

Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society
1904-2004

Centenary Gala Concert

Sunday 30th May 2004

Souvenir Programme £2

Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society

Presents

A Centenary Gala Concert

In the Presence of

**HM Lord Lieutenant of Kent
Mr Allan Willett CMG and Mrs Anne Willett**

Special Guests

The Chairman of Kent County Council
Mr Kent Tucker CMG and Mrs Eileen Tucker
The Mayor and Mayoress of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Cr David Wakefield and Mrs Ruth Wakefield
The Mayor of Southborough Town Council
Mrs Colette March and Escort

Derek Watmough MBE
Conductor

Charlotte Ellett
Soprano

Anthony Michaels-Moore
Baritone

Klaus Uwe Ludwig
Piano

English Festival Orchestra
Leader Adrian Levine

Combined Choirs of the Royal
Tunbridge Wells Choral Society
and the Bach-Chor Wiesbaden

PROGRAMME

The National Anthem

Poulenc Gloria

Gershwin Rhapsody in Blue

INTERVAL

Walton Belshazzar's Feast

Assembly Hall Theatre,
Tunbridge Wells

Sunday 30th May 2004
at 3 pm

The Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society

The Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society had its beginnings in the late Autumn of 1904 when an announcement in the Kent & Sussex Courier invited "Ladies and Gentlemen with good voices" to take part in rehearsals of Brahms' *Requiem*, conducted by Mr Francis J Foote. There was a good response to this invitation. On November 25th the Courier reported that there were nearly 100 voices, but there were still vacancies for Tenors and Basses – this, in spite of the fact that there was already a large choir in the town known as the Tunbridge Wells Vocal Association.

The performance of Brahms' *Requiem* took place on Wednesday, 10th May 1905 in the Great Hall and there was a glowing report in the Courier only two days later. At the end of the report Mr Foote announced that he would begin rehearsals of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* and Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* next autumn. The *Dream of Gerontius* may have been rehearsed but no performance was given and, in fact, it was the Vocal Association who gave the first performance in Tunbridge Wells of Elgar's masterpiece in March 1907, having received a telegram from Elgar wishing them every success. Mr Foote's choir concentrated their efforts on Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* and in the same concert on 2nd May 1906 also sang Brahms' *Song of Destiny* and the Kyrie and Gloria from the *Mass in G Minor* by Francis Foote. (Mr Foote wrote several compositions.) Herr Hans Wessely, "the celebrated Austrian violinist" played Max Bruch's Violin Concerto, so there was much variety in this concert.

Until 1920 the choir was known as the Francis Foote Choir, but in that year it was decided to revive an old title and to call the group The Tunbridge Wells Choral Society. Evidently there was a choir of this name as far back as 1862. Francis Foote continued to be their conductor until 1942, when he retired. The Society appointed Sydney Ansell as chorus master and the main concerts were conducted first by George Weldon and then by John Hollingsworth – conductors of the Tunbridge Wells Symphony Orchestra.

After the war it took a little while for the choir to settle. Both Albert Croucher and Robin Miller were conductors for short periods and then came Dr Harold May in 1953. Trevor Harvey took over in 1964 and it was during his time that our present conductor, Derek Watmough, began his association with the Society as accompanist. When Trevor Harvey left in 1972 Derek worked with Myer Fredman for three concerts and took over as chief conductor in 1973. The Society was delighted when Derek was awarded the MBE in 1992.

Over the years there have been a number of guest conductors including Sir Adrian Boult and Richard Hickox and, of course Klaus Uwe Ludwig who, along with his choir, we are very happy to have with us for our Centenary Concert, on this occasion as solo pianist in the *Rhapsody in Blue*.

There have been many highlights over the 100 years of continuous "singing in the choir". Francis Foote and the Tunbridge Wells Choral Society gave the opening concert (*The Messiah*) at the Assembly Hall and, earlier, there were a number of *al fresco* concerts – some of them rained upon of course! *Elijah* (1917) was successfully performed at Bredbury on Mount Ephraim, as was *Merrie England* (1928) in Dunorlan. In 1949, 1950 and 1951 the Society joined with other choirs from East Sussex to sing Bach's *St Matthew Passion* at Glyndebourne where one of the soloists was Kathleen Ferrier. The conductor was Dr Reginald Jacques. During Trevor Harvey's time the choir performed at one of the Robert Mayer Concerts at the Festival Hall, Mr Harvey being the regular conductor of that series of concerts.

