



Festival Singers

Recreated

Saturday 19 November 2022

Wesley Methodist Church

75 Taranaki Street, Wellington

Hans Leo Hässler (1564-1612)

Mein G'müth ist mir verwirret

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden

Paul Simon (1973)

American Tune

Thomas Morley (c.1557-1602)

Now is the month of maying

Thomas Weelkes (1576-1623)

Four arms, two necks, one wreathing

John Dowland (1563-1626)

The lowest trees have tops

John Dowland

If my complaints could passions move

Richard Edwards (1524-1566)

In going to my naked bed

King Henry VIII (1491-1547)

Pastime with good company

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Jonathan Berkahn (b.1971)

Daughters of Invention:

Inventio 1 in C, BWV 772

Digression 1-2

Inventio 11 in G minor, BWV 782

Digression 11 (waltz)

Digression 10 (slip jig)

Anon. arr. Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)

Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen

Jan Sandström (b.1954)

Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen

Jonathan Berkahn

Six Madrigals

Now is the month of maying

Four arms, two necks, one wreathing

The lowest trees have tops

If my complaints could passions move

In going to my naked bed

Pastime with good company

Interval

About the music

We begin with three incarnations of the tune often known as the “Passion Chorale.” Originally a secular song about unrequited love, Hüssler’s haunting melody became a hymn tune that caught Bach’s attention and lived its second life as a chorale in his 1729 St Matthew’s Passion. Exactly one hundred years later, in 1829, Mendelssohn staged a revival of the St Matthew Passion, then in 1830 wrote the exquisite cantata the choir performs tonight. In 1973, Paul Simon brought the melody to life again with a poignant meditation on the disillusionment many Americans felt in the political climate of the early 1970s. Many artists have covered it since, but Eva Cassidy’s beautiful version shaped our choral arrangement.

The next part of the programme is a series of madrigals and partsongs from the 16th and 17th centuries. While 19th century informal music-making was centred around the piano, and that of today around the guitar, in the 1500s people would sit around a table and sing unaccompanied vocal music. Part-books exist (including for some of tonight’s madrigals) with the parts oriented so that singers could sit around all four sides of the book and read their part the correct way up. Morley, Weelkes, and Edwards come from the heartland of this English madrigal tradition, which peaked in the second half of the 16th century. John Dowland is better known as a songwriter, but his music in itself exemplifies the theme of this concert, with the same piece often existing simultaneously as a lute-song, a partsong (as performed

here), and an instrumental dance piece. The best-known composer (if not as a composer) is of course Henry VIII; there is no reason to doubt that he wrote the small collection of songs and instrumental pieces attributed to him. His greatest hit, of course, remains “Pastime with good company,” an invitation to conviviality from this young, powerful, and very charismatic king.

Jonathan Berkahn’s “Daughters of Invention” is a projected set of 15 tunes having their origin in J.S. Bach’s two-part Inventions. These Inventions (along with 15 three-part Sinfonias) were written for the keyboard instruction of his son Wilhelm Friedemann, but are beautiful miniatures in their own right. The accompanying “Digressions” – mostly jigs, reels, and other traditional Irish genres – are not reworkings of the originals, or intended to sound at all “Bachian,” but entirely new tunes, taking their origin from the thematic material of the Inventions then continuing in their own way. They are more intended to contrast with rather than echo their sources.

Frequently sung in Advent, “Es ist ein Ros’ entsprungen” metaphorically casts the Virgin Mary as a rose and references various biblical prophecies foretelling the coming of Christ. Michael Praetorius’s stunning 1609 setting has been enormously popular and was even co-opted by the Nazi party in 1930s Germany, rewritten with a secular text about motherhood and light illuminating the Fatherland. In 1990, Swedish composer Jan Sandström surrounded Praetorius’s melody

with a second choir, recasting the original in an extraordinary new light.

