# THE HAMPTON SINGERS

79

Weber

## "Jubilee Mass"

Mendelssohn

## "O Come, Let us Worship"

**Jacqueline Bartleet**
**Pauline Oram**
**Terence Bailey**
**William Robinson**

**Nigel Argust** *Organ*
**Andrew Dicks** *Conductor*

**Saturday. 13th May 1989 8 pm**

**Hampton-in-Arden Parish Church**

**TICKETS: £2.50 (Children £1.50)**

# P R O G R A M M E

"O Come Let Us Worship" Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy
("Come, Let us Sing" - Psalm 95)

"The Lord is my Shepherd" Franz Schubert
Psalm 23

"Locus Iste" Anton Bruckner

"O Fly with Me" Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy

"Come Live with Me" W. Sterndale Bennett

## I N T E R V A L

"Jubilee Mass" Mass in G Carl Maria von Weber

"O Come Let Us Worship" F. Mendelssohn Bartholdy

This setting of Psalm 95 was written during a particularly happy period in Mendelssohn's life, following his marriage in March 1837 - his family had been long afraid that "his critical temperament might prevent him from finding either a wife or a good opera libretto".

Mendelssohn's church music (with the notable exception of "Elijah") has fallen greatly out of favour for most of the 20th century in reaction to the more turgid and sentimental aspects of "Victorianism": now it is undergoing thorough reassessment, and it is easier to connect the man who had the good judgement to recognise and re-establish the genius of Bach with the composer of the work we are going to hear tonight.

He chose to start with the words of the 6th verse, probably because they lent themselves so well to a natural and impressive opening chorus. The first two verses follow, together with a change of key from E flat to C major in a lively and exhilarating chorus (though many critics have commented that the dotted rhythm goes more naturally with the original German words than with "Come Let Us Sing").

An impressive canonic section follows, to "For He is a Great King above all Gods", followed by a lyrical duet which deals with the 6th verse again. The next chorus, beginning "The Sea is His and He made it", containing references to the theme of the opening movement, leads straight into the last chorus, which covers the last four verses of the Psalm. This is mostly quiet and elegiac, though there are two surprisingly dramatic outbursts for "Unto whom I swear in My Wrath", that they should not enter into My rest".

In summary, the general consensus of opinion is that, despite some inequalities in structure, the work contains a great deal of fine music, and demonstrates an interesting attempt at an unusually dramatic treatment of the text.

Psalm 23 "The Lord is my Shepherd" F. Schubert

This opens with an accompaniment of slow triplet figures is D flat, over which the voices have a clear legato line. The quiet and contemplative beginning gives way to more movement in the second verse "He maketh me to rest in green pastures: he leadeth me beside still waters".

Through a series of modulations, the music unexpectedly builds up to a brief climax at the end of the third verse, ready for a change of key and mood for "Yea, though I walk through Death's dark vale of shadows". This forms the central section.

The music returns to the opening key for the final words "Yea surely peace and mercy", ending with the same triplet figures that occurred at the beginning.

"Locus Iste" Anton Bruckner

This is one of a set of "a capella" motets intended for inclusion, if desired, into the more usual and familiar sections of a sung Mass. (Others include an "Ave Maria" and a "Christus Factus Est Pro Nobis".)

It is regarded as a jewel - small but perfect - and is a great favourite with chamber choirs.

"O Fly with Me" F. Mendelssohn

"Come Live with Me" W. Sterndale Bennett

By way of contrast, two short songs about love, the one by Mendelssohn describing how sad the singer will be if his lover does not fly with him; the other, the lyrics being by Marlowe ("To His Coy Mistress"), describes what he will do if his lover does, in the Arcadian sentiments then popular.

I N T E R V A L

"Jubilee Mass" C. M. von Weber

Weber composed this in 1818 for the Golden Wedding of the King of Saxony, Frederick Augustus. It is a miracle of melodic inspiration, but has never achieved widespread popularity, possibly because it is not a long work and the soprano line is particularly florid, making it uneconomic to schedule in concerts, and impractical for use in church.

Weber is known for, among other things, his championship of emergent nationalism in opera (previously dominated by the Italians in Germany), and his interest in orchestration. An examination of the score shows how instrumentally Weber conceived his vocal lines, both in terms of what he asked the voice to do, and in phrasing and word setting.

Nonetheless, this Mass is delightful to listen to, having been required to utter its sentiments in an atmosphere of worldly celebration, which the almost Haydnesque directness and tunefulness of the opening "Kyrie", and still more the following "Gloria", make clear. The latter shows the skill with which he was able to bind his solo and orchestral forces together into one movement; by the time the "Cum Sanctu Spiritu" fugue has arrived, each has had a brief entry - in the case of the tenor, a beautiful extended solo, and the final fugue itself is conducted under brilliant passagework from the soprano, no doubt a delight to the King in the handling of the celebrated castrato Sassaroli.

The "Credo" is constructed as a series of bold choral entries against the working out of a leitmotif on which the violins open; its central section, the "Et Incarnatus Est", re-introduces the soprano in a passage over chromatic harmony which used to be praised as anticipating Wagner. The operatic quality which Weber found so hard to dismiss from his sacred music shows pleasantly in the "Benedictus" for all four soloists; the "Agnus Dei", a short and charming cavatina for contralto, leads directly into the brief and graceful "Dona Nobis Pacem" which concludes this work.

# EDWARDIAN EVENING

## Saturday 9th December 1989

After the success of our "Victorian Evening" eighteen months ago, we are following up with an "Edwardian Evening" - having raided grandmother's attics and cupboards for parlour songs and old favourites from the music halls and London shows current during that glittering decade before the First World War.

Start your breathing exercises now - as there will be plenty of opportunity for the audience to have a good sing, too!

If you would be interested in taking part with us in the concert mentioned above (and other concerts too, we hope) please call Anthea Purchase (Hampton 2309) or Andrew Dicks (021 - 742 - 6798): they will be delighted to hear from you and to introduce you at the next rehearsal.

We meet on Monday nights at 8 p.m. at the Manor Hall (... and afterwards at the White Lion....).