

Nantwich & District Choral Society

CONCERT
MUSIC FOR ST. CECILIA



Saturday, 21st November, 1981, at 7.30 p.m.

Central Methodist Church, Nantwich

PROGRAMME – Adult: £1.50, Child and OAP: 50p, Family: £2.50



CONCERT MUSIC FOR ST. CECILIA

Marian Greensill – Soprano
Malcolm Boden – Counter Tenor
Brian Greensill – Tenor
Howard Watkin – Bass

Leader of the Orchestra – Darrell Wade
Conductor – Edward Hewison

PROGRAMME

WELCOME TO ALL THE PLEASURES – PURCELL
(1659–1695)

SIMPLE SYMPHONY – BRITTEN (1913–1976)

HYMN TO ST. CECILIA – BRITTEN

INTERVAL OF TWENTY MINUTES

Refreshments will be available in the schoolroom opposite

ODE ON ST. CECILIA'S DAY – PURCELL

St. Cecilia came to be regarded as the patron saint of music in the sixteenth century. There is little evidence before that time, apart from some medieval paintings, to associate St. Cecilia (martyred AD 176) with music. In England The Musical Society decided to hold annually a series of celebrations on St. Cecilia's Day – 22nd November. These ran from 1683 to 1703 and well known authors and composers of the day were commissioned to write an ode in praise of music. Purcell was asked to write odes for the celebrations in 1683 and 1692 and these are the two works at the beginning and end of tonight's programme.

WELCOME TO ALL THE PLEASURES (1683)

This ode is in the style of a verse anthem, a form with which Purcell was very familiar. A trio of solo voices is answered by the chorus and between these sections are longer passages for the solo voices. The modest style of the ode in comparison with that of 1692 is perhaps best shown at the end of the final choral section on the words 'In a consort of voices we'll sing to Cecilia'. Each voice of the chorus dies away until the final bass note is left unaccompanied. We are left in awe of St. Cecilia. (The second soprano soloist is Ruth Miller).

ODE ON ST. CECILIA'S DAY (1692)

It is clear that in the nine years which had elapsed since Welcome to all the Pleasures, a much grander and more triumphant style of writing was demanded. The author (Brady) provides much imagery which inspired Purcell's imagination. The variety throughout is

remarkable – note for example the reference to the flute and violin in No.3, the impassioned phrases in 'Tis Nature's Voice (No.4) accompanied by continuo only and then the majestic entry of the choir in No.5 and the expansive style of choral writing. The merits of the organ and again of the flute and violin are exhorted in Nos.8, 9 and 10. The opening words 'Hail, Bright Cecilia' are once more used in the final number and the chorus (now in six parts) and full orchestra bring the work to a triumphant conclusion.

1. Overture
2. Solo and chorus 'Hail! Bright Cecilia'
3. Duet 'Hark each tree'
4. Solo 'Tis nature's voice'
5. Chorus 'Soul of the world'
6. Solo and chorus 'Thou tun'st the world'
7. Trio 'With that sublime celestial lay'
8. Solo 'Wondrous machine'
9. Solo 'The airy violin'
10. Duet 'In vain the am'rous flute'
11. Solo 'The fife and all the harmony of war'
12. Duet 'Let these amongst themselves contest'
(The second bass soloist is Brian Roberts)
13. Chorus 'Hail! Bright Cecilia'



HYMN TO ST. CECILIA (1942)

Something of a revival of works written in praise of St. Cecilia has taken place in this country in the twentieth century and Britten's Hymn to St. Cecilia is one of the outstanding examples. Britten, born on St. Cecilia's Day itself in 1913, wrote the work whilst on board ship returning to England from America in 1942. His instinctive gift for setting the English language to music and his creativity in responding in musical terms to the imagery of the words are highly evident in this work. It is written for five part choir and is unaccompanied. The poem is by his former friend and colleague W. H. Auden. After a chorale like opening section there follows a scherzo like movement on the words 'I cannot grow, I have no shadow to run away from'. A contrastingly restrained episode follows ('O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall') during the course of which instrumental tones are written into the soloists parts – 'quasi violino' for alto (sung by Jean Atkin), 'quasi timpani' for bass, 'quasi flauto' for soprano and 'quasi tromba' for tenor. The opening words 'Blessed Cecilia' return briefly in the concluding passage.

SIMPLE SYMPHONY (1934)

The material for this delightful work is based on pieces which Britten wrote as a child. The four movements are: 1 Boisterous Bourree, 2 Playful Pizzicato, 3 Sentimental Saraband, 4 Frolicsome Finale.





The National Federation of Music Societies, to which the Society is affiliated, gives support towards the cost of this concert with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain. The Society wishes also to acknowledge the assistance given by Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council and North West Arts.

FUTURE PROGRAMME

CAROL CONCERT

Saturday 19th December 1981 at 7.30
Central Methodist Church, Nantwich

CONCERT

Sunday 14th March, 1982 at 8.00
Oakley Centre, Crewe

An all Beethoven Programme to include the Mass in C
and The Choral Fantasia

NANTWICH AND DISTRICT CHORAL SOCIETY

Rehearsals are held on Wednesday evenings at 7.30
at Malbank School.

For further details,
please contact the Secretary,
Mrs. Theresa Abel, Tel. 620212

