastered, he would then move

[9]J. Ogasapian, *Organ Building in New York City: 1700–1900,* Braintree, 1977, p. 31.

backward another four measures or so, and then proceed to the final cadence once more.

> The singers attack the new measures, going on to the close, which now seems to them familiar, an old friend. Thus they learn the entire chorus in a manner that minimizes discouragement and defeat and that preserves the mood, the spirit of the composition. Always they reach the end, the satisfying close, triumphantly. This is why it is no figure of speech to say that the Bethlehem singers know their music forward and backward. They learned it backward.[10]

Since Wolle's conducting score has apparently not survived, it might be instructive to investigate a similar document for clues as to how the Bethlehem performance was conceived and executed.

In the Bach bicentenary year of 1885, Philipp Wolfrum, the Bach biographer, instituted the founding of the *Heidelberger Bachverein.* This choral society, like the Bach Choir of London, though primarily concerned with performances of the music of Bach, has from the beginning performed works of other composers, ancient and modern — unlike the Bach Choir of Bethlehem which has confined itself to the works of the Leipzig Cantor. There is, however, a connection between Wolfrum and Wolle in that both had been pupils of Rheinberger in Munich, where Wolle had attended a performance of the St. John Passion in the Bach anniversary year of 1885. There might well have been, therefore, a similarity of approach to the work by the two pupils of Rheinberger.

Wolfrum conducted the St. John Passion for the first time in Heidelberg ten years after Wolle had conducted it in Bethlehem, that is, on February 13 and 14, 1898. Wolfrum's manuscript conducting score has only recently come to light in Heidelberg.[11] It is neatly scribed in ink with various lead and blue pencil markings, indicating dynamics and other details. The score reveals that two substantial cuts were made: the tenor aria "Erwäge, wie sein blutgefärbter Rükken" was omitted — a common practice of the time since it was considered both too long and too difficult — and the final chorus, "Ruht wohl," was substantially reduced. These cut portions were restored for later performances by newly-written sections inserted into the score. A pencil addition at the top of the first page of the tenor aria — "(nur 1917 gemacht)" — indicates that it was first used in 1917 for Wolfrum's fourth performance of the work in Heidelberg;

[10]Raymond Walters, *The Bethlehem Bach Choir,* Boston and New York, 1923, pp. 218–219.

[11]The discovery was made in 1987 and therefore unavailable for discussion in Hans-Jörg Nieden's 1974 Heidelberg dissertation, *Philipp Wolfrum: Untersuchungen zur Bachrezeption um die Jahrhundertwende.*

presumably the omitted sections of the final chorus were restored at the same time.

A notable feature of the score is the way in which the arias are accompanied. Instead of the figured bass being realized for keyboard continuo, independent parts for strings or winds have been composed, so that the movements are accompanied only by the orchestra, without the support of organ or any other keyboard instrument. For example, the alto aria "Von den Stricken meiner Sünden" has newly-written three-part strings added — Violins I, II, and Viola — and the tenor aria "Ach, mein Sinn" shows the addition of independent parts for two clarinets in C. The orchestral accompaniment of the choruses is similarly reinforced by clarinets and bassoons. Where Bach called for either lute or cembalo in the bass arioso "Betrachte, meine Seele," Wolfrum's score is marked "Harfe oder Klavier." When the score was first written, the instrumental doubling of the voice parts in the chorales was clearly marked, but with the organ staves left unfilled. However — in blue pencil — most of the chorales were marked "A cappella!".[12]

At the end of the first part is inscribed, "Ende des ersten Theiles," to which is added in pencil "8m." The meaning is made clear by reference to the poster advertising the event in Heidelberg, which specifies an eight-minute intermission.

Of particular interest are the organ parts for the recitatives and choruses. The recitatives are accompanied only by the organ written on two staves. The organ parts for the choruses are much more expansive and are fully written out on three staves. It is significant that Wolfrum's 1898 performance of the St. John Passion was in the Peterskirche in which a new, large three-manual Walcker organ of 48 speaking stops had just been installed. Indeed, the performance of the St. John Passion on February 13, 1898 was the first time the organ was heard in a public performance; a week later, on February 20, Wolfrum gave the first recital on the instrument. The new organ in the Peterskirche, therefore, was to be effectively used at its first public hearing, hence the carefully written-out organ parts in Wolfrum's score. But Wolfrum had studied organ with Rheinberger and even without the new instrument could have been expected to have given close attention to the role of the organ.

It is obvious that Wolle, being another organ pupil of Rheinberger, was similarly concerned about the role of the organ in the work, especially in light of the problems created by the organ at the February performance of *Messiah.* Instead of the organ being entrusted to Mrs. Wilson, who had

[12]In one instance, some time after the score was completed, it was decided to transpose the chorale "Er nahm alles wohl in acht" up a half-step from A major to B-flat major. The preceding recitative ends in A minor, which in the score is crossed out and replaced by the required modulation.

played for the *Messiah* performance, "the organ accompaniments were handled by Prof. Wolle,"[13] who also conducted. Here the reverse console of the Geib organ in the Parochial Day School hall proved to be invaluable. Since the console faced forward into the hall, the organist could sit at the keyboard, with the pipework behind him, and have a field of vision over the console. This would imply that the chorus and orchestra were divided into two sections and were seated on either side of the console and at right angles to it. Wolle could then have conducted from the console or nearby.

