



Renaissance Voices

Derek Morphy- Conductor

Sopranos

Maureen Ferley
Louise Friesen
Wanda Nicol
Céline Ross
Tristin Tergesen
Karen Tole Henderson

Altos

Miriam Baron
Roxanne Boucher
Edna Dahl
Charlene Diehl-Jones
Martha Graham
Barbara Hicks

Tenors

Vic Bartel
P.J. Buchan
Peter Dueck
Ted Dueck
Scott Naugler
Steve Newransky

Basses

John Brubacher
Rudy Dahl
John Dobson
Wes Elias
Mike Schroeder Hubert
Ted Wiens

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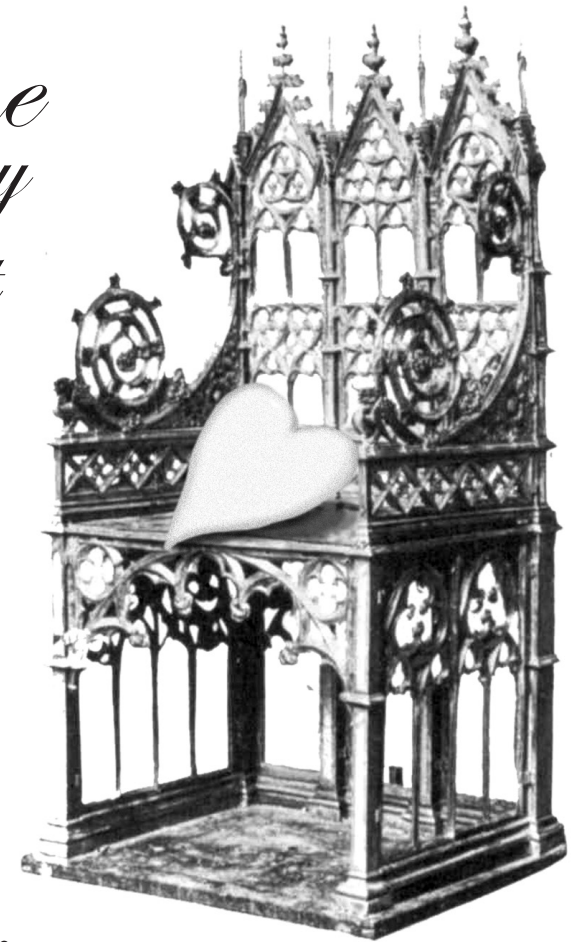
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Antero Lindblad
Judy Pringle and the Canadian Choral Centre
Joanne Rempel & Corinne Maes at Colors for Hair
Kurt Engbrecht at Symmetry Massage Therapy
Rick Loewen at Henderson Massage Therapy Clinic
Meeka Walsh at Border Crossings
H. P. Tergesen & Sons



Renaissance Voices

in concert

The Throne of my Heart



A Concert for Mother's Day

Sunday May 11th, 3:30 pm
Monday May 12th, 7:30 pm
First Presbyterian Church
61 Picardy Place (at Canora, near Portage & Broadway)

Renaissance Voices

Derek Morphy, Conductor

Programme

Three Anthems by Thomas Weelkes

**All people clap your hands
When David heard
Hosanna to the Son of David**

Six Motets from the 20th and 21st centuries

My soul, there is a country	Charles Hubert H. Parry
When Mary thro' the garden went	Charles Villiers Stanford
I my Best-Beloved's am	John Rutter, tenor solo by Steve Newransky
Ave vernum corpus	Javier Busto
Sleep	Eric Whitacre
Come, my light	Imant Raminsh

Intermission

Please enjoy refreshments at the back of the sanctuary,
and don't forget to enter your name for our door prize!