Over such a long period there have been many ups and downs, but the main aim has always been to perform the greatest choral music to as high a standard as forces and finances will allow and to give enjoyment to our audiences.



The Bach-Chor Wiesbaden

This choir was founded in 1978 by Klaus Uwe Ludwig, full-time director of music at the Lutherkirche, Wiesbaden. They are based at the Church and, while specialising in the music of Bach, give many concerts of music from all periods. They have made a number of recordings, including works by Louis Spohr, Frank Martin and Max Reger, who was at one time organist at the Lutherkirche.

The choir has made concert tours to Danzig during the communist regime, Paris, and as “musical envoy of Hessen” to Wisconsin, USA, where they gave five performances of Bach’s Mass in B Minor.

Since 1985 they have regularly performed with the Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society both here and in Wiesbaden. They will be celebrating their thirtieth anniversary in a joint concert with our own choir singing “The Kingdom” by Elgar, having combined with us for our 90th anniversary with performances of Elgar’s “The Dream of Gerontius”.

In 2003 the Choir was awarded the Culture Prize of the Land State Capital, Wiesbaden.

The English Festival Orchestra

The English Festival Orchestra was formed in 1984 with the intention of providing a high-quality professional orchestra for major choirs and choral societies both in the South East and further afield. Following its inaugural appearance at London’s Queen Elizabeth Hall, the orchestra has performed at many prestigious venues including the Royal Albert Hall and the Barbican (London), Canterbury Cathedral, Symphony Hall (Birmingham) and the Royal Concert Hall (Nottingham).

The Orchestra has been associated with Sir David Willcocks and the Royal Albert Hall ‘From Scratch’ concerts since 1993, a partnership which has created links with choral societies and individual singers throughout the UK and abroad. The EFO also has a special relationship with the Leith Hill Musical Festival, a unique choral festival (founded by Vaughan Williams in 1904, the same year as the Tunbridge Wells Choral Society), for which it has provided annual orchestral accompaniment for the past ten years.

The English Festival Orchestra is delighted to have been invited by the Tunbridge Wells Choral Society to share in its centenary celebrations. The Orchestra’s own far more modest twentieth birthday, whilst being an anniversary of which it can be proud, reminds us of the commitment and dedication, over several generations, which are needed to reach the landmark of 100 years of music making.

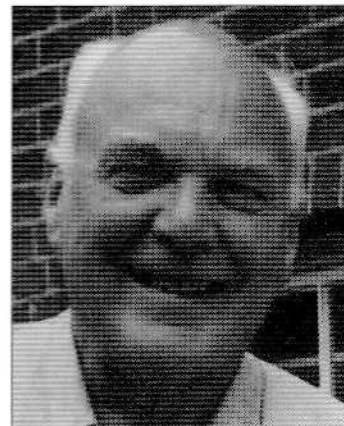
Tunbridge Wells
BOROUGH COUNCIL

www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

The Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society would like to thank the Mayor and Corporation
and the Borough Council of Tunbridge Wells and the Wiesbaden Society
for their involvement in this Centenary Concert.

Derek Watmough MBE – Musical Director and Conductor

Derek is a Yorkshireman who studied Classical Languages and, later, Music at the University of Durham. As a teenager he played the violin in the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. A European tour with them in 1955 inspired him to travel as often as possible (a passion he still pursues) and to learn to speak a few European languages. He reads German, French, Spanish, some Dutch and Italian. His fluency in German has been invaluable since the Choral Society developed a close relationship with the Lutherkirche Bach Choir in Wiesbaden. Derek held teaching posts at the Royal Grammar School in High Wycombe, at the Skinners' School in Tunbridge Wells and finally at Beacon Community College in Crowborough, and since he retired from teaching he has devoted his time to a large number of musical activities in the area and elsewhere.