However, before he took his place at the console at eight o'clock on the evening of June 5, 1888, Wolle made an announcement to the attending audience.

> A most welcome preface to last evening's concert by the Bethlehem Choral Union was the announcement made by Prof. Wolle that Bethlehem could claim the honor of being the first town in America to enjoy the complete rendition of Bach's "Passion" according to the Gospel of St. John. The confirming proof of the validity of this claim was a letter from Carl Zerrahn, conductor of the Boston Händel and Haydn Society, stating that Bach's great masterpiece had never been sung by that famous society, save that a few fragments had been rendered as concert pieces. This announcement brought forth much applause.
>
> From the sweet strains of the orchestral prelude to the majestic chorus which marked the end of the work the audience was wrapt in wonder at the exquisite beauty of the composition and the skill with which the large body of singers and players rendered the work under the magic influence of Prof. Wolle's baton.[14] The plaintive strains of the prelude developed into a majestic display of the capabilities of stringed instruments and led up to the first grand chorus: then followed in pleasing succession and with most becoming grace the delicate melody of the tenor and bass recitatives, choruses grand and abounding in magnificent bursts of music and the lovely solo parts.
>
> Thus the story of the "Passion" was told in music well fitted to the solemn theme, save in a few instances where the soloists were given courses in musical gymnastics, but even here the music was wonderful in its beauty. The Choral Union rendered the "Passion" as Bach wrote it and proved quite equal to the task.[15]

The final sentence is, of course, a gross over-statement. It is clear that the Passion was not performed "as Bach wrote it"; indeed, a substantial part of his music was not even heard. To begin with, the orchestra was

[13]*Bethlehem Daily Times,* June 6, 1888.

[14]In later years Wolle does not appear to have used a baton for choral conducting: "It would be hard to imagine Dr. Wolle conducting with a 'stick'. For he could not then crook the little finger of the left hand that way or pull the curved and quivering digits toward himself, hauling the very soul of the choral forces after them"; Walters, op. cit., p. 219.

[15]*Bethlehem Daily Times,* June 6, 1888.

significantly deficient. The article that appeared in the *Bethlehem Daily-Times* the day before the performance began with this paragraph:

> Added interest will be given the accompaniments of the great work to be heard to-morrow night in Day School Hall by the coöperation of the stringed instruments, the organ and piano. So rare is the St. John "Passion" in this country that after several unsuccessful attempts to procure the orchestral parts here the directors of the Choral Union were obliged to send to England for them, and could even there procure only the stringed quartette, the other parts existing only in manuscript.[16]

Here is another confirmation that the Novello edition was used. On the reverse of the title page of the vocal score is the following information:

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD (S. JOHN)

		s.	d.
Full Score. German Words	8vo	16	0
Vocal parts	8vo, each	1	0
Violin, First		2	6
Violin, Second		2	6
Viola		2	6
Cello and Double Bass		6	6
Wind Parts (MS.).			

Book of Words, 10s. per 100.

The implication is that the Novello music store on Broadway, New York, did not keep the parts in stock, and therefore an order had to be made to the London headquarters of the publishing house. It also seems to suggest that, since the full score offered by Novello had only the German text, Wolle probably conducted from the vocal score. This appears to be confirmed by the absence of wind instruments from the orchestra: if Wolle had a copy of the full score, the parts could have been easily copied out.

The orchestra, therefore, was of strings alone, and the obbligato wind parts, such as the accompaniment for the alto aria "Von den Stricken" and flutes in the soprano aria "Ich folge dir gleichfalls," appear to have been supplied by Wolle on the organ:

> The solo parts were admirably taken care of by Miss Margaret A. Nevins of Catasauqua, the soprano; Mrs. W.L. Estes, the contralto; Wm. Hamilton, the tenor; and C.T. Bender and W.P. Thomas, the basso parts; and the organ accompaniments were handled by Prof. Wolle.[17]

However, a piano was also employed, almost certainly in place of the lute or cembalo in the bass arioso "Betrachte, meine Seel" — as Wolfrum was to

[16]Ibid., June 4, 1888.

[17]Ibid., June 6, 1888.

use either harp or piano ten years later — but also, it appears, as part of the accompaniment for the choruses:

> The orchestra did its duty quite satisfactorily, even though weak in numbers, and of course the piano parts were admirably taken care of by Mrs. Wilson.[18]

The performance, therefore, was in this respect atypical. In both Germany and England it was customary for the orchestra to be augmented by additional wind instruments: substituting later instruments for Bach's obsolete requirements; reinforcing instrumental and vocal parts; and playing newly-written additional parts.[19] But in Bethlehem the orchestra was minimal in contrast to the maximal and expansive examples of Wolfrum and others in Europe around that time. Although one would wish for more detailed evidence concerning the Bethlehem performance, it looks as though the small string orchestra was augmented by the piano throughout and the organ primarily assisted the orchestra for the arias. The choruses appear to have been sung with only string and piano accompaniment since the newspaper report speaks of them being conducted by Wolle with a baton.