The concert concludes with Jonathan Berkahn's Six Madrigals. Like so many of his pieces, these emerged from a casual conversation with the conductor. The rest of the concert being made up of reworkings of existing musical works, it occurred to him that something similar could be done with the texts of older madrigals, along the lines of similar sets of songs by Roger Quilter, Bob Chilcott, David Hamilton, and others. He therefore undertook to deliver one piece a week to the choir, over six Mondays. They are not really madrigals – self-supporting

pieces of vocal polyphony – at all: most are accompanied, and two feature soloists. Rather, they are attempts to find new ways of expressing the meaning of these marvellous texts. The texts were chosen with care after much searching. While much madrigal verse is conventional warbling about nymphs and shepherds (and none the worse for that), there are many texts that are striking, moving, or just plain odd. The six poems present a single narrative arc, moving from spring, to passion, to love, to heartbreak. However, “the falling out of faithful friends renewing is of love,” and we finish with king Henry's irresistible invitation to conviviality.

Texts

Mein G'müth ist mir verwirret

My mind's confused within me,
made thus by a tender maiden.
I am utterly astray.
My heart hurts badly.
I have no rest day and night.
I ever lament.
I keep sighing and crying,
in sorrow almost despairing.

Oh that she would ask me,
what was the cause
of my complaint.
I would tell her freely
that she alone is the thing
that wounds me so much.
Could I soften her heart,
I'd be better soon.

I cannot fully explain
Her beauty and virtue.
If I could choose anything,
It would be that she would choose
To turn her heart and body
To me forever more.
Ah, then my pain and lament
Would turn to greatest joy.

O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden

O sacred Head, now wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down,
now scornfully surrounded
with thorns, Thine only crown;
O sacred Head, what glory,
what bliss till now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call Thee mine.

American Tune

Paul Simon (1973), adapted by Eva Cassidy

Many's the time I've been mistaken
And many times confused
Many's the time I've been forsaken
And certainly abused
But it's alright, it's alright
You can't be forever blessed
When I think of another working day
I've just got to get some rest
I've got to get some rest

I don't know a soul
who's not been battered
Don't have a friend who feels at ease
Don't know a dream
that's not been shattered
Or driven to its knees
Oh but it's all right, it's all right
We've lived so well so long
When I think of the road
we've travelled on
So far away from home
So far away from home

And I dreamed I was dying
I dreamed that my soul
rose unexpectedly
And looking back down at me
Smiled reassuringly
And I dreamed I was flying
And high up above
my eyes could clearly see
The Statue of Liberty
Sailing away from me
And I dreamed I was flying

We come on the ship
they call the Mayflower
We come on the ship
that's sailed the blue
We come in the ages
most uncertain hour
And we sing an American tune
But it's alright, it's alright
You can't be forever blessed
When I think of another working day
I've just got to get some rest
I've got to get some rest.

Now is the month of maying

Now is the month of maying,
When merry lads are playing, fa la,
Each with his bonny lass
Upon the greeny grass. Fa la.

The Spring, clad all in gladness,
Doth laugh at Winter's sadness, fa la,
And to the bagpipe's sound
The nymphs tread out their ground. Fa la.

Fie then! Why sit we musing,
Youth's sweet delights refusing? Fa la.
Say, dainty nymphs, and speak,
Shall we play barley-break? Fa la.

Four arms, two necks, one wreathing

Four arms, two necks, one wreathing,
Two pair of lips, one breathing.
Fa la la.
Two hearts that multiply
sighs interchangeably.
Fa la la.

The thought of this confounds me,
And as I speak it wounds me.

Fa la la.

It cannot be express'd,
Good help me while I rest.

Fa la la.

Bad stomachs have their loathing,
And O this all is nothing.

Fa la la.

This so with griefs doth prove,
Report oft turns in love.

Fa la la.

The lowest trees have tops

The lowest trees have tops,
the ant her gall,
The fly her spleen,
the little spark his heat,
And slender hairs cast shadows
though but small,
And bees have stings
although they be not great.
Seas have their source,
and so have shallow springs,
And love is love in beggars and in kings.

Where waters smoothest run,
deep are the fords,
The dial stirs,
yet none perceives it move:
The firmest faith is in the fewest words,
The turtles cannot sing,
and yet they love,
True hearts have eyes and ears,
no tongues to speak:
They hear, and see, and sigh,
and then they break.

If my complaints could passions move

If my complaints could passions move,
Or make Love see wherein
I suffer wrong:

My passions were enough to prove,
That my despairs had govern'd
me too long.

O Love, I live and die in thee,
Thy grief in my deep sighs still speaks:
Thy wounds do freshly bleed in me,
My heart for thy unkindness breaks:
Yet thou dost hope when I despair,
And when I hope,
thou mak'st me hope in vain.
Thou say'st thou canst my harms repair,
Yet for redress,
thou let'st me still complain.