He enjoys playing the piano as much as conducting and has played with the Sussex Camerata and directed the Mid-Sussex Sinfonia and the Tunbridge Wells Sinfonietta from the keyboard. He will invariably be found singing in the Chorus at concerts by local groups where his tenor voice is much valued. He is also one of four regular conductors of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Symphony Orchestra. His first concert as Conductor of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society in 1973 included Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, which is one of the works to be performed today. His series of lectures on music of all kinds are popular and he contributes concert reviews to the Kent & Sussex Courier. He was awarded the MBE in 1992 for his services to music.

Klaus Uwe Ludwig – Piano

Klaus studied Lutheran Church Music at Heidelberg, and solo singing and conducting at Mannheim Music Academy and was awarded Konzert-Diplom with distinction for "artistic organ playing". At the the age of 34 he was awarded the title of "Director of Church Music", one of the youngest to hold this title.

Since 1978 he has been attached to the Lutheran Church in Wiesbaden, founding the Bach-Chor Wiesbaden and the other groups associated with it (among others the Chamber Choir "Kleine Kantorei", a children's choir, the Bach Orchestra Wiesbaden and the Johann-Walter-Kreis Wiesbaden).



He is a composer of several children's operas (Singspiele) for solos, children's choir and orchestra.

In 1980 and 2000 he performed Bach's complete works for organ and in 1989-91 the works of Max Reger. He is also an interpreter of French and German Romantic music, a Director of premières, known for unusual programme combinations, organ concerts at home and abroad, LP and CD recordings, and performances on TV and radio.

In 1998 he was awarded the "Scroll of Honour for Culture and Art" of the Hessian Ministry for Science and Arts in acknowledgement of his achievements and his dedicated work with the Bach-Chor Wiesbaden.

In 2003, together with the Bach-Chor Wiesbaden, he was awarded the Cultural Prize of the Provincial Capital Wiesbaden.

Charlotte Ellett – Soprano

Welsh soprano Charlotte Ellett studied at the Royal Northern College of Music. She completed her studies at the National Opera Studio in June 2002 supported by the Wood/Peters Award in association with Glyndebourne, The Peter Moores Foundation, The Sybil Tutton Charitable Trust and a Countess of Munster Award.

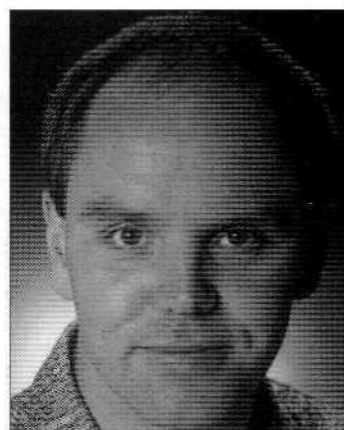
Charlotte Ellett has been successful in many competitions, recently winning the Alexander Young Award. She has taken part in masterclasses with Benjamin Luxon, Elizabeth Gale, Anne Howells, Ryland Davies, Martin Isepp and Carlo Rizzi.



She sang a number of roles at the RNCM and also sang Despina (*Così fan tutte*) at the Aix-en-Provence Musique Festival, a role she has repeated for Pimlico Opera, and Mabel (*The Pirates of Penzance*) for Carl Rosa Opera. Concert engagements have included *Messiah* at the Royal Albert Hall and the Mozart *Requiem* for Raymond Gubbay at the Royal Festival Hall and Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. Her repertoire further includes J S Bach *Cantata 51* and *Magnificat*, Handel's *Samson*, Haydn's *The Creation* and *Nelson Mass*, Mozart's *Exsultate Jubilate* and *Mass in C Minor* and Vivaldi's *Gloria*. She also recently sang Frasquita (*Carmen*) for Glyndebourne Touring Opera and her future engagements include The Angel (*Jephtha*), Karolka (*Jenufa*) and Barbarina (*Le nozze di Figaro*) for Welsh National Opera as well as a wide range of performances with choral societies throughout the UK.