The chorus numbered 115 singers, somewhat smaller than the later inflated Bach Choir, which could number two or three times this figure. The chorus's performance was well received, as was confirmed in the report in the *Bethlehem Daily Times*.[20] Following the previous harsh criticism, the musical honor and dignity of the Choral Union had been restored. But perhaps the glowing praise had as much to do with an injustice being righted as with the actual performance.

Wolle's tempi were by all accounts somewhat brisk. The *Messiah* reviewer had noted that at least one movement was faster than he would have preferred. The music critic of the *Cincinnati Times-Star*, in reference to the performance of the St. John Passion conducted by Wolle at the Fifth Bethlehem Bach Festival in 1905, observed the same trait:

> In the choral numbers the tempos were startling and radically rapid, but through this means considerably enhanced the effective character of the text. The chorus, "Crucify, Crucify," was sung as a veritable outburst of mob passion, and "We have a law" in the same dramatic manner.[21]

Wolle was not a detached interpreter of Bach. He believed that the dramatic content inherent in the music must be brought to life in performance, something for which he had both supporters and detractors.[22]

[18]Ibid., June 6, 1888.

[19]See, for example, Macfarren's comments in his introduction to the Novello vocal score.

[20]June 6, 1888; quoted in Walters, op. cit., pp. 40–41.

[21]Ibid., p. 83.

[22]Ibid., pp. 220–223.

The Bethlehem tradition of the audience joining in some of the chorales had not yet begun; they were sung by the chorus alone. Whether they were unaccompanied, as in Heidelberg under Wolfrum, is an open question, though the probability is that they were accompanied.

The most revealing piece of information that comes from the report that appeared in the *Bethlehem Daily Times* the day after the performance is hidden in a single sentence that the Bach Choir historian either missed altogether, or preferred not to relate. It reads: "Rev. Edwin G. Klosè read the connecting parts of the Scripture narrative very expressively."[23] In other words, the reviewer could not echo the words of the *Musical Times* critic in London, who attended the first English performance of the St. John Passion in 1872, and wrote:

> To Mr. Arthur Wade . . . belongs very high praise for the distinct enunciation and the highly dramatic manner with which he declaimed the very long and most difficult part of the Evangelist, giving to it great variety of colouring. It is not enough to class this gentleman's performance with those of the other vocalists, for, as it was more trying, his success in it merits more consideration; the close of the recitative, which tells how Peter "went forth and wept bitterly," was sung with true pathos, and that which describes the rending of the Temple veil, with energy as appropriate.[24]

Nothing like this could have been written about the role of the evangelist in Bethlehem, not because it was badly sung, but because it was not sung at all! Should the objection be raised that perhaps the reviewer meant "declaimed" — meaning "sung" — by his use of the term "read," the following will clarify the matter. The "reader" was the Rev. Edwin Gottlieb Klosè, a Moravian minister and former professor at the Moravian Seminary in Bethlehem. He died in 1899 and in the funeral oration Bishop J. Mortimer Levering made the following observation:

> I must yet refer to his service to this congregation [Bethlehem Moravian Church] of which he became a member for life in 1867. Already when he came here as a student he became a member of the church choir and the fine **bass** voice with which nature endowed him was used for more than 26 years to the glory of God with the services of this sanctuary.[25]

Edwin Klosè, therefore, could not have sung the part of the evangelist in the St. John Passion because it was beyond the range of his bass voice.

This means that something like twenty-five movements, or partial movements, were not sung but simply read. Thus, the statement in the

[23]*Bethlehem Daily Times,* June 6, 1888.

[24]*The Musical Times* 15, 1872, p. 433.

[25]*The Moravian* 39, No. 38, Sept. 1894, p. 600.

Bethlehem Daily Times on June 4, 1888, that the performance would last just one hour and a half, is not attributable to Wolle's quick tempi alone. It remained a "partially complete" performance in more ways than one; however, nothing even close to it had been presented in America up to that time.

> In short, Bach's "Passion," as rendered by the Bethlehem Choral Union, was a thorough success and Prof. Wolle and his faithful assistants can feel very proud of the first rendition on this continent of this magnificently set story of the "Passion" of our Lord Jesus Christ.[26]

They had reason to be proud. It may not have been an entirely complete performance, but no one can deny that it was indeed an historical performance, a significant milestone in the reception of Bach's choral music.

The author is grateful for information and help received from the following: Paul Boumann, Archivist of the Bach Choir of Bethlehem; Dr. Vernon Nelson, Director of the Moravian Archive, Bethlehem; Stephen L. Pinel, Archivist of the Organ Historical Society; Frau Annemarie Spiecker, Archivist of the *Heidelberger Bachverein*.

[26]*Bethlehem Daily Times*, June 6, 1888.

