

The University Musical Society



The University of Michigan

Presents

GREGG SMITH SINGERS

GREGG SMITH, *Conductor*
RAYMOND BEEGLE, *Accompanist*

Soloists:

ESTHER MARTINEZ, *Soprano*
PRISCILLA MAGDAMO ABRAHAM, *Alto*

WILLIAM LYON LEE, *Tenor*
WILLIAM FEUERSTEIN, *Bass*

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, JANUARY 12, 1969, AT 2:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Carols of Death WILLIAM SCHUMAN
General Booth Enters Into Heaven IVES
Psalm 90 IVES

INTERMISSION (5 minutes)

Music for Multidimensional Choirs

Heilig MENDELSSOHN
Nymphes des bois JOSQUIN DES PRES
"Gloria" and "Lauda Jerusalem" from *Vespers of 1610* MONTEVERDI

Three Contemporary Pieces for Multiple Choirs

The Bells of Rhymney (text by Pete Seeger; setting by Michael Hennagen)
This Is the Word (text by Woodie Guthrie; setting by J. Marks)
Election, 1968 (music by Dale Jergenson, Edmund Najera and Gregg Smith)

INTERMISSION (15 minutes)

A Catch ANONYMOUS
Consonance WILLIAM BILLINGS
Alice in Wonderland, Suite II IRVING FINE
Two Philippine Folksongs
Three Folksongs Arr. GREGG SMITH
 Gladjens Blomster (Fairest Flowers)—Swedish
 The Railroad Corral—American
 Coplas—Mexican

PROGRAM NOTES

Carols of Death WILLIAM SCHUMAN

The Last Invocation — Toward an Unknown Region — To All, To Each

Known as one of America's most important twentieth century orchestral composers, William Schuman has also made major contributions to the choral repertoire. His own experience as choral director at Sarah Lawrence College in his early professional career seems to have given him a special understanding of choral textures and sounds. Of his many a cappella pieces, the Carols of Death are the most stunning and beautiful; the choral colors, the careful detail given to each word and mood, make these settings of Walt Whitman texts true twentieth century masterpieces.

General Booth Enters Into Heaven CHARLES IVES

In the great art song "General Booth," set to a text from the famous poem by Vachel Lindsay, Ives quotes throughout the hymn tune "Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?" In this masterpiece we see all the elements of Ives' world coming together in an enormous depiction of the text; unbounded frenzy, religious fervor, dissonance upon dissonance and yet one of the most beautiful, poetic moments to the words "Jesus came from the court-house square." All of these elements of Ives' world had to be in the music just to fully depict the multitudes and varieties in Booth's Legions.

Psalms 90 CHARLES IVES

This work could rightly be called Ives' sacred masterpiece, and it is slowly becoming recognized as one of the greatest of twentieth-century choral works. Finished between 1900-1902, it encompasses all of the innovations of the previous Psalms, 14, 24, 25, 54, 67, 100, 135 and 150, all given to a powerful and sublime expression of text. This ranges from a 22-note tone cluster to express the feeling of wrath to a simple and beautiful hymn expressing the "rejoicing in beauty and work." In a final grand expression of faith, Ives uses varying sets of bells and chimes superimposed over the hymn itself, creating new dimensions of sound.

Music for Multidimensional Choirs

Around 1930 Charles Ives wrote an article entitled "Music in the Future" in which he anticipated the stereo revolution that was to occur twenty-five years later. It was Ives' contention that music should not be confined to one sound-making area but could and would come from all over, as he put it in his own crusty way: "to better bring out the inner content of the music (assuming there is inner content)." In these presentations the Gregg Smith Singers have endeavored to fulfill Ives' idea both for traditional music and with music written for this medium. For the audience, therefore, there is the new experience of being surrounded by sound not through the phonograph but with live musicians.

Heilig FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Mendelssohn was one of the most prolific of romantic composers of church music. The great popularity of his oratorio *Elijah* has tended to overshadow the many other beautiful works that he wrote for the church. "Heilig" is one of these—a true miniature masterpiece. Written for two four-part choirs, the opening is stunning as the notes of a rich eight-part chord are sung one at a time by each part of the choirs. After the chord has unfolded, the two choirs answer each other back and forth in the great antiphonal tradition.