Anthony Michaels-Moore – Baritone

Anthony Michaels-Moore studied at Newcastle University and at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama with Eduardo Asquez and now with Neilson Taylor. He was the first British winner of the Luciano Pavarotti Competition in 1985. He has had a long and fruitful relationship with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden – after his début in 1987, he became a member of the Company, appearing in many productions. He has returned as a guest as The Herald (*Lohengrin*), the title role (*Macbeth*), the Count (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Gérard (*Andrea Chénier*) and Rolando (*Il Battaglia di Legnano*).



He has also sung with all the major British Companies – English National Opera, Opera North and Welsh National Opera. Abroad he has appeared with La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera, New York, Opera de Paris, Toulouse Opera, Teatro Del Liceu, Barcelona, Oviedo Festival, Spain, Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich, the Deutsche Oper Berlin and the Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires.

Current engagements and future plans will be performances in Japan, Pittsburgh, Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Brussels, the Bastille, Paris, San Francisco, concert performances as Balstrode (*Peter Grimes*) with the London Symphony Orchestra under Colin Davis in London, New York and Chicago, and other roles in Berlin and Vienna. He has performed on the concert platform with many of today's leading conductors and orchestras and appeared in many BBC Promenade Concerts. He has appeared in a number of televised performances and has made numerous recordings of concert and operatic works.



Programme Notes

These notes were supplied through the Programme Note Bank of Making Music, (the National Federation of Music Societies) to which the Society is affiliated.

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Gloria

Choral singing in France has never been a favourite pastime. The arts are looked upon as being something for experts and, as a consequence, have a marked degree of sophistication. Certainly in the choral field there has been a reluctance of interest on the part of composers. Around 1900, if voices were used at all, they were treated as instruments: hence the practice of adding a wordless chorus to symphonic music as in Debussy's *Nocturnes*. There were, however, significant French choral works composed during the opening years of the 20th Century. One of the earliest was a fine setting of Psalm 80 by Roussel – a work that deserves more hearings – and this undoubtedly pointed the way for succeeding composers such as Poulenc.

Francis Poulenc was largely a self-taught composer and, coming under the influence of Satie and the poet Cocteau early in his life, it was not surprising that he became a member of the breakaway group of composers known as “Les Six”. The common aims of the members of this group were simplicity, terseness and clarity – a positive revolt against formal Germanic influences as well as the so-called impressionism in the music of their own country. Their characteristics were avoidance of pretentiousness; melodic lines of extravagant simplicity; rhythms of curious irregularity interspersed with the obvious; harmony that at times was simple and at others complex – often aggressive, but nearly always in an acceptable musical language. Of all the composers in the group Poulenc alone excelled in the field of choral music.

Although he frequently declared that he was “first and foremost a composer of religious music”, it was not until 1936 that Poulenc wrote his first sacred composition – the *Litanies à la Vierge Noire de Rocamadour*. His religious inspiration never left him from then onwards; there followed a Mass and a series of Motets, but it was not until 1950 that he wrote his first large-scale choral work – the *Stabat Mater*.

Ten years later the composer employed the same forces – soprano solo with chorus and large orchestra – for the *Gloria*, a work commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation of the Library of Congress. The familiar liturgical words, taken from the greater Doxology of the Mass, are given a setting that abounds in joy, yet is always sincere and humble. Critics used to label the work as sacrilegious; Poulenc answered them in saying “While writing it I had in mind those Crozzoli frescoes with angels sticking out their tongues; and also some solemn-looking Benedictine monks that I saw playing football one day”.

Here is the secret of Poulenc – he found it difficult to be mournful, even in the most severe sacred text. He would certainly have agreed with Martin Luther's objection to the Devil having all the good tunes! His contemporary Claude Rostand said of him: “There is in him something of the monk and the street urchin. These are works of a profoundly religious man, in which he himself offers the prayers of a believer”. Certainly this lovable work has justly become popular with singers and audiences alike, and must surely be among the finest examples of religious music of our time.