Choral Conductors Forum

THE YOUNG BASS VOICE

by DONALD NEUEN

Whereas the young tenor voices must be the choral conductor's foremost concern, those of the young basses may be his least. Basses, like sopranos, reach mature vocal quality early. They, more than other sections of the choir, can feel free to "sing out." Two problems, however, must be taken into consideration: 1. "Hollering" high notes and "growling" low ones. 2. Singing "back in the throat" in an attempt to sound older, producing a dark, "hooty," sluggish, and often flat tone.

The first problem is easily corrected. Let the sound taper off at the point of middle C and above, stressing the principle that *the singer should never sing louder than he can sing well.* The same applies to the range below B-flat, a ninth below middle C. Basses tend to force volume on their low notes, both because they want to *contribute* and because they like a "masculine" sound. They don't realize that it may actually be offensive. The extreme range, at the top as well as the bottom of the (amateur) bass voice, must be almost folk-like in its easy quality. On the other hand, the octave from B-flat (one step below middle C) to the lower B-flat may be sung with practically the same fullness as would be used by a trained adult singer. The tone, however, must be relaxed, "forward," possessing a pleasing degree of brightness, and based on *buoyant energy.*

A sound that is placed "forward" is obviously the solution to the second of the mentioned problems. Of greatest importance in the efforts to produce a consistently good tone, accurate pitch, effective diction, and true blend, it is the basic concept underlying successful performance for all basses and baritones. As "forward" we mean to describe a tone thought of as being focused in the front of the face (mask), rather than in the throat — the actual focal point being in the area of the upper teeth and nose. It corresponds to the sound ideal of the lyric baritone — or, at times, even tenor. As the young bass matures, this forward "placement" will combine with a full head resonance for a well-focused tone conveying natural beauty, depth, and a "ringing" clarity of sound. This concept will achieve the desired intensity of tone.

It is best never to ask for a "big bass sound" from young bass singers. We must hasten to add that nothing carried to extreme is valid. If the approach discussed above is taken too far, the tone will, of course become too bright, nasal, or "brassy" and thus unpleasant. *Good judgment and reason must guide all endeavors.*

Just as the unison sound of girls' voices might be used to demonstrate a relaxed tone quality the young tenor may emulate, the tenor section itself might serve to demonstrate an appropriate quality of sound in high passages for the bass section. And just as we have to warn the tenors against sticking their chins out and up in singing high passages, we must not permit the basses to "tuck" theirs down into the neck in singing low ones. They should simply relax and sing naturally, with no force or strain whatsoever.

The image of *lyric* singing here suggested will develop, as the singer grows older, towards a stronger, more dynamic sound — but a sound that will remain based on a free and natural tone production which is the chief grace of a fine bass voice.

Choral Performances

Report from Switzerland

The Archangel Michael, combatant of Satan and defender of the Church and Crusaders, is the patron saint of the convent and sanctuary of Beromünster, and in his name a special tradition arose there: it became customary to offer triple-chorus Masses on St. Michael's Day (September 29) — works unfolding all the splendor of Baroque music that the architecture of the cathedral, with its three choir lofts, invited. For the years 1693 to 1797 records of annual Michaelmas performances have been preserved.

One of those Masses was composed by Franz Meyer von Schauensee. The work, originally performed in 1749 under the direction of the composer, calls for three choirs, three orchestras, three organs, and twelve solo parts, some of which are very brilliantly conceived. Large choral portions alternate with solo and ensemble episodes. Particularly impressive sections are an instrumental "battaglia" (*Concerto rappresentando una battaglia musicale*) depicting the Archangel's fight with the dragon, and an aria in which three solo basses celebrate Michael's victory.

Franz Josef Leonti Meyer von Schauensee (1721–89) was the scion of an old Lucerne family. His career as an officer afforded him sufficient leisure for the study of music in Lucerne and Milan. In later years he served as an alderman, as well as canon and organist of a Lucerne convent. He composed a large number of ceremonial and dramatic works and is recognized as one of the outstanding Swiss musicians of the eighteenth century.

His Mass for St. Michael's Day was recently heard in the large *Tonhalle* auditorium of Zürich. Jakob Kobelt directed his choral ensemble, which was distributed over the two galleries and the stage in order to convey the intended spatial effect. The orchestral forces consisted of three string groups, the third being enhanced by the sound of pairs of flutes, horns, and trumpets, a trombone, and kettledrums. The soloists were Helen Keller and Dorothea Frey (sopranos), Kale Lani Okazaki and Annemarie Zemp (altos), Silvan Müller, Peter Schaufelberger, and Beat Spörri (tenors), the trio of basses being Howard Nelson, Craig Mann, and Willy Spitz. The three organists were Jakob Wittwer, Alwin Waldhoff, and Fredy Gross-

mann. The performance, supported by ample funding, will be remembered as a high point of the season.

* * *

Johannes Driessler (born 1921), Professor of Sacred Music at the Academy in Detmold, has written, among other works, several oratorios, of which *Thy Kingdom Come* — composed in 1948 and premiered in 1950 — might be considered one of the outstanding examples of the genre in our time.

