Hampton-in-Arden Parish Church

Saturday 1st June 1985 at 8.00 pm



THE HAMPTON SINGERS

with

Joy Naylor

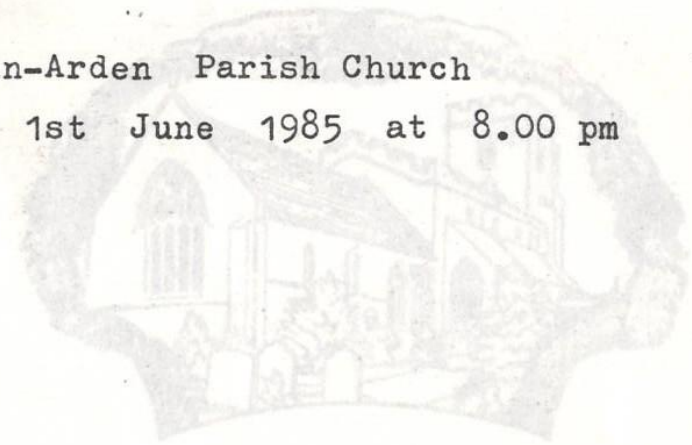
(soprano)

Programme £1.50
Students/seniors£1.00

To celebrate European Music Year, and the tercentenary of the birth of J.S. Bach and G.F.Handel

THE HAMPTON SINGERS
conducted by Andrew Dicks
with Joy Naylor, soprano

Hampton-in-Arden Parish Church
Saturday 1st June 1985 at 8.00 pm



The Hampton Singers would like to thank all who have helped towards the concert tonight, especially to Rev. Alan Reynolds and the P.C.C. for permission to perform in the Church.

Future concerts:

Friday 5th July "A celebration for St. Mary"

Friday 6th September A Capella concert at Temple Balsall Parish Church

PROGRAMME

Sacerdotes Domini — W. Byrd

Zadok the Priest — G.F.Handel

Lord I Trust Thee — G.F.Handel

Solo - O had I Jubal's Lyre
from "Rinaldo" — G.F.Handel

If ye love me — T. Tallis

Lord, for Thy Tender Mercies — Hilton ?

Ave Verum Corpus — W.A.Mozart

Solo - Susanna's aria "Dehviemi"
from "The Marriage of Figaro"
W.A.Mozart

Blessed be the God and Father — S.S.Wesley

Fugue in E flat (St. Anne) for organ
J.S. Bach

interval - fifteen minutes

Hear My Prayer — F. Mendelssohn

My spirit sang all day — G. Finzi

My love dwelt in a northern land — E. Elgar

Solo - The sun whose rays
from "Mikado" — A. Sullivan

Choir - folk song arrangements

Solo - I know where I'm going — P.Hughes

Choir - Hey Jude — Lennon/ McCartney

William Byrd lived during a period which has become known as the Golden Age of English Choral Music. The motet Sacerdotes Domini (Let the Priests Make Offering) comes from a collection (the gradualia) that he published in 1605. He wrote in the dedication to this book: 'There is a certain hidden power, as I learnt by experience, in the thoughts underlying the words themselves; so that, as one meditates upon the sacred words and constantly and seriously considers them, the right notes, in some inexplicable manner, suggest themselves quite spontaneously.'

What better way to continue our programme of choral music by turning to George Frederick Handel, THe tercentenary of whose birth we are celebrating this year. Handel composed four fine anthems for the coronationat at Westminster Abbey of King George II and Queen Caroline on 11th October 1729. The singers then comprised some 10 boys and 26 men from the Chapel Ryall,.augmented for thes special occasion to a total of 47. It is recorded that an orchestra numbering as many as 160 was used. Zadok the Priest became instantly popular, was performed many times during Handel's lifetime and has remained as popular ever since.

In about 1716, Handel wrote "The Passion of Christ" to a German poem by Barthold Brockes. It is in this work that we find the splendid chorale "Lord I Trust Thee". It is interesting that the music was written well before the great passions of J.S.Bach. It is known that Bach would have heard Handel's Passion and we could speculate that the incorporating of chorales into the St. Matthew Passion may have been influenced to some extent by Handel's music.

Yearly performances of Messiah have tended to label Handel as a respectable English Gentleman, devoted to the Anglican Church. In reality he was far more at home composing opera for the theatre. Rinaldo is one such opera and from it comes the aria 'O had I Jubal's Lyre!'

Another centenary that occurs this year is that of of the death of Thomas Tallis in 1585. We are therefore including the four-part church anthem If ye love me. This is a setting of English words and was originally intended to be sung by men only.

The origin of the music for Lord for Thy Tender Mercies is rather uncertain. It is known, however, that the words come from a collection of prayers published in 1568. It is therefore a later work than the Tallis anthem and certainly predates Mozart's Ave Verum Corpus.

The short motet by Mozart was composed during the last year of his life. It seems to capture in a few bars the essential spirit that runs through the whole of his musical output.

A few years earlier, in 1785, Mozart wrote the comic opera "Figaro." Here he was fortunate to have collaborated with Lorenzo da Ponte, reckoned to be one of the most wittiest and skilful librettists in the history of opera. Their combined genius in "Figaro" and "Don Giovanni" produced work that many have said forms the foundation of all subsequent comic opera in Europe.

Centenary celebrations in 1976 of the music of Samuel Sebastian Wesley reawakened interest in one of our own neglected English composers. His large scale anthem 'Ascribe Unto the Lord' is a most impressive contribution to choral music in what was otherwise a barren time in England. On a slightly lesser scale "Blessed be the God and Father" demonstrates skilful writing. It was written for performance one Easter Sunday when only the cathedral boys and one gentleman (the Dean's butler) was present.

It is difficult to believe that one hundred years ago the music of J.S.Bach was practically unheard in England. Mendelssohn, himself a fine organist, gave the

first performance for many years of the Fugue in E flat for organ known as the "St. Anne" fugue. This work is a fine example of Bach's masterly use of counterpoint in writing for the organ. It is in three contrasting sections.

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Hear My Prayer was composed by Mendelssohn in 1844. It was dedicated to Wilhelm Taubert and was first published in Germany as a work for soprano soloist, with choir and organ accompaniment. It is, in fact, a setting of psalm 55.

When the work was imported into England a new set of words were written for it by William Bartholomew. It is these words that have become familiar to English listeners as "O for the wings of a dove," and invariably sung by a boy soloist. This association has, especially over the last fifty years, tended to take away from the listener and performer alike the expressive and dramatic style of the music.

notes by Andrew Dicks