Donald Hunt

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Rhapsody in Blue

George Gershwin was the son of Russian-Jewish immigrants to the United States and was raised in the New York ghetto of Brooklyn. His father made a precarious living from a succession of enterprises and so the family was poor. From the tough world of the East Side streets where he played as a boy George emerged to move quickly up the ladder of success as pianist and composer. By 1925, after composing the *Rhapsody in Blue*, he was in London helping to prepare his musical *Lady Be Good* for its London première. His name was at that time frequently linked with the Mayfair social set, and even royalty, who lionised him like some American Liszt. He was showered with invitations to parties where he performed at the piano. By 1936 he was living in luxurious accommodation in Beverly Hills, Hollywood, on account of the music he wrote for movies such as *Shall We Dance?* starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. The end came suddenly and brutally in 1937 when a brain tumour killed him only a month or so after the onset of symptoms. He was 38.

Gershwin had little formal training as a musician in his early years, and at school did badly and often played truant. An upright piano was bought by his parents for his brother Ira. However, it was George who was soon picking out tunes on it and who became its sole user. His first good teacher, Charles Hambitzer, recognised him as a genius who would make his mark in music. Nonetheless George's parents discouraged his musical ambitions and sent him to commercial school for accountancy studies.

George however was intent on a musical career and persuaded his parents to allow him to start on his way by taking a job in Tin Pan Alley as a song-plugger for Remick's, a music publisher, when he was 15. In those days the only means available to publishers to publicise their songs was to employ song salesmen like George who sat in cubicles for up to ten hours a day playing music for anyone who came along to listen. It was tough, but the incessant playing quickly increased George's facility at the keyboard and he constantly experimented with new runs, chords and modulations.

In 1916 and 1917 he had his first compositions published, one of them by Remick's. His goal now was to become a composer for the Broadway musical theatre. He had a number of songs accepted for inclusion in musicals written by others and this brought him to the attention of George White, a dancer-producer who mounted his own annual revues on Broadway called George White's Scandals. Gershwin wrote the scores for five successive Scandals between 1920 and 1924, which brings us to the year in which the *Rhapsody in Blue* was composed. Gershwin's original intention had been to write an extended blues for orchestra, but he abandoned this in favour of a piece very free in form to be given the title by which we know it. Its shape came to him while he was travelling to Boston. In Gershwin's words: "It was on the train with its steely rhythms, its rattle-ty bang that is often so stimulating to a composer ... I frequently hear music in the heart of noise. And there I suddenly heard – even saw on paper – the complete construction of the *Rhapsody*. No new themes came to me, but I worked on the thematic material already in mind and tried to conceive the composition as a whole. I heard it as a sort of musical kaleidoscope of America – of our vast melting-pot, of our blues, our metropolitan madness ...".

Inextricably linked with the *Rhapsody's* composition are Paul Whiteman, his band and Ferde Grofé who orchestrated it for performance in the Aeolian Hall, New York, on 12 February 1924 with Gershwin himself at the piano. Grofé's orchestration took into account the virtuoso capabilities of Whiteman's musicians, whose names are written on Grofé's score. At this stage of his career it appears that Gershwin was not capable of orchestrating the piece himself. Grofé made some revisions to maximise the orchestral effect, and one important feature – the famous clarinet glissando at the start was introduced during rehearsal by the player. The clarinetist played a glissando instead of a straightforward run as a joke, but Gershwin asked him to incorporate it in the performance and it has been retained ever since. There followed further performances, publication, a recording, and the *Rhapsody's* use in a movie about Whiteman called *The King of Jazz* which earned Gershwin a quarter of a million dollars in the next ten years.

Ben Brickman

William Walton (1902-1983)

Belshazzar's Feast

In 1929, the BBC commissioned works from Walton, Lambert and Hely-Hutchinson, each one limited to a "small chorus, small orchestra not exceeding 15 and a soloist". Walton turned for a text to his friend Osbert Sitwell, who eventually decided on *Belshazzar's Feast*, constructing it on a selection taken from the 5th chapter of the book of Daniel and Psalms 137 and 81, all introduced by Isaiah's prophecy that "the day of the Lord is at hand".