In passages selected from the Old and New Testaments, the composer has portrayed a dramatic confrontation of God and Man. Mankind, represented by the chorus and — as its spokesman — a solo soprano part, is here placed against the Divine, speaking in the voices of the Old Testament Prophet (tenor) and Christ (bass). As an introduction to the dramatic setting, the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:4) is intoned by a male voice; its postulate "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (verse 9) carries the germinal message of the work and recurs symbolically at critical points.

The First Part deals with phases of Mankind's rebellion against the Divine — insurrection, dissension, denial — and the Prophet's lament. The deprecation by the chorus is answered with the Prophet's reminder of the Commandments. In the Second Part, repentance and confession lead to humble faith. With the words of the Lord's Prayer, Mankind surrenders to God.

The gradual transformation is borne out in the musical setting, leading from the freely expressive sections of Part One to dense polyphony in Part Two. As in the works of the old masters, technical means of composition take on figurative meaning — canon, fugue, inversion, and retrograde motion.

Emblematic is also the application of the number five. The woodwind quintet, consisting of two oboes, English horn, and two bassoons, suggests the timbre of the Baroque organ. The five-part tutti registers of choir and strings are contrasted against three solo voices and two solo flutes.

A performance of the work at St. Peter's Church in Zürich left a deep impression. Directed by Willy Fotsch, the New Oratorio Chorus of Zürich was assisted by the *Musikkollegium* of Glarus. The excellent soloists were Barbara Gilbert, an American artist now living in Basel (soprano), Bernhard Hunzinger (tenor), and Hans Peter Scheidegger (bass).

* * *

In a Good Friday concert, the Protestant choruses and the civic orchestra of Winterthur presented Adolf Brunner's *St. Mark Passion* in

Winterthur's Central Church. Conducted by Klaus Knall, cantor at the Zürich Cathedral, the performance, involving double chorus with soloists, organ, and orchestra, combined the *Kantorei* ensembles and the *Collegium Vocale* of the city's *Evangelische Singgemeinde,* with Dieter Agricola (tenor), Ulrich Studer (baritone), Heinz Suter (bass) as soloists and Heiner Kühner at the organ.

Adolf Brunner, now living in Thalwil, was born in Zürich in 1901. *The Story of the Lord's Passion According to St. Mark,* which has remained his last work, was written in 1970/71 and premiered by the Dresden *Kreuzchor* in 1974. Its first series of performances in Switzerland, given in Bern, Basel, and Zürich, met with great success. The composer had chosen the Gospel of St. Mark because of its dramatic and realistic manner of presentation. The work places high demands upon the chorus; clarity of diction is of paramount importance for what might be described as a "two-hour recitative." The six sections of the Passion oratorio, linked by chorale-based organ interludes, lead finally to a double-choir motet on the words of the repentant centurion, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54), in suggesting the Believer's hope for a world beyond.

— Viktoria Haefer

Recent Books

THE CHURCH MUSIC OF HEINRICH BIBER, by Eric T. Chafe. Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, Studies in Musicology, No. 95, 1987 (8½" × 11", xi + 307 pp., $64.95).

Today, Heinrich Biber is chiefly remembered as the foremost German violinist of the seventeenth century. Much has been written about his virtuoso violin sonatas with their consort-like chordal textures, use of *scordatura,* florid running passages, and brilliant programmatic effects. He has been regarded as an instrumentalist who extended the technical limits of his instrument and was able to incorporate many of his innovations into attractive musical compositions. While it is true that Biber's virtuosity on the violin is a vital ingredient in much of his music, he was hardly a one-sided virtuoso; rather, he was a highly skilled composer of a wide variety of vocal as well as instrumental music including large-scale masses and even operas. His vocal music is largely unknown and unavailable in modern editions. The present book, the first full-length study of Biber and his music in English, redresses this balance and makes a convincing case for regarding Biber as one of the great creative musical minds of the late seventeenth century.

Combining extensive archival research with serious stylistic analysis of Biber's entire surviving corpus, as well as that of many of his contemporaries, Professor Chafe has succeeded in producing one of the most important studies of late seventeenth-century German church music in a long time. His book provides a detailed account of Biber's life and career, a discussion of performance practices in Salzburg Cathedral in the late seventeenth century, an introduction to the church music of seventeenth-century Salzburg, analysis of individual genres, the most complete work list of Biber's music to date, and a very fine bibliography containing a number of interesting studies I have not encountered elsewhere.

In tracing Biber's career from his home town of Wartenburg in Upper Bohemia to Graz, Kroměříž (1668–70), and finally to Salzburg (1670–1704) — the clearest, most complete biography of the composer available — Chafe explains how Biber's style was influenced not only by composers such as Vejvanovsky, Schmelzer, Cesti, and Hofer, but according to the taste of his various employers as well. Especially useful are the lists of works from

each period of Biber's life, which, coupled with the fine analyses in the later chapters, allow a chronology of his works to begin to emerge. In the process, Chafe makes several cogent observations about the style of late seventeenth century music and concludes that "the methods of modern thematic-motivic analysis" are inappropriate to this music and inevitably place it in an unfavorable light compared to the eighteenth century. This chapter should be required reading for all music historians because the different perspective it places on this music has far-reaching implications not only for Biber but for much of the music of this period, which is all too often regarded as a mere stepping-stone to the "high" Baroque. Chafe understands, and is sympathetic to, the effects Biber was striving to achieve and is thus able to offer far more enlightened commentary about his style than many historians, whose condescending attitude towards the seventeenth century often misses the point of this music.