Can Love be rich, and yet I want?
Is Love my judge,
and yet am I condemn'd?
Thou plenty hast, yet me dost scant:
Thou made a god,
and yet thy pow'r contemn'd!
That I do live, it is thy pow'r:
That I desire, it is thy worth:
If Love doth make men's lives too sour,
Let me not love, nor live henceforth.
Die shall my hopes, but not my faith,
That you that of my fall may hearers be,
May here despair, which truly saith,
I was more true to Love than Love to me.

In going to my naked bed

In going to my naked bed,
as one that would have slept,
I heard a wife sing to her child,
that long before had wept.
She sighed sore, and sang
full sweet to bring the babe to rest,
that would not cease,
but cried still, while lying on her breast.
She was full weary of her watch,
and grieved with her child,
she rocked it and rated it,
till that on her it smiled:
Then did she say,
“now have I found this proverb
true to prove;
the falling out of faithful friends
renewing is of love.”

Then took I paper, pen and ink,
this proverb for to write,
In register for to remain
of such a worthy wight.
As she proceeded thus
in song unto her little brat,
much matter uttered she of weight,
in place whereas she sat,
and proved plain there was no beast,
nor creature bearing life,
could well be known to live
in love without discord or strife:
then kissed she her little babe,
and swore by God above,
the falling out of faithful friends
renewing is of love.

Pastime with good company

Pastime with good company,
I love, and shall until I die .
Grudge who lust but none deny,
so God be pleased thus live will I
For my pastance,
Hunt, sing and dance,
my heart is set,
all goodly sport,
for my comfort
who shall me let.

Youth must have some dalliance,
of good or ill some pastance
Company methinks then best,
all thoughts and fancies to digest.
For idleness
is chief mistress
of vices all
then who can say
but mirth and play
is best of all.

Company with honesty
is virtue, vices to flee.
Company is good and ill,
but every man hath his free will.
The best ensue,
the worst eschew,
my mind shall be
virtue to use,
vice to refuse,
thus shall I use me.

Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen

(Praetorius)

A rose has sprung up, from a tender root.
As the old ones sang to us,
it's lineage was from Jesse,
And it has brought forth a floweret
in the middle of the cold winter
Well at half the night.

The rosebud that I mean,
of which Isaiah told
Is Mary, the pure,
who brought us the floweret.
At God's immortal word,
she has borne a child
Remaining a pure maid.

The floweret, so small
that smells so sweet to us
With its clear light dispels the darkness.
True man and true God!
He helps us from all trouble,
Saves us from sin and death.

Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen

(Sandström)

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming,
From tender stem hath sprung.
Of Jesse's lineage coming,
As men of old have sung;
It came, a floweret bright,
Amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.

Festival Singers

Musical Director: Ingrid Schoenfeld

Accompanist: Jonathan Berkahn

Percussion: Joe Fecteau

Guitar: Matt Munro

Sopranos:

Robyn Bridge, Heather Garside,
Anne Neal, Jo Rothbaum*,
Zoe Rothbaum*, Helen Willberg.

Altos:

Karen Espersen*, Jan Hamill,
Helen Jackman, Kenda Kittelty,
Wendy Nelson, Margaret Seconi*,
Rita Urry.

Tenors:

Samuel Berkahn*, Joe Fecteau*,
Paul Kilford.

Basses:

Jonathan Berkahn, Robert Easting*,
Philip Garside, Alex Jeune,
Ian Livingstone, Matt Munro,
Brian Patchett,

* *Soloists*

Sing with Festival Singers in 2023

We rehearse from
7-9pm on Monday nights
from February to early December
at Newlands Christian Assembly,
126 Newlands Road.

All singers welcome.

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adults, (\$225 each for those in the same
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\$100 for a full year.

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in our supportive greater Wellington
community choir.

For more details contact:

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or

Philip Garside (Secretary)
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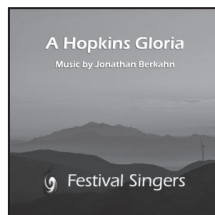
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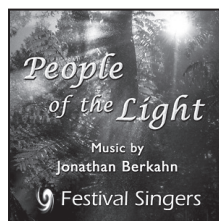
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