Walton was always slow at composition, and his work on this project was no exception: by September 1930 the job had far outgrown the original limitations imposed by the BBC. The first performance was eventually given after choral rehearsals lasting six months, on 8 October 1931 as part of the Leeds Festival, with Dennis Noble as the soloist and Dr (as he then was) Malcolm Sargent conducting. The critics hailed it as a masterpiece, but it caused shocked reactions among the Establishment. Study of the score reveals an amalgam of influences traceable back through Elgar's demons from *The Dream of Gerontius* and the Pomp if not the Circumstance of his famous marches, to Mendelssohn's 'Baal' choruses in *Elijah* and even as far as Purcell's dissonances. It is remarkable that this 29-year-old man, largely self-taught, could absorb and mould these disparate elements into such an individual and unmistakable style of his own.

Although the work is continuous, it falls into three sections divided by written pauses which Walton puts to dramatic effect. Trombones open the composition with a unison B flat repeated eleven times – a suitably stark introduction for Isaiah's awful prophecy, declaimed by the men's voices. An orchestral prelude presents a musical idea that is to pervade this section, as the choir sings the lament of the Jews in captivity. The mood of despair and hopelessness in this first part of the work, underlined by the wailing saxophone, is juxtaposed with more forceful passages as the Israelite prisoners tell how their captors expected them to provide entertainment. The mood of resentment suddenly takes over to the accompaniment of short, stabbing, muted brass, as the choir repeats "how can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"

After yet more grieving, positive anger suggests that violence will bring about the overthrow of their captors and the destruction of Babylon. The first pause is filled by the soloist in his role of story-teller, reciting the wealth and possessions of the city including "... the souls of men". The orchestra bursts in with a motif which streaks down through the orchestra like some symbolic thunderbolt. With mounting horror, the chorus recounts the story of the infamous feast wherein Belshazzar and his court commit the sacrilege of drinking from the sacred vessels captured from the Jews' temple in Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the thunderbolt idea keeps appearing as if in timely warning. The soloist, in the role of the king, leads his guests in a great heathen hymn of praise to their gods, accompanied by some imaginative orchestration and exotic percussion including an anvil, a gong struck with a metal beater, xylophone and slapstick.

Finally the gods of brass are fanfared by two extra brass sections placed at each side of the orchestra (This was an idea allegedly suggested by Beecham in one of his naughty moods, in the belief that the work was as doomed as Babylon and would be heard no more at all). The Israelites' horror mounts through the excesses of the idolatrous feast until the ultimate blasphemy "Thou O king art king of kings. Oh king live forever". This unleashes one of the composer's screaming discords, a shrill E flat in the orchestra over what is basically a D tonality in the choir. It eventually turns into the thunderbolt motif making its final and devastating appearance.

The second pause is filled again by the soloist who tells of the writing on the wall to the accompaniment of some spine-tingling orchestral sounds. To an abbreviated version of the opening fanfare, the men translate the terrible message written on the wall. The choir can hardly wait to snatch the word "SLAIN!" out of the soloist's mouth in a great shout. Three great hammer blows from the orchestra symbolically complete the destruction of the city.

The final section is a joyful hymn of praise and thanksgiving, only briefly interrupted by a reference to the weeping and wailing of the other kings and merchants of the earth who, no doubt, realised their own precarious situations. Enraptured Alleluias are passed between the two choirs until, at the peak of the thanksgiving, the conductor is faced with no less than 36 lines of music in an exciting, triumphant ending to this positively Mahlerian score.

Bryan Cresswell

MEMORIES OF 'BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST'

From 1940 to 1972 I worked closely with William Walton, helping to edit and prepare some of his compositions for performance and publication, including dealing with his alterations in 'Belshazzar's Feast'.

In 1948 Walton decided to revise several sections of the orchestral score, reducing some of the powerful brass and the rather-too-noisy percussion parts. Because of these important changes the publishers realised they needed an entirely new score of the complete work, and they asked me to write a copy in my most careful pen-and-ink musical handwriting, to be suitable for photographic reproduction.