The discussion of performances in Salzburg Cathedral is extremely valuable, not only for what it tells us about Biber, but for what it adds to our knowledge of the performance of polychoral music in general. Chafe combines information gleaned from archival and pictorial documents with the surviving music to present a convincing account of the disposition of vocal and instrumental forces employed during Biber's tenure as *Kapellmeister*. In many large European churches in the seventeenth century, large-scale works were performed by multiple choirs, some comprised of soloists, others of ripienists, scattered throughout the church in different balconies or choir stalls, each of which had its own continuo instrument(s). (The term "choir" at this time simply referred to an ensemble of musicians, either singers or instrumentalists, and does not necessarily imply more than one performer per part.) In Salzburg, according to Chafe, even Biber's simpler four-part church music was performed with soloists, ripienists, instrumentalists, and continuo players in separate locations. Spatial separation was, therefore, as important an element in the performance of small-scale works as in larger ones.

The question is how large is large? Some of the literature dealing with this music suggests that works of the unfortunately-coined "colossal Baroque," such as the *Missa Salisburgensis* — here convincingly ascribed to Biber — may have involved as many as four hundred singers. Chafe dispels this myth by describing how vocal and instrumental ensembles were used in Salzburg Cathedral and how their numbers related. He points to, among other examples, Küsel's famous engraving of 1682, which depicts about fifty musicians, almost evenly split between singers and instrumentalists, in an arrangement ideally suited to many of Biber's large-scale works. Not only were much larger ensembles unnecessary, they were impractical due to the size of the organ balconies and the number of available instrumentalists. It is interesting to note that no more than two copies of each ripieno part for Biber's works survive in the Salzburg Cathedral archive, suggesting the

number of ripienists was not very large. Grand effects could nevertheless be produced by combining the many small instrumental and vocal choirs, while dynamic and textural contrasts were achieved by the alternation of solo and ripieno choirs and varying the number and type of instruments doubling the vocal lines.

The role of space and location in this music cannot be overestimated, and the author is quite right in admonishing those critical of the works because of their "harmonic simplicity": "Unless we are willing, and able, to eliminate from music all allegorical and even rhetorical devices — echo effects, dynamic contrasts, orchestration, to name a very small number — we stand on shaky ground in using external criteria as a yardstick for artistic value." Unfortunately, as Professor Chafe points out, we will never be able to experience these sonic extravaganzas as Biber's listeners did since Salzburg Cathedral, along with many other venerable Baroque churches, dismantled its balconies in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The famous 1682 Küsel engraving of a performance in Salzburg Cathedral, which Chafe uses to support many of his conclusions, is unfortunately so small in the reproduction on page 45 that it is impossible to see which instruments or even how many performers are involved. This is a shame since, by relating the engraving to specific musical works performed in Salzburg in the 1680's, Chafe is able to present the most convincing discussion of this source in print. Better reproductions of Küsel's work confirm most of Chafe's conclusions, though I wish he had gone a step further in trying to complete the description of the various instrumental ensembles. The unidentified figures in the right front balcony, for example, are probably additional string players required to produce the five or six parts called for in the music. And the "crook" seen in the left front balcony is undoubtedly meant to represent a third trombone since the music requires it, and since it is unlikely anyone could play the trombone with one hand and hold another in his left hand!

The chapters on individual musical genres — the Masses, Vespers music, Miscellaneous Church Compositions and Church Sonatas — provide fascinating insights into the development and maturation of Biber's compositional skills. His versatility and flexibility as a composer are, as a result, brought much more clearly into focus. Biber's ability to combine *stile antico* counterpoint with the rhetorical gestures of the Italian Baroque Sonata, the folk and programmatic elements of Austrian violin music (of which he himself was the master), and the festive brilliance of the trumpet fanfare in one coherent, individual musical language is indeed remarkable. Chafe's probing analysis of these elements, along with his comparisons of Biber's style to that of his contemporaries, establishes a new standard with which to assess problems of attribution and chronology in the late seventeenth century.

As I was reading the book, I could not help feeling a strong sense of frustration that so little of the repertoire under discussion, not only that of Biber, but of his contemporaries Rittler, Brückner, Hofer, Weichlin, Kerll, Megerle, Mayr, and Bertali, is available in modern editions. Since Professor Chafe transcribed much of this music for his study, perhaps he could be persuaded to prepare a series of editions making it available to a wider public.

