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Schola Cantorum Spring Concert

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UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Music

SCHOLA CANTORUM CONCERT

SPRING 1982

James Erb, Director

CANNON THEATRE

April 21, 1982

8:15 PM

PROGRAM

Prelude: Sumer is icumen in Anonymous c. 1250

I

Psallat Chorus (1978)Joel Suben (b. 1946)
(First performance)
Anthem (1962)Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)
Psallat ChorusJoel Suben

II

Three Madrigals (1611)..Carlo Gesualdo di Venosa (1560-1613)
Asciugate i begli occhi
Ma tu, cagion
Beltà, poi che t'assenti

Intermission

III

Four Chansons
Amours on changé de facon (1530).....Mahiet (fl. 1530-40)
En desirant (1544).....Cornelius Canis (1506-1561)
Si vous estes m'ameye.....Adrian Willaert (1490-1562)
Si vous estes m'ameye.....Orlando di Lasso (1532-1594)

IV

Three English Part-Songs
When David Heard.....Thomas Weelkes (c. 1576-1623)
A Country Pair.....Thomas Weelkes
Dialogue: Phillis I Fain Would
Die NowThomas Morley (1557-1603)

Postlude: Contrappunto bestiale
alla menteAdriano Banchieri (1567-1634)

SCHOLA CANTORUM (James Erb, Director)

Emily Rennie, '82
Sara Deierhoi, '84
Sandy Dickerson, '83
Suzanne Morehouse, '84
Tricia Carter, '85
Suzanne Utley, '82
Robert V. Hannah, III, '84
Mike Kotrady, '83
Ron Barnett, '83
Glenn Davis, '84

Accompanist: Suzanne Bunting, Associate Professor
of Music

Solo Group: Emily Rennie
Sandy Dickerson
Robert Hannah

PROGRAM NOTE

This program features two pieces based on older music and one group that served to inspire a composer who lived three centuries after the original works appeared. Joel Suben's Psallat Chorus is based on a plainsong fragment; Adrian Willaert's Si vous estes m'ame of 1528 turns up in a greatly amplified arrangement of 1584 by Orlando di Lasso. The three Gesualdo madrigals of 1611 became the basis of three orchestral pieces by Igor Stravinsky in 1960, and were performed earlier this month when the University Orchestra played the Stravinsky adaptations.

This evening's performance of Psallat Chorus is the first anywhere. It was commissioned for the observance of the 65th anniversary of the chorus "OGNIWO" of the Silesian Philharmonic Orchestra in Katowice, Poland, where Dr. Suben spent two years on a Fulbright grant. The choice of chant material, explains the composer, was determined by the need to write something universal in quality, but distinctly Polish in origin. Although the chant (sung twice before the Suben work) is clearly diatonic, Suben has embedded it in a setting using the 12-tone technique now almost standard among contemporary composers. Considering that

audiences generally consider this technique formidable and inaccessible, Psallat Chorus is astonishingly light, bright and unimposing. "In this case," says the composer, "I am using 12-tone technique as a kind of cantus-firmus medium. My compositional method here is not at all mathematical but melodic." The accompaniment is for "prepared" piano, i.e., paper clips are attached to the six piano strings that provide the pitches for the chant fragment.

The remainder of the program offers music that has no other reason for inclusion than its excellence. Some is by obscure composers like Mahiet, whom we know only by that one name and to whom only two pieces are attributed anywhere; some is by a composer who at one time held one of the highest musical positions in the world (Canis, court composer to Holy Roman Emperor Charles V) but is only now beginning to re-emerge, thanks in part to a definitive study of his life and music by Dr. Homer Rudolf. Other pieces, like the prelude and postlude, are so well-known as to have become choral-concert cliches. Still others are by composers of considerable reputation among musicians but of whose works only a wee proportion is ever performed. To these may be counted Weelkes and Morley.

The audience is requested to follow the translations of the pieces, provided on the inserted sheets. Please withhold applause until the end of each group.

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