Walton sent me pencil copies of his altered scorings, and I embarked on the daunting task of producing a revised full orchestral score of the whole of 'Belshazzar's Feast' – all 1130 bars of it. For this arduous job I had to write hundreds of thousands of notes, covering 148 pages of 36-stave music-paper. After eighteen laborious weeks I finished the manuscript of the new full score when I penned the very last of the 180 repetitions of the word 'Alleluia'!

When Walton first contemplated composing 'Belshazzar's Feast' at the end of 1929 his plan was to write a work for only a small choir and a small orchestra. However, for various reasons, he completely changed his mind, and astonished friends, critics and the musical public by scoring the work for a large double chorus and a huge orchestra with a lot of brass and percussion – plus optional parts for organ, piano and a couple of brass bands.

'Belshazzar's Feast' was first heard in public at the Leeds Festival in October 1931, with the Leeds Festival Chorus, the London Symphony Orchestra and Dennis Noble, conducted by Malcolm Sargent. After the first performance Walton was told that some of the chorus members had complained that the voice parts were very, very difficult to sing – they probably were found difficult in the 1930s.

In spite of the fact that the words of the work had been selected by Osbert Sitwell from the Holy Bible, the organisers of the Three Choirs Festival at first refused to allow 'Belshazzar's Feast' to be performed in cathedrals because they considered the subject was 'unsuitable'.

Roy Douglas, President of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society

We are privileged to have our President, Roy Douglas, with us here today, as at all our concerts. Roy was born in 1907 in Tunbridge Wells and started to play the piano at the age of five and was composing piano pieces at the age of ten.

His early orchestral experiences were with the Folkestone Municipal Orchestra and in 1933 he became a full member of the London Symphony Orchestra as pianist, organist, celesta player, fourth percussionist and librarian, playing under Bruno Walter, Hamilton Harty, Adrian Boult, Eugene Goossens, Henry Wood and Malcolm Sargent. As an orchestrator he was indefatigable during and after the War and he worked with many composers including Vaughan Williams, John Ireland, Alan Rawsthorne, Walter Goehr and Arthur Benjamin and for William Walton for thirty years from 1942-1972.

He has entertained us on many occasions with his anecdotes from his distinguished musical career, which spanned most of the 20th Century.

Part I

Gloria -Francis Poulenc

Charlotte Ellett – Soprano

1. Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis
(Glory be to God on high and on earth peace to men of goodwill)

2. Laudamus te

Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.
(We praise thee, we bless thee, we adore thee, we glorify thee.
We give thee thanks for thy great glory)

3. Domine Deus

Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.
(Lord God, heavenly King, God the almighty Father)

4. Domine Fili Unigenite

Domine Fili Unigenite, Jesu Christe.
(Lord Jesus Christ, only begotten Son)

5. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei

Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris, Rex Caelestis, qui tollis peccata mundi,
Miserere nobis, suscipe deprecationem nostram.
(Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who takest away the sins of the world,
Have mercy upon us. Thou who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.)

6. Qui Sedes ad Dexteram Patris

Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis. Quoniam Tu solus Sanctus, Tu solus Dominus,
Tu solus Altissimus Jesu Christe. Cum sancto spiritu in gloria Dei Patris, Amen.
(Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us. For Thou alone art the Holy One,
Thou alone art the Lord, Thou Jesus Christ alone art the Most High, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of
God the Father. Amen.)

Rhapsody in Blue – George Gershwin

Klaus Uwe Ludwig – Piano

Interval

Part II

Belshazzar's Feast – William Walton

Anthony Michaels-Moore – Baritone

Thus spake Isaiah:
Thy sons that thou shalt beget
They shall be taken away,
And be eunuchs
In the palace of the King of Babylon
Howl ye, howl ye, therefore:
For the day of the lord is at hand!

By the waters of Babylon,
There we sat down: yea, we wept
And hanged our harps upon the willows.

For they that wasted us
Required of us mirth;
They that carried us away captive
Required of us a song.
Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

How shall we sing the Lord's song
In a strange land?