The few minor flaws and omissions on Chafe's part are insignificant and do little to detract from the value of his work. For example, Muffat's sole surviving violin sonata, used by Chafe to compare the Alsatian's music to that of Biber, is not unpublished (fn. 86, p. 269), but is available in two separate and readily available modern editions. Also, it would have been helpful had the original spelling of names of instruments been provided in each case since the nomenclature of the seventeenth century is still a highly contentious issue. Are the flutes, mentioned on page 50, "traversi" or is this a mistranslation of "flauti" as occurs, probably inadvertently, on page 64? What exact wording does the Breslau account of Meuer's *Jubilate* give for the "small" and "large bass violins" (page 50)? Though Chafe interprets the former as being a cello, it could just as easily be a bassetto in F or G, since that was the smaller of Praetorius's two "Bass de braccio," but without the original wording it is especially difficult to determine. Chafe uses the term "violone" throughout the text without defining it or mentioning whether he feels it is identical to the "Basso di viola" called for in much of Biber's music, or whether it is a contra bass. As recent research has shown, the term "violone" referred to several different instruments in the seventeenth century, most of which played at 8 foot pitch. Is there any evidence to suggest whether Biber's bass lines were played on a large bass viol in G, as Prinner defines the "basso di viola," or on a "basse de violon" tuned in B-flat? And what light, if any, do the sources of Biber's (and his contemporaries') music shed on the question of bass-line doubling at 16 foot pitch? A discussion of these vital issues would have been quite useful, especially since Biber's music raises so many scoring-related problems.

Professor Chafe's description of performance practices at Salzburg Cathedral is extremely useful and enlightening. At the same time, the author indicates some discomfort with, if not disdain for, the historical performance movement. While he maintains "it is not the use of historical instruments that has allowed the music to speak once more, certainly not strict adherence to the performance instructions Biber occasionally provided . . . (p. 15)," he admits that "until a sympathetic performance style was developed — and this took place rather recently under the doubtful aegis of the "historical" instrument revival — most of Biber's music had no audience at all." Surely the reason Biber's music has been brought back to life in recent years is that his style is most effectively conveyed by the rich,

sonorous blending of low-tension, gut-strung instruments and incisive articulations provided by short, light bows used with the style of bowing described by Muffat, Prinner, and their contemporaries. It is not that Biber's music is unplayable on modern instruments, it is simply that the combination of rustic folk elements, florid passagework, and sonorous chords is ideally suited to the instruments of his time. If the balance of timbres and textures in Biber's music is more dependent on the exact instruments used than, say, the *Art of Fugue* (Chafe's example), that is not a negative reflection on the quality of his writing. It is, after all, not a coincidence that the dedicated original-instrument ensembles like The Parley of Instruments, Concentus Musicus, and Collegium Aureum have been principally responsible for the revival of Biber's music.

At any rate, these are minor quibbles which will not becloud the extremely high quality of Professor Chafe's work. Major problems of this publication are not due to the author's share in it but to that of the publisher. The large format used was undoubtedly intended to provide room for examples from the large-scale works; yet these have been so drastically reduced that they are difficult to read and do not take full advantage of the space available. In addition, as is the current trend, the UMI series uses endnotes rather than footnotes, so that the reader must either keep a bookmark in the back of the book and continually flip back and forth every few sentences, losing his place and concentration in the process, or, as I tend to do, read through each chapter and then go through the endnotes, trying to remember to what they refer. This system may simplify layout for the publisher, but it is a major inconvenience to the reader. Footnotes printed on the same page as the text are much easier and faster to read, particularly in scholarly publications where so much vital documentation is provided by the footnotes. Since publishers used to print proper footnotes, I fail to understand why it is so rarely done today.

Above all, as is the case with most of the UMI series, this book carries a very high price tag of $64.95, which is too expensive for the audience for which it might have been intended, i.e., individual scholars and performers. Unfortunately, Biber's name does not have the familiar ring as does, for instance, that of Buxtehude. Kerala Snyder's outstanding book on Buxtehude costs half as much and contains higher quality illustrations and musical examples, including a beautiful full-color sleeve. We realize that not only Buxtehude but also Schirmer Books has a larger sales potential. Yet *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber* deserves a place in the library of anyone seriously interested in Baroque music. It is an exemplary piece of work and makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the music of one of the great Baroque composers.

— Paul O'Dette

Recent Scores

JOHANNES BRAHMS: *Requiem,* Lara Hoggard, editor and translator. Hinshaw Music, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1988 — 150th Anniversary Edition, HMB 145 (92 + xx pp.).

At long last we have a scholarly and thoughtfully edited version of Brahms's *Requiem* with a new English translation. The score is printed in larger than normal format (8½ × 11), allowing extra space, especially in the piano reduction.

This is truly a model for scholarly editions of familiar works. The first page gives the original German text. The next page gives Hoggard's English translation and Biblical sources. A foreword with historical information follows. There is an afterword that gives the background for the genesis of the edition, a discussion of how textual decisions were arrived at, a discussion of Brahms's tempi, an essay, "The Nature of the Brahms *Requiem,*" and a short bibliography. Hard to believe, all this sells for only $4.95, making it by far the least expensive piano/vocal edition of the work on the market.