Nymphes des bois JOSQUIN DES PRES

One of the great glories of the early renaissance, "Nymphes des bois" is a lament on the death of Josquin's teacher, Johannes Ockeghem. The text implores the nymphs of the woods and master singers of all nations to make their beautiful voices into trenchant cries and lamentations because of the death of Ockeghem. As a four-part madrigal group sings this lament in French, the tenors sing the requiem chant in Latin. Near the end of the piece the tenors cease and two groups of singers answer each other, and finally all the singers join in a short "Requiescat in Pace."

"Gloria" and "Lauda Jerusalem" from *Vespers of 1610* . . . CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI

The *Vespers of 1610* is a grandly scaled evening service for chorus, orchestra, and soloists, which includes several motets, solos, duets, and a full scale Magnificat. Throughout the work Monteverdi uses the traditional magnificat chant, weaving both beautiful melodies and most complex counterpoint about it. In the Gloria two tenors duet in florid opera style, the second is an echo of the first. As they sing, the treble voices spin out the chant in long sustained notes. In the "Lauda Jerusalem," Monteverdi employs tenors in the chant, this time in incredibly "jazzy" and complex rhythmic form, while two choirs of three parts each weave their complex and rhythmic lines in and around the tenors. "Lauda Jerusalem" is at the same time one of the most complex and most exciting of all renaissance choral pieces.

Three Contemporary Pieces for Multiple Choirs

The three contemporary pieces reflect thoughts and ideas of these times, it being Gregg Smith's strong feeling that not only should a serious concert present the traditional classical music (and even the first 50 years of the twentieth century are now traditional!) but it should also in some way be involved with the present in terms of feelings and issues. The three pieces presented here are not intended as any one viewpoint but showing contemporary young artists reflecting ideas of their times.

The Bells of Rhymney (text by PETE SEEGER—setting by MICHAEL HENNAGEN)

In this setting of the well-known text by the Folksinger, Pete Seeger, composer Hennagen utilizes the bell motive through both choir (basses) and instruments to create the ominous feeling of the text. The actual text is sung back and forth between two other choral forces in a polytonal setting.

This Is the Word (text by WOODIE GUTHRIE—setting by J. Marks)

The text of "This Is the Word" is a beautiful expression of the artist's own reason of being. The music itself is completely improvised and yet the organization created by Marks is a true composition: six soloists follow each other singly, then in pairs, then three, four and five—at the end coming together quietly. The rest of the choir sings random chords together using the text backwards. This work was created by Mr. Marks for a forthcoming Columbia Album featuring the Gregg Smith Singers called "Rock and Other Four Letter Words."

Election, 1968 (music by DALE JERGENSON, EDMUND NAJERA and GREGG SMITH)

"Election, 1968" is a conglomeration of the words and sounds of the summer of 1968—a reflection of the bizarre, the banal, the ugly, cheap, and even grand and beautiful. The use of three different composers is just an extension of the fact that the conventions themselves juxtaposed the most divergent of personalities and elements. Each composer has written for one of three choirs, each choir having a different "personality." Although the total organization was worked out together, each composer wrote for his own choir independently in the hopes that a musical "convention atmosphere" can be realized. The texts were written (or at least spoken) by many different people, some very well known and some not. The music includes much original as well as many "old favorite" melodies.

A Catch (Anonymous)

Consonance WILLIAM BILLINGS

In returning to the traditional the Gregg Smith Singers present two works of a lighter nature. "The Catch" comes from the renaissance and in round form portrays the street cries of London—the peddler coming from afar selling his wares—approaching and then disappearing.

"Consonance" is a lively setting of a text about music by that wonderful American contemporary of George Washington, William Billings. As in most of the music of this time in America, the piece is marked by exuberant rhythms and tremendous spirit.

Alice In Wonderland—Suite II IRVING FINE

The Knaves Letter — The White Knight's Song — Beautiful Soup

With his untimely death in 1962, composers everywhere mourned the loss of Irving Fine, a true composer's composer. Every work he wrote was beautifully crafted, and he is especially unexcelled as a choral composer because of his exquisitely careful setting of text. "Alice in Wonderland" is a delightful example—Fine not only captures the whimsical but with complete artistry. An outstanding pianist himself, Fine wrote virtuoso piano parts in his accompaniments.

Two Philippine Folksongs (music collected by PRISCILLA ABRAHAM and arranged by EDMUND NAJERA and DALE JERGENSON)

Priscilla Magdoma Abraham is a native of the Philippines and has spent a lifetime collecting and recording the folksongs of her native land. An excellent musician, she is also blessed with a beautiful alto voice.

