

3/93

THE CHERWELL SINGERS
ENGLISH AND FRENCH SACRED MUSIC

Director: Alasdair Jamieson
Organ: Alexander Mason

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME from THE APOSTLES

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

The Spirit of the lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the
poor:

He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and
recovering of sight to the blind, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord;
To give unto them that mourn a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment
of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be
glorified.

For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in
it to spring forth;

So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.
As the earth bringeth forth her bud.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel.

After *The Dream of Gerontius* (1900) Elgar began composing the two linked oratorios *The Apostles* (1903) and *The Kingdom* (1906). They were conceived as a single work, then planned as the first two in a trilogy which was to expound the schooling of the young church, the result on earth, then the result in the next world. The present Prologue to *The Apostles* sets out the calling and responsibilities of an apostle in the text and introduces some of the oratorio's leitmotifs in the music.

THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH

Thomas Tallis (1505-1585)

Incipit lamentatio Ieremiae prophetae:

ALEPH. Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo: facta est quasi vidua domina gentium, princeps provinciarum facta est sub tributo.

BETH. Plorans ploravit in nocte, et lacrimae eius in maxillis eius: non est qui conseletur eam ex omnibus caris eius: omnes amici eius spreverunt eam, et facti sunt ei inimici.

Ierusalem, Ierusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

De lamentatione Ieremiae prophetae:

GHIMEL. Migravit Iuda propter afflictionem ac multitudinem servitutis, habitavit inter gentes, nec invenit requiem.

DALETH. Omnes persecutores eius apprehenderunt eam inter angustias. [Viae Sion] lugent, eo quod non sint qui veniant ad solemnitatem. Omnes portae eius destructae, sacerdotes eius gementes, virgines eius squalidae, et ipsa oppressa amaritudine.

HE. Facti sunt hostes eius in capite, inimici illius locupletati sunt; quia Dominus locutus est super eam propter multitudinem iniquitatum eius: parculi eius ducti sunt acptivi ante faciem tribulantis.

Ierusalem, Ierusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

I

Here beginneth the lamentation of Jeremiah the prophet:

How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people: how is she become as a widow, she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become a tributary.

She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return unto the Lord thy God.

II

From the lamentation of Jeremiah the prophet:

Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude; she dwelleth among the heathen, she findeth no rest.

All her persecutors overtook her within the straits. [The ways of Zion] they mourn, because none come to the solemn assembly. All her gates are desolate, her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she herself is in bitterness.

Her adversaries are become the head, the enemies prosper; for the Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of the transgressions; her children are gone into captivity before the adversary.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return unto the Lord thy God.

Tallis is first recorded as an organist at Dover Priory in 1531 and later held posts at a London church and at Waltham Abbey in Essex. At the dissolution of the monastery in 1540 he spent a short time in Canterbury, but soon became a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, a post he held through all the religious changes until his death. The *Lamentations* - two separate compositions in different modes that are nevertheless grouped together in the majority of sources - have rightly been accorded a high place in Tallis's output and in Tudor music as a whole. The texts are those of the first two lessons at Maundy Thursday Matins. Following custom, Tallis set not only the biblical text but also the announcements, the Hebrew letters which separate the verses, and the refrain 'Ierusalem, Ierusalem ...'. The very moving first set of *Lamentations* has an adventurous scheme: Tallis moves from an initial Phrygian modality on E through cadences in A and D to a B flat cadence at 'BETH'. After a climax on the words 'Plorans, ploravit', the movement away from E is reversed. Tallis uses

repeated-note declamation and antiphony of one voice against the other four at the end, in the solemn appeal to Jerusalem to turn to God. This same exhortation appears at the end of the second set in music of a triple measure. The second set, though tonally more conventional, uses a wider variety of vocal textures.

ORGAN SOLO

TRUMPET VOLUNTARY IN D

William Boyce

GREAT IS THE LORD opus 67

Edward Elgar

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness;
beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north
(Great is the Lord.../beautiful in elevation...), the city of the great King.
God hath made Himself known in her palaces for a refuge.
For, lo! the kings assembled themselves, they passed by together;
they saw, then were they amazed;
they were dismayed, they hasted away;
trembling took hold of them there,
pain as of a woman in travail, as with the east wind that breaketh the ships of Tarshish ...
they were dismayed, they hasted away.
As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God:
God will establish it for ever.
We have thought on Thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple:
as is Thy name, O God, so is Thy praise unto the ends of the earth;
Thy right hand is full of righteousness:
We have thought on Thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple.
Let mount Zion be glad, let the daughters of Judah rejoice, let mount Zion be glad because of
Thy judgements;
walk about Zion and go round about her, tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks,
consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following.
For this God is our God for ever and ever;
He will be our guide even unto death. Amen.