The most valuable feature of this edition is that it represents the first successful attempt to provide an English underlay reflecting Brahms's original German. The standard English translation, as Hoggard points out, was based on the King James Bible and was not necessarily similar to Brahms's equally poetic source, the German (Luther) Bible. Much of Brahms's original textual-musical blend was ignored in order to force the King James version to match the music.

For instance, in Movement I, the phrase "*die da Leid tragen,*" with its strongest textual emphasis on "*Leid,*" was originally translated "(bless)-ed are they that mourn." Instead of the word "mourn" receiving the musical emphasis, the stress fell on the word "they." Hoggard has translated the phrase "who are sorrowful" so that the rise and fall of the text match the German almost perfectly.

The first long phrase of Movement II shows similar attention to textual detail. "*Gefallen*" is translated "fallen" instead of "decayeth," thus even the vowel sounds are more closely matched.

Even more important is the setting of the phrase "*werden mit Freuden ernten*" in Movement I. Brahms placed "*Freuden*" at a particular place in each phrase, with "*ernten*" at the end of the phrase, moving away from the climax. In the standard English translation the word "joy" sometimes comes at the correct spot, sometimes not, and often even at the evanescent end of the phrase. In Hoggard's translation the word "rejoicing" always falls where "*Freuden*" does in the German. There are endless examples of this careful selection of words to allow the English to match Brahms's subtle text setting. The large gestures worked in the standard English version, but the beautiful smaller details were often lost.

Hoggard has also corrected two serious mishaps in the standard English Version. In his letters after the first performance, Brahms responded to criticism that the work did not seem very "Christian" by replying that he would like to call the work a "Human Requiem." He gathered the texts himself from various parts of the Old and New Testaments and from the Apocrypha. There is no mention of Christ anywhere in the work. One can only come to the conclusion, from Brahms's own words, that this particular omission was intentional. Yet, in the standard English translation, "*die Zukunft des Herrn*" becomes "the coming of Christ." Hoggard retranslates this phrase as "coming of the Lord," which is more accurate and more in keeping with the spirit of Brahms's intent. At the same time it prevents an unfortunate accent on the last syllable of "coming."

The second critical spot is in the fugue in Movement VI. The subject of this fugue begins with a whole note on the word "*Herr,*" followed by shorter notes for "*du bist würdig zu nehmen Preis und Ehre und Kraft.*" That first strong note is clearly meant to call out the word "*Herr*"; it is not only the longest note but one of the highest, and it begins the phrase. In the stretto the successive entrances climb by fourths so that the word "*Herr*" rises dramatically from C to F to B-flat to E-flat to A-flat. In the standard version we have had to struggle with a text that reads, "worthy art Thou to be praised, Lord of honour and might," with the emphasis usually, but fortunately not always, on the less-than-beautiful first syllable of "worthy." I can recall many performances where all that was audible in the stretti sections was "Whirr, whirr, whirr, whirr . . ." How nice is Hoggard's simple solution. We now hear "Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord," as he sets the text, "Lord, Thou art worthy to have all praise and honor and might."

One might have wished for the inclusion of instrumental cues, such as are given in the familiar Peters edition, so that singers might be oriented to listen for oboe, horns, and so forth. But the editor's decision was to forego these in the interest of not cluttering the score. The same is true for a multitude of details about which the scrupulous scholar may wonder, only

to find out that earlier standard editions, such as the Breitkopf score, were unreliable. The sources that give answer to all the questions one might have are legion, and the editor has sifted them in what is in fact a lifework's study, with the one purpose in mind: to provide a practical edition that will do full justice to the composer's masterwork.

Nevertheless, I suppose that in using this edition for many years one will still come across minor errors, or something else to which to take exception; there will, fortunately, always be something left to be done by future generations. But this edition is so far superior in every way to others on the market — in terms of scholarship, translation, readability, even cost — that one really should only praise Hoggard and Hinshaw Press for an outstanding contribution to the field of choral literature.

— David Janower

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The American Choral Directors Association, founded in 1959, is a non-profit professional organization whose active membership is composed of 11,000 choral musicians from schools, colleges and universities, churches, community and industrial organizations, and professional choirs. Its general purposes are to foster and promote excellence in choral music, including performance, composition, publication, study, and research.

Through its fifty-two state and seven divisional organizations, as well as on the national level, the Association sponsors workshops, conventions, and festivals where ideas are shared and explored, problems discussed, and music is heard. Its publications program includes monographs on various specialized subjects of interest to choral directors, state and division newsletters, and the monthly *Choral Journal,* which contains articles, reviews of books, recordings, and music, as well as notices of choral activities throughout the nation.

Active membership in American Choral Directors Association is currently available at $25.00 per year. For further information, write the American Choral Directors Association, P.O. Box 5310, Lawton, Oklahoma 73506.

Through affiliation with The American Choral Foundation, ACDA members may obtain regular membership in the Foundation, including a subscription to the AMERICAN CHORAL REVIEW, for a reduced contribution of $25.00. ACDA members interested in joining the Foundation are asked to make application directly to the Foundation at 2111 Sansom Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103, being sure to identify themselves as ACDA members.