

Edinburgh University Concerts 1978-79

JOHN ALLDIS CHOIR

conductor - JOHN ALLDIS

STOCKHAUSEN	die Nachtigall
MIKLOS MAROS	Turba
LIGETI	Lux Aeterna
MESSIAEN	Cinq Rechants
SMALLEY	Benedictus
HOLLOWAY	Hymn for Voices

in the Reid Concert Hall
on Thursday 30 November at 7.30

Tickets 80p (Students 40p)
from the Edinburgh Bookshop
and the Concert Office, Music Faculty

Presented with the financial support
of the Scottish Arts Council

**JOHN ALLDIS
CHOIR**

30 November

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Students: 40p

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
(with the financial support of the Scottish Arts Council)

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Thursday 30th November 1978, at 7.30 p.m.
REID CONCERT HALL

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Missa Brevis	
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STOCKHAUSEN b. 1928

Die Nachtigall

'Die Nachtigall' is the first of 3 movements for unaccompanied mixed choir which Stockhausen wrote in 1950 to poems of Verlaine and which he dedicated to his first wife—they are in fact collectively known as 'Chore für Doris'.

They are very much 'student' compositions—composed as they were at the age of 22—with the accent on academic priorities.

At the beginning the writing is very dense, imparting as it does a sense of urgency, which quite overrides the sense of the text. At the thirteenth bar, however, the music relaxes into a more illustrative, programmatic, interpretation of the words.

Like flocks of noisy birds that madly fare,
All my past memories round me beat the air:
Beat 'gainst the foliage of my heart so bleached,
My heart which its bent alder trunk hath reached
E'en where Regret's cold violet stream doth show,
That melancholy close at hand doth flow.
They beat, their evil clangour, by degrees,
Which a moist vapour, mounting, doth appease,
Now penetrates so far to the tree's core
That in an instant I can hear nought more—
Nought, save a voice that a lost name doth sing,
Nought, save this voice, a voice so languishing!
Of my dear first bird-love so far away,
Singing as erst upon that primal day.
While in the moon's sad splendour which doth rise
So solemn and so pale, this night which lies
Full pensively, and heavy with the Spring,
And Silence, and obscure imagining,
On the blue grass, wind-ruffled, rocks to sleep
The tree which throbs, the bird which now doth weep.
Verlaine

MIKLOS MAROS b. 1943

Turba

Miklos Maros, born in Hungary in 1943, composed 'Turba' in 1969. The work is written for a choir and conductor, who also sings. The title is Latin, and means crowd. The improvisations of the choir emphasise the impression of a crowd, out of which the soloistic parts rise in contrast. 'Turba' incorporates a choral Halleluia on words from the Bible.

LIGETI b. 1923

Lux Aeterna

Written for sixteen solo voices, Lux Aeterna was composed in 1966 and first performed that year by the Stuttgart Schola

Cantorum. One year earlier Ligeti had completed his Requiem for chorus and orchestra, and this unaccompanied setting of that part of the Requiem Mass which had not been included in the larger composition is therefore, in a way, an offshoot of it. In the composer's own words '... the chords slowly melt into one another in a smooth, continuous process: ripples appear to cloud the image and then, as calm is restored, a new picture forms before our eyes'.

'May light perpetual eternally shine upon them with thy saints, O Lord, for Thou art gracious: grant unto them eternal rest.'

MESSAIEN b. 1908

Cinq Rechants

The Cinq Rechants of 1948 form the third part of Messiaen's Tristan and Yseult trilogy, the first two parts being the song cycle Harawi (1945) and the Turangalila Symphony (1945-8). The poems, like those of Harawi are by the composer himself and use both French and a series of invented syllables which are chosen for their ability to define rhythmic patterns. The French text is elusive and surrealist. It links images of love—'ma prison d'amour faite d'air léger', 'Miroir d'étoile, chateau d'étoile, Yseult d'amour'—with those of enchantment: 'losange ma fleur toujours, philtre Yseult rameur d'amour'. Like the lovers of Messiaen's beloved Tristan only in death can the lovers be united, and again, as in Harawi, the text intertwines images of love and death: 'l'explorateur Orphée trouve son coeur dans la mort', 'les amoureux s'envolent vers les étoiles de la mort'.

All five numbers of the cycle have the same basic formal plan, an alternation of verse and chorus—of Couplet and Rechant.

INTERVAL

ROGER SMALLEY b. 1943

Benedictus from Missa Brevis

'Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini'—

'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'

Roger Smalley's Missa Brevis, based on a keyboard piece 'Gloria Tibi Trinitas' by the early Tudor composer William Blitheman, and written for 16 solo voices was given its first performance by the John Alldis Choir in 1967. The Benedictus takes the form of a duet for two sopranos, and begins with the oscillating three note figure derived from Blitheman.

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ROBIN HOLLOWAY

Hymn for Voices, Op. 36

Mud; Questions and Answers; Interlude; River; Interlude, Beach,
Questions and Answers; Hymn, Finale

The composer writes: This work, commissioned for the Bath Festival and the John Alldis Choir with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain, was written in early September 1977. It takes words from various sources and works them (with much omission, addition and alteration) into a metaphorical progress of transformation. This begins in a state of muddy stagnation (the Thames maidens' song from Eliot's 'The Waste Land'); through a series of mock-serious questions and answers about the nature of slime and sliminess (from Sartre's disquisition on 'le visqueux'); to a state of watery limpidity (Ruskin's description of the Rhone in 'Praeterita'). The work now opens up into a kind of scena. Its setting is the beach and its concern the mysterious object cast up by the interplay between land and sea, as described in Valéry's 'Eupalinos'. The dialogue-form of Eupalinos gave the idea for the second series of questions—now high-spirited and clearly nonsensical—before the enigmatic description of the object is given in answer. The final transformation is very freely adapted from d'Annunzio's poem 'Bocca d'Arno', a pantheistic/erotic dissolve into light and air.

The piece's raison d'être is its enjoyment of different choral textures, through which the words drift rather as pretext than as message. This tendency is fully realised by the three wordless sections. Earlier, they act as punctuation; in the finale the music is liberated completely from texts, working in every previous stage of the piece into a wordless fantasia.

(Edinburgh University acknowledges the financial assistance of the Scottish Arts Council)

Next Concert: Thursday 7 December

MICHAEL BEESTON *viola*

MARGARET MURRAY McLEOD *piano*

J.S. BACH Viola da Gamba Sonata in D major, BWV 1028

SCHUBERT Sonata in A minor 'Arpeggione'

BRITTEN Lachrymae—Reflections on a song of Dowland

SHOSTAKOVICH Sonata for viola and piano, Op. 147

15 pence