

**GUILDFORD
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA**

William Armon Leader

PROTEUS CHOIR

Guildford Corporation Concerts
Vernon Handley Director of Music

**THE SEVENTEENTH CONCERT IN
THE ENTERPRISING SERIES**

Saturday 22nd February 1969 at 7.45 pm
GUILDFORD CIVIC HALL

GWENNETH PRYOR

Pianoforte

VERNON HANDLEY

Conductor

GWENNETH PRYOR *Pianoforte*

Gwenneth Pryor, who was born in Australia, studied at the New South Wales State Conservatorium, from which she graduated in 1960 with the prize for the most outstanding student of her year. She came to England in 1961 on a travelling scholarship to study at the Royal College of Music with Lamar Crowson, and she has also studied abroad with Karl Engel, and with Vlado Perlemuter. Miss Pryor made her London debut at the Wigmore Hall in October 1965, in a recital presented by the Royal College of Music in aid of the New Building Fund. In addition to her engagements in this country, she has performed in Vienna, Prague, Brussels, Switzerland and Australia, and she has several records to her credit. She forms a Duo with Carlos Villa, the leader of the New Philharmonia Orchestra.

THE PROTEUS CHOIR

The Proteus Choir, which numbers 65 young people between the ages of 15 and 24, was formed in 1963 as an additional choir in the Corporation's music scheme, where young people could gain experience in choral work. In its ranks are trained musicians and singers, as well as young people still at school or in the professions. It gives a number of unaccompanied concerts each year both secular and religious, as well as singing large choral works with the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, including first performances of works in this country. The Choir has appeared on television, recorded background music for the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, and visited Germany to make a record of English music for Cologne Radio.

The training of the choir falls on a team, and the Musical Director wishes to record his thanks to Miss Prudence Eddon, Miss Patricia Finch, Miss Mary Rivers and Mr. Kenneth Lank for the help they have given with sectional rehearsals.

The programme this evening has been chosen to show the different facets of French music in this century. It is impossible in the space of one programme and with rehearsal limitations to have examples of all the important composers, but an attempt has been made to show differences of style and the different use of instrumental and vocal combinations. The first part of the programme deals really with entertainment music; the second with works of more serious intention. A deliberate attempt has been made, in keeping with this series, to choose some works which are not necessarily fashionable, thus giving the concertgoer chance to fill in, in his picture of French music, some of the gaps left by current musical fashion. Honegger was not actually French, but Swiss. However, he was resident in France where he received his musical education, and because of this and his connection with Milhaud, Poulenc and Auric, he is always ranked amongst the French composers of the century.

Ravel 1875-1937**Alborada Del Gracioso**

Many of Ravel's orchestral pieces started life as works for keyboard, and the brilliant *Alborada del Gracioso* is No. 4 of *Miroirs* for Piano, written in 1912. The title is a peculiar one, and means quite literally the Morning Song of the Clown. It is an orchestral show piece in three parts: the first a very lively dance; the second a rather more reflective song for the first bassoon against two harps, percussion and extensively divided strings, and the third, a recapitulation of the dance. Triple woodwind, full brass, eight percussion instruments, two harps and the strings are the forces employed, and there is much extremely difficult writing for woodwind and brass soloists within the piece, including a passage for flutes, and later flutes and trumpets which disposes of 108 notes in six bars.

Milhaud 1892-**Symphony No. 4 for String Orchestra****Overture—Chorale—Etude**

In many ways Darius Milhaud rebelled against the large orchestra and luxuriant harmonies of his immediate predecessors, leading violent attacks on the work of Wagner and others, and so, even though the works that we are to hear this evening are the products of the 1920's, they are of a clarity and simplicity of invention which was found very refreshing at the time they were written. It is not that they are less modern, but simply that Milhaud was rebelling against harmonic luxuriance for its own sake. They represent a musical imagination which was remarkable both for sparkling vitality and for profound feeling. Milhaud, himself, said, "The most difficult thing in music is to write a tune. Anybody can acquire a brilliant technique. The vital element is the melody, which should be easily remembered, hummed, and whistled in the street. . . . I have never been able to understand the establishment of different categories in music. . . . There is only music, and one can find it in a café melody or an operetta tune as well as in a symphony, an opera, or a work of chamber music". He was self-confessedly open to the influences of any sort of music that he felt to be enjoyable, as can be seen in the two works to be played this evening.

The string symphony is one of five that he wrote for small orchestral combinations. This one, the fourth, was finished in Paris in 1921, and bears at the top of the score the message that it could be played either on 10 instruments or the full string orchestra with four violin sections, two viola, two 'cello and two double bass. The formal procedure of the three short movements is classical, but the resulting harmony can only have been produced in the twentieth century.

Milhaud 1892-

Symphony No. 6 for Oboe, 'Cello and Mixed Chorus

James Brown—*oboe* Raymond Adams—*'cello*

Calme et Doux—Souple et Vif—Lent et Expressif

Although he wrote symphonies in extended form for large orchestra, the five referred to above, plus a number of other works for small combinations of instruments and/or voices, reflect Milhaud's determination to spring clean the critical world's view of the word "symphony". Like Stravinsky's "symphonies" of wind instruments, these works return to a more literal definition of the word which means simply "sounding together". Milhaud expresses the different textures and sonorities that each group can make when sounding together. The chorus in this symphony sing no words, nor is any indication given in the score of the sounds they should make. The composer occasionally marks that their vocalisation shall be "chanté", or "sans nuances", without expression. The first movement is pastoral in character; the second in seven/four throughout, and the third shows clearly that Milhaud took very seriously what he is quoted as saying above, for it is nothing more or less than a superb "blues", beautifully expressed on this unlikely combination of instruments and voices. The first two movements are polymodal; each voice occasionally departing into a different mode from the others. Milhaud deliberately allows the modes to wend their way along, not bothering to resolve them for the ears that are used to major and minor keys.