Three Folksongs Arr. by GREGG SMITH

- Gladjens Blomster (Fairest Flowers)—Swedish
- The Railroad Corral—American
- Coplas—Mexican

Folksong presentations have always been a traditional part of the Gregg Smith Singers programs, combining as they do so well, important musical expression and yet a wide area of communication. As specialists in the modern, the Gregg Smith Singers have added the modern touch to their arrangements. "Gladjens Blomster" is poignantly beautiful and yet rich harmonically in this basically simple setting. "Railroad Corral" is a virtuoso setting for chorus. With a strong lively beat, Gregg Smith has added colorful harmonies and fascinating counterpoint, yet never neglecting the various changes of text. The final chord is completely modern, deliberately unresolved to give the feeling of the herd still trudging onward in the dusk to the final corral.

"Coplas" is a lively and rhythmic traditional Mexican melody, slightly risqué and humorous.

Company Manager: JAMES PFAFFLIN

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Instruments courtesy of JENCO, Inc., Decatur, Ill.

Acoustical Shell courtesy of Wenger Corp., Owatonna, Minn.

THE GREGG SMITH SINGERS are Recording Artists for Columbia, Everest, and MGM records.

1968—INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS—1969

SPECIAL CONCERT

ARTUR RUBINSTEIN, Pianist Wednesday, January 22, 8:30

Tickets: \$7.00—\$6.50—\$6.00—\$5.00—\$3.50—\$2.50

On sale now.

HAGUE PHILHARMONIC 8:30, Friday, January 24

WILLEM VAN OTTERLOO, *Conductor*

Program: Symphonische Etude ANDRIESEN
Symphony in D major, ("Prague") MOZART
Symphony No. 6 in A major BRUCKNER

MUSIC FROM MARLBORO, will be the next concert in the Chamber Arts Series, Saturday, February 1, at 8:30.

Artists:

RICHARD GOODE, *Pianist* JOHN BARROWS, *Horn*
PINA CARMIRELLI, *Violinist* THOMAS PAUL, *Basso*

Program: Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano BARTÓK
Five Songs SCHUBERT
Songs and Dances of Death MOUSSORGSKY
Trio in E-flat for Horn, Violin and Piano, Op. 40 BRAHMS

ANN ARBOR MAY FESTIVAL — April 24, 25, 26, 27, 1969

THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA AT ALL CONCERTS

P R O G R A M S

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 8:30

EUGENE ORMANDY, *Conductor*.

RICHARD TUCKER, *Tenor*, will sing arias by Mozart, Handel, Meyerbeer, and Puccini. "Classical" Symphony (Prokofieff); "Iberia" (Debussy) and the Symphonic Poem "Pines of Rome" (Respighi).

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 8:30

THOR JOHNSON, *Conductor*.

JOANNA SIMON, *Mezzo-soprano*, will sing Pantasileas's aria from *Bomarzo* (Ginastera). HANS RICHTER-HAASER, *Pianist*, will perform Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11 (Chopin). UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION performs *Psalm 150*, Op. 5 (Ginastera) and the choral work "Fern Hill" by John Corigliano, with Joanna Simon.

SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 8:30

EUGENE ORMANDY, *Conductor*.

All orchestral program: Overture to *Die Meistersinger* (Wagner); Symphony No. 3 (Charles Ives); and Symphony No. 1 (Mahler).

SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 2:30

THOR JOHNSON, *Conductor*.

UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION performs Schubert's *Mass* in A-flat, with soloists: MARIA STADER, *Soprano*; JOANNA SIMON, *Mezzo-soprano*; JOHN McCOLLUM, *Tenor*; WILLIS PATTERSON, *Bass*.

ZARA NELSOVA, *Cellist*, performs the Elgar Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra.

SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 8:30

EUGENE ORMANDY, *Conductor*.

REGINE CRESPIN, *Soprano*, will sing "Sheherazade" (Ravel); and the aria, "Ah Perfido," Op. 65 (Beethoven). Symphony No. 31 in D major—"Paris" (Mozart), and "La Mer" (Debussy).

Series Tickets: \$30.00—\$25.00—\$20.00—\$15.00—\$10.00

U N I V E R S I T Y M U S I C A L S O C I E T Y

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