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her cunning.
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.
Yea, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

By the waters of babylon
There we sat down; yea, we wept.

O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed,
Happy shall he be that taketh thy children
And dasheth them against a stone,
For with violence shall that great city Babylon be
thrown down
And shall be found no more at all.

Babylon was a great city,
Her merchandise was of gold and silver,
Of precious stones, of pearls, of fine linen,
Of purple, silk and scarlet,
All manner vessels of ivory,
All manner vessels of most precious wood,
Of brass, iron and marble,
Cinnamon, odours and ointments,
Of frankincense, wine and oil,
Fine flour, wheat and beasts,
Sheep, horses, chariots, slaves
And the souls of men.

In Babylon
Belshazzar the King
Made a great feast,
Made a feast to a thousand of his lords,
And drank wine before the thousand.

Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine,
Commanded us to bring the gold and silver vessels:
Yea! the golden vessels, which his father,
Nebuchadnezzar,
Had taken out of the temple that was in Jerusalem.

He commanded us to bring the golden vessels
Of the temple of the house of God,
That the King, his Princes, his wives
And his concubines might drink therein.

Then the King commanded us:
Bring ye the cornet, flute, sackbut, psaltery
And all kinds of music: they drank wine again,
Yea, drank from the sacred vessels,
And then spake the King:

Praise ye the God of Gold
Praise ye the God of Silver
Praise ye the God of Iron
Praise ye the God of Wood
Praise ye the God of Stone
Praise ye the God of brass
Praise ye the Gods!

Thus in Babylon, the mighty city,
Belshazzar the King made a great feast,
Made a feast to a thousand of his lords
And drank wine before the thousand.

Belshazzar whiles he tasted the wine
Commanded us to bring the gold and silver vessels
That his Princes, his wives and his concubines
Might rejoice and drink therein.

After they had praised their strange gods,
The idols and the devils,
False gods who can neither see nor hear,
Called they for the timbrel and the pleasant harp
To extol the glory of the King.
Then they pledged the King before the people,
Crying, Thou, O King, art King of Kings:
O King, live for ever.

And in that same hour, as they feasted
 Came forth fingers of a man's hand
 And the king saw
 The part of the hand that wrote.
 And this was the writing that was written;
 'MENE, MENE, TEKEL UPHARSIN'
 THOU ART WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE
 AND FOUND WANTING'.
 In that night was Belshazzar the king slain
 And his Kingdom divided.

Then sing aloud to God our strength:
 Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
 Take a psalm, bring hither the timbrel,
 Blow up the trumpet in the new moon,
 Blow up the trumpet in Zion
 For Babylon the Great is fallen, fallen.
 Alleluia!

Then sing aloud to God our strength:
 Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
 While the Kings of the Earth lament
 And the merchants of the Earth
 Weep, wail and rend their raiment.
 They cry, Alas, Alas, that great city,
 In one hour is her judgement come.

The trumpeters and pipers are silent,
 And the harpers have ceased to harp,
 And the light of a candle shall shine no more.

Then sing aloud to God our strength.
 Make a joyful noise to the God of Jacob.
 For Babylon the Great is fallen.
 Alleluia!

Selected and arranged from the Bible by
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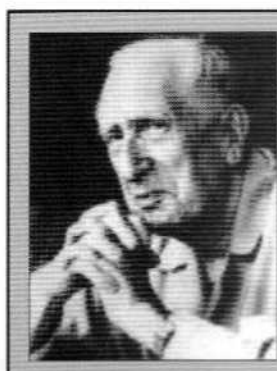
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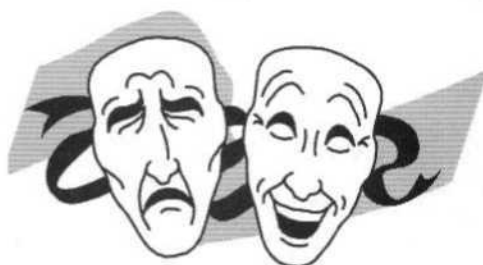
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