GIVE UNTO THE LORD opus 74

Edward Elgar

Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength, give unto the Lord
the glory due unto His name;
worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
The voice of the Lord is upon the waters:
The god of glory thundereth;
it is the Lord that ruleth the sea.
The voice of the Lord is mighty in operation;
the voice of the Lord is full of majesty;
the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars, Yea breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.
Yea, the voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire, shaketh the wilderness, strippeth the
forests bare.
In His temple doth everyone speak of His glory.
Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
The Lord sitteth above the water-flood;
and the Lord remaineth a King for ever;
The Lord shall give strength unto His people;
the Lord shall give His people the blessing of peace.

These two psalm settings both exist in versions with orchestral accompaniment. *Great is the Lord* (Psalm 48: 1910-12) begins and ends with a grand, striding theme in three minim beats in a bar. In between there is a vigorous passage suggesting the Kings' discomfiture before Mount Zion, a recitative for full choir and a bass solo ('We have thought on Thy loving kindness, O God'). A quietly jubilant 'Let Mount Zion be glad' leads back to the initial theme.

In Psalm 29 the psalmist exhorts princes to give glory to God by reason of his power ('The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars...') and the protection of his people; Elgar's music (1914) well conveys the drama of the former and the consolation of the latter. We meet many hallmarks of this composer's style: the frequent fluctuations of tempo, the use of the term 'nobilmente' at the opening, the extraordinary care Elgar lavishes on the articulation of the vocal lines and the pervasive lyricism which softens even the most daring harmonic shift.

- INTERVAL 15 MINUTES -

LITANIES A LA VIERGE NOIRE

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Seigneur, ayez pitié de nous,
 Jésus-Christ, ayez pitié de nous.
 Jésus-Christ, écoutez-nous.
 Jésus-Christ, exaucez-nous.
 Dieu le père, créateur, ayez pitié de nous
 Dieu le fils, rédempteur, ayez pitié de nous.
 Dieu le Saint-Esprit, sanctificateur,, ayez
 pitié de nous.
 Trinité Sainte, qui êtes un seul Dieu, ayez
 pitié de nous.
 Sainte Vierge Marie, priez pour nous.
 Vierge, reine et patronne, priez pour nous.
 Vierge que Zachée le publicain nous à fait
 connaître et aimer.
 Vierge à qui Zachée ou Saint Amadour eleva
 ce sanctuaire, priez pour nous.
 Reine du sanctuaire, que consacra Saint
 Martial et où il célébra ses saints
 mystères,
 Reine, près de laquelle s'agenouilla Saint
 Louis vous demandant le bonheur de la
 France, priez pour nous.
 Reine, à qui Roland consacra son épée,
 priez pour nous.
 Reine, dont la bannière gagna les batailles,
 priez pour nous.
 Reine, dont la main délivrait les captifs,
 priez pour nous.
 Notre Dame, dont le pèlerinage est enrichi
 de faveurs spéciales.
 Notre Dame, que l'impiété et la haine ont
 voulu souvent détruire,
 Notre Dame, que les peuples visitent comme
 autrefois, priez pour nous.
 Agneau de Dieu, qui effacez les péchés du
 monde, pardonnez-nous.
 Agneau de Dieu, qui effacez les péchés du
 monde, exaucez-nous.
 Agneau de Dieu, qui effacez les péchés du
 monde, ayez pitié de nous.
 Notre Dame, Priez pour nous.
 Afin que nous soyons dignes de Jésus-
 Christ.