Ravel 1875-1937

Piano Concerto in G major

Allegramente

Adagio assai

Presto

Koussevitzky asked Ravel for a new score for the fiftieth anniversary season (1930-1931) of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Ravel was working on the Concerto in G major at the time, but did not submit it until the following year, and it received its first performance in 1932. In the two outer movements Ravel treats the piano as a biting percussive instrument, and as part of the orchestral texture which is pointilliste and luminous.

The crack of a whip opens the first movement which is built of rhythmic chords, orchestral colour, glissandi, trills; in fact, this is Ravel in the Ringmaster's role. There is plenty of wit, and the principal theme bows directly in the direction of Gershwin. The jazz style which Milhaud adopted completely in the last movement of his Sixth Symphony is here only borrowed, for nothing could be more French than this movement.

The second movement makes a fine contrast. All the crispness is gone, and now the music is slow and contemplative, the piano singing a long tune and adding the most liquid of backgrounds to the cor anglais' version. The quasi rondo of the finale bristles with tricks, and the jazz style comes back with syncopated accents and a sliding trombone. Nothing could be lighter or fuller of good intentions.

INTERVAL

Coffee will be served in the Surrey Room during the interval by members of the Concertgoers' Society

Messiaen 1908- O Sacrum Convivium Motet au Saint-Sacrament

Messiaen is one of the most revolutionary of modern French composers. He has said of himself that the formation of his musical personality was chiefly due to "Hindu rhythms, and especially the 120 Indian folk rhythms collected by Charnagadeva in the thirteenth century. Also bird-song, especially the songs of the lark, the thrush and the nightingale". It ought to be said that this quotation applies to his technical musical personality and that his character is grounded in religion, many of his works having religious titles like the colossal two-hour piano work, "Vingt regards sur l'enfant Jesus". His best-known large work is the Turangalila Symphony. A far cry from this monstrous musical expression is the small motet, "O Sacrum Convivium". Although it is for mixed choir a cappella or for soloists, the difficulty of the intonation, as well as the different number of circumstances in which it might be performed, have led the composer to add that it can have an organ accompaniment. Short, subtle, rapt, its intensity is expressed in uneven rhythms, and it rises only once to a forte.

O sacrum convivium! In quo Christus sumitur:

Recolitur memoria passionis eius

Mens impletur gratia, et futurae gloriae.

O sacrum sacrum sacrum

O sacrum convivium! In quo Christus sumitur:

Mens implatur gratia, et futurae gloriae.

Nobis pignus datur, alleluia

A sacrum sacrum convivium.

Honegger 1892-1955 **Symphony No. 3 (Symphonie Liturgique)**

Dies Irae (Allegro marcato)

De Profundis Clamavi (Adagio)

Dona Nobis Pacem (Andante)

Honegger wrote five symphonies, and although they are works of musical argument and integrity, he often likened the form to a Novel. He would not give page by page programmes, but there was little need to; his

symphonies are so outspoken that we can appreciate the elementary conflicts that they are concerned with. His own words are the best possible illustration of this: "The Third Symphony is, in common with the majority of my symphonic works, in the form of a triptych. The score is a direct reaction against the fashion of so called 'absolute' music. Each of the three sections endeavours to express an idea—a fault which I should not presume to call philosophical, but which is my own personal feeling. I have, therefore, called upon liturgical subtitles, and given the work the name of 'Liturgical' Symphony in the hope of making my intentions the more clear.

"The first movement is entitled *Dies Irae*. This poses no problem, for we have all lived through times of war and revolutions, by which those who preside over destinies have gratified their peoples. The second movement, *De Profundis Clamavi*, reminds us of all the purity and trust which is still to be found in Man, and which reaches out toward that force which we feel above us—God perhaps, or what everyone fervently nourishes in his most secret soul. The third movement, *Dona Nobis Pacem*, depicts the inevitable rise of the world's stupidity: nationalism, militarism, beurocracy, administrations, customs barriers, taxes, wars, which transform human beings into robots with everything which Man has invented to persecute Man. All this terrifying imbecility ends by forcing out this cry of despair, *Dona Nobis Pacem*. The movement closes with a brief meditation on what life could be: calm, love, joy . . . a song of birds, of nature and of peace".

The work was written in 1945–1946 and, as can be seen by the above remarks, is deeply marked by contemporary events. When Honegger calls his Symphony a triptych, he is implying that the movements are interlinked, and indeed material from the first movement is used in variants of considerable importance in both the *Adagio* and the terrifying march of the last movement. It is the mark of a true symphonist that the composer can use a tune to express such exhaustion and anxiety in the second movement, and complete the symphony with the same tune, now joyfully serene on the solo violin.

Saturday 8th March 1969 7.45 pm
The Crossley Clitheroe Concert

Adagio and Fugue in C minor Mozart
Symphony No. 31 in D major Mozart
Requiem Mozart

Philharmonic Choir
Annon Lee Silver Soprano
Meriel Dickinson Alto
Alexander Oliver Tenor
Richard Van Allan Bass
Vernon Handley Conductor