

ASSEMBLY HALL, TUNBRIDGE WELLS

SUNDAY APRIL 18, 1982

3.00 pm

**Poulenc**  
**GLORIA**

**Vaughan-Williams**  
**A SEA SYMPHONY**

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY

PHILIPPA DAMES-LONGWORTH, Soprano

JOHN HANCORN, Baritone

LEADER OF THE ORCHESTRA

LIONEL BENTLEY

conducted by

**DEREK WATMOUGH**

## GLORIA

**Francis Poulenc**  
(1899—1963)

Poulenc was born of a wealthy family and remained a bachelor until he died. His musical philosophy can be summed up in a letter he wrote in 1944, in which he said, "I know perfectly well that I'm not one of those composers who have made harmonic innovations like Stravinsky, Ravel or Debussy, but I think that there is room for new music which doesn't mind using other people's chords. Wasn't that the case with Mozart and Schubert?"

When we consider that the first performance of the Gloria was only just over 20 years ago we can, perhaps, be thankful that Poulenc was, above all, a melodic composer. In his youth he was described as one of "les sportifs de la musique" and, on another occasion as "part monk, part guttersnipe". His religiousness is always merry (and why should it not be?), but there are passages of deep feeling for, in his later life, he was a devout Catholic.

The Gloria was composed in 1959 and was commissioned in memory of Serge Koussevitzky (conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1924 to 1949) and his wife, Natalie. There are six sections: Gloria Laudamus Te, Domine Deus, Domini Fili Unigenite, Domine Deus Agnus Dei and Qui Sedes Ad Dexteram Patris.

G.D.S.

Philippa Dames-Longworth      Soprano

**INTERVAL 15 minutes**

## A SEA SYMPHONY

**Ralph Vaughan-Williams**  
(1872—1958)

The early works of Vaughan-Williams show little evidence of that unmistakable personal idiom which is so recognisable to music-lovers. He began to develop his individual style in his thirties, with "Songs of Travel", "A Norfolk Rhapsody" and "Toward the Unknown Region"; then came the work which established him as an important composer of remarkable originality.

A SEA SYMPHONY was first performed at the Leeds Festival in

1910, conducted by the composer; he was then thirty-eight, and had spent seven years working on it. Walt Whitman's words deal with the sea in varying moods and aspects, the ships, and the men who sail in them. But there is also a more philosophical meaning: man sailing on the sea of life, and the voyage of his soul to its ultimate destination.

The opening is electrifying when heard for the first time. After a very brief fanfare the chorus proclaims: "Behold the sea itself, and on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships"; on the word "sea" the orchestra comes surging in, conveying an impression of great waves. Later, the words are concerned with ships, wind and spray, sailors, and flags of all nations; towards the end a quieter section is a lament for "all that went down, doing their duty"; the movement ends peacefully.

The second movement is headed "On the beach at night, alone", and the orchestra begins by depicting a deserted seashore, with the waves lapping gently in the darkness. The poem tells of the "one-ness" of the universe, "all distances, all souls, all nations, all identities, this vast similitude spans them".

In the third movement, "The Waves", which is very lively indeed, chorus and orchestra combine to give a vivid picture of sweeping waves, flying spray and billowing sails.

"The Explorers", the final movement, is the longest and most profound. Here the poet and composer grapple with the subjects of: the world, the universe, man's place in the scheme of time, and the journey of the soul toward an unknown region; the music has a solemn spaciousness and a kind of ecstatic yearning. After a long section for chorus and orchestra only, the soloists have an extended duet, in which the baritone seems to represent "man", and the soprano his soul; this beautiful passage has a rapt, religious fervour. Suddenly the music becomes more vigorous, with the chorus singing "Away, O Soul! hoist instantly the anchor . . . Sail forth, steer for the deep waters only"; the soloists join in, and a very dramatic climax is reached. After a brief silence, the mood changes to quiet resignation; soloists and chorus sing the the words "O my brave soul! O farther, farther sail"; and the music sails farther and farther away until it is completely out of our hearing.

Roy Douglas

Philippa Dames-Longworth      Soprano  
John Hancorn      Baritone

**Philippa Dames-Longworth** was born in Devon and is a graduate of Trinity College of Music where she received many prizes and awards. Her post-graduate studies have included intensive summer courses at the Britten-Pears School for Advanced Studies on an Anthony Gishford Scholarship, and two years as a member of the Guildhall School Opera Course.

Philippa's professional operatic debut was in 1979, in the world premiere of Tavener's "Thérèse" at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. She is particularly interested in the twentieth century repertoire and, amongst other works, has sung McCabe's song cycle "Notturmi ed Alba" with Bernard Keefe, Alban Berg's "Lulu Suite" with Simon Rattle and, more recently, Fanshawe's "African Sanctus" in Sheffield Cathedral. Philippa's oratorio experience is extensive, having performed with choral societies throughout the country as well as at The Royal Albert Hall, Fairfield Hall, St. John's Smith Square and on the South Bank.

She has sung at many British festivals including Aldeburgh, where she sang in Handel's "L'Allegro" with Sir Peter Pears, and Brighton in Monteverdi's "Vespers". She has just returned from singing Keiser's "Markus Passion" in Germany and is currently appearing in a season of operetta at Sadlers Wells Theatre.

**John Hancorn** was born in Inverness, and is a graduate of Trinity College of Music. He has also studied at the Britten-Pears School for Advanced Musical Studies, and at the National Opera Studio.

Last year he was winner of South East Arts Young Musicians Platform Scheme, as a result of which he made a successful Wigmore Hall debut, and has appeared regularly throughout the South-East in oratorio and on the recital platform. Operatic roles include "Zaretsky" in Eugene Onegin in the 1979 Aldeburgh Festival Production under Rostropovitch, "Masetto" in Don Giovanni at the Edinburgh Festival, and last year he made his debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in Meyerbeer's "L'Africaine".

John has an extensive and growing reputation in oratorio, with performances with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, the English Chamber Orchestra, the R.P.O. and concerts on the South Bank. He has also appeared at the Aldeburgh and Flanders Festivals.

John will be joining Glyndebourne Festival Opera this spring, for their Summer Festival Season, and Autumn Tour, and future concert engagements include a "Messiah" with the Northern Sinfonia in Leeds.

# THE ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY

## 78th SEASON

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We are most grateful for the support of Patrons and Vice Presidents, and new ones are always welcome. Please ring or write to the General Secretary, G.D. Stredder, Vine Cottage, Camden Park, Tunbridge Wells TN2 4TN (0892) 25790.

The Choir rehearses on Monday evenings from September to April. New members are always welcome. There is a simple and private audition. Please ring the General Secretary (as above) if you are interested in becoming a singing member.

The National Federation of Music Societies and South East Arts, to which the Society is affiliated, give support towards the cost of concerts with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain. The Tunbridge Wells Borough Council also provides guarantees.

The Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society is a registered charity.

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

### **THE ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY**

#### **79th SEASON**

- Sunday November 14 1982**      **Mozart— Mass in C Minor**
- Sunday December 12 1982**      **Carol Concert with the  
Pembury Junior School Choir  
The Mayfield Band  
and soloists**
- Sunday April 10 1983**      **First performance  
in Tunbridge Wells—  
Schubert— Mass in A<sup>b</sup>  
Puccini— Messa di Gloria**

**All concerts in the Assembly Hall at 3.00 pm**

**conducted by  
DEREK WATMOUGH**