Lord, have mercy upon us,
 Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us.
 Jesus Christ, give ear unto us.
 Jesus Christ, Harken unto us.
 God the Father, Creator, have mercy on us
 God the Son, Redeemer, have mercy on us.
 God the Holy Ghost, who blesseth all
 things, have mercy on us.
 Holy Trinity, who art one God, have mercy
 on us.
 Holy Virgin Mary, pray for us
 Virgin, Queen and Protectress, pray for us.
 Virgin, whom Zaccheus the publican has
 made us know and love,
 Virgin, to whom Zaccheus or St Amadour
 raised this sanctuary, pray for us
 Queen of the sanctuary which St Martial
 consecrated and where he celebrated his
 holy mysteries,
 Queen, before whom St Louis knelt to beg
 for the safety of France, pray for us.
 Queen, to whom Roland dedicated his
 sword, pray for us.
 Queen, whose banner has triumphed in
 battle, pray for us.
 Queen, whose hand has set captives free,
 pray for us.
 Our Lady, whose pilgrimage is made rich by
 special favours
 Our Lady, whom impiety and hate have
 often wished to destroy.
 Our Lady, whom the peoples visit as in
 years gone by, pray for us.
 Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of
 the world, pardon us.
 Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of
 the world, hear us.
 Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of
 the world, have mercy on us.
 Our Lady, pray for us.
 That we may be worthy of Jesus Christ.

The tragedy of a friend's death in a car accident and a consequent visit to Notre Dame de Rocamadour restored Poulenc to his paternal Roman Catholic faith. This took place in 1935 and from then until his death Poulenc produced a steady flow of religious choral works. The *Litanies à la Vierge Noire* (1936) were written in the week after his visit to the Black Virgin's shrine at Rocamadour (St. Amadour is the legendary founder of the shrine; after the discovery in 1162 of an ancient tomb containing an unidentified body, the legend underwent surprising developments. Amadour was represented as a servant of the Virgin Mary, who married St. Veronica and came as a missionary to Gaul; later on he was identified as Zaccheus the publican, the man who questioned Christ from a tree and later welcomed him into his house. (Luke xix: 2-9)) The three-part female chorus is treated in a modal style that avoids conventional cadences, while the organ punctuates the discourse with fervently chromatic chords.

ORGAN SOLO

FUGUE SUR LE NOM D'ALAIN

Maurice Duruflé

MESSE SOLENNELLE

Jean Langlais (1907-1991)

Kyrie Gloria Sanctus-Benedictus Agnus Dei

Jean Langlais studied the organ with Tournemire and composition with Dukas - a teacher he shared with Messiaen. In 1945 he followed Franck and Tournemire as organist of Ste Clothilde. He made his first visit to the USA in 1952 and repeatedly returned for concerts and teaching: many of his works were written for Americans.

The *Messe Solennelle* was composed in 1951 and was dedicated to Canon H. Hubert, Curé at Ste Clothilde. Langlais' style is an attractive combination of Gregorian chant, polymodal harmonies and limpid counterpoint. The influence of Messiaen is apparent in some pages, notably the highly perfumed introduction to the 'Benedictus' and the final cadence of the 'Agnus Dei'. The 'Kyrie' and 'Agnus Dei' are linked by a common texture: rising quavers with the bass part replicating the soprano line. This texture is also found in the 'Gloria' ('Cum Sancto Spirito') but is less important here than the predominantly contrapuntal treatment of each line, the music moving easily from mode to mode. The 'Sanctus - Benedictus' sequence is unified by a common 'Osanna': fortissimo homophonic acclamations of the 'Sanctus' text bestride seismic tremors on the organ while in the 'Benedictus' women's voices are entrusted with a floating melody in octaves.

A.J.

THE CHERWELL SINGERS
Director: Alasdair Jamieson

SOPRANO: Julia Craig-McFeely, Sue Dillon, Jenny Jones, Hilary Schroeder, Zoe Tarrant,
Joanna Tucker, Kipper Walker

ALTO: Liz Healing, Janet Jeffs, Rosemary Keavy, Brit Lunnan, Claire Singleton,
Sharon Washington

TENOR: Derek Fowler, Bill Johnston, Guy Peskett, David Sutton, John Tucker

BASS: Michael Bourdeaux, Richard Coleridge, Stephen Dunstone, Christopher Franks,
Peter Brandon Jones, Paul Mayhook, Robert de Newtown

The Cherwell Singers was founded in 1978 in order to perform the extensive choral chamber repertory. The choir undertakes three or more major concerts each year, and also has a full diary of private functions. Recent concerts have included music by Sheppard, Byrd, Poulenc, Messiaen, Berlioz and Tippett and performances of J. S. Bach *Magnificat*, Scarlatti *Stabat Mater*, Duruflé *Requiem*, Monteverdi *Vespers*, Britten *St Nicolas*, and Handel *Dixit Dominus*. Forthcoming engagements include a joint concert with a Norwegian choir on 15 May 1993.