Five Spirituals

Lord, I want to be a Christian	Esther Beresford
Soon Ah will be done	Diane Loomer, alto solo by Martha Graham
I want to die easy	Robert Shaw/Alice Parker, tenor solo by Vic Bartel
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child	Fela Sowande, mezzo solo by Wanda Nicol
Witness	Edwin Fissinger, baritone solo by Michael Schroeder Hubert

Four Frivolous Fancies

Alouette	Robert Sund
Tangueando	Oscar Escalada
Bo-Peep	Ward Gardner
Two for the price of one	Andrew Carter

Notes

THE THRONE OF MY HEART, a phrase from Raminsh's *Come, My Light*, encapsulates the music for this concert: the repertoire is diverse, but linked by its passion.

Some works are subdued and introspective, some pour out their emotion in rich harmonic or lyrical textures, and others offer the pleasure of pure frivolity.

Three Anthems by Thomas Weelkes

Born in the early 1570s, Thomas Weelkes was one of the most renowned English madrigalists. Most of his great secular music, noted for its bold harmonies and expressive beauty, was written while he was still in his twenties, before he assumed his duties as organist and choirmaster of Chichester Cathedral. He died in 1623, having apparently gone to seed through drunkenness.

These three anthems, among the more complex of his sacred writing, demonstrate his skills in word painting and his rhythmic flourish. In the weaving, five-part setting of **All people, clap your hands**, Weelkes gives glorious expression to the explosive verve of the Psalmist's text. **When David heard and Hosanna to the Son of David**, both in six parts, have been described by Peter Phillips as "pinnacles of achievement within the English Renaissance school." The text of **When David heard**, from the second book of Samuel, reflects the height of David's passion when he learns of the death of his son, Absalom. We hear his agony in the intentional clashes of the false relations, as well as other chromaticisms more commonly employed by some of Weelkes' Italian contemporaries. The work moves from deep anguish and outbursts of pain, to quiet resignation. In **Hosanna to the Son of David**, voices declaim and echo phras-

es of a text from Matthew to create a vivid expression of rejoicing. Weelkes ends the piece with a resounding "*Hosanna in excelsis Deo.*"

Six Motets from the 20th and 21st Centuries

Our first two motets come from the very early part of the last century. Though C. Hubert H. Parry is best known now for his great Coronation anthem, "I was glad," and the song, "Jerusalem," his part-songs may be his finest achievement. **My soul, there is a country** comes from "Songs of Farewell" published at the age of seventy, in 1918, the year of his death. The text, by seventeenth-century poet Henry Vaughan, invokes a place where, "above noise and danger, sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles." Writing at the end of the First World War, Parry would have found that a compelling vision. The harmonic writing and changing meters of the opening section reflect the text's passionate conviction; the longer closing section, invoking the power of God—the "One who never changes"—perhaps intimates his own sense of mortality.

Charles Villiers Stanford, along with Parry and Elgar, initiated a remarkable revival in English choral music, which had languished since Purcell's time. Holding music posts at Trinity College, Cambridge and the newly opened Royal College of Music in London, Stanford exerted an enormous influence on

the next generation of talented English composers. **When Mary thro' the garden went** comes from a set of part-songs that Stanford wrote in 1910 to texts by the poet Mary Coleridge. It is fanciful, imagining Mary Magdalene, on the first Easter morning, walking sadly and reflectively through the garden of Gethsemane, but anticipates in its closing measures the ecstasy to come.

John Rutter, born in 1945, first came to prominence as the Director of Music at Clare College, Cambridge; his Cambridge Singers recordings define the best of English choral singing. One of the leading choral composers of our time, his music, while retaining musical integrity and originality, has strong popular appeal. **I my Best-Beloved's am**, written in 2002, overlays the Latin nuptial responses from the Tridentine rite with a poem by the seventeenth-century poet, Francis Quarles. The Latin rite is sung by the men, largely in four-part harmony, while the women deliver the English text in weaving melodic counterpoint. The nuptial responses suggest a secular marriage, but the English text introduces a more symbolic dimension, with Christ as the object of devotion.

Ave verum corpus is by the remarkable, self-taught Basque musician, Javier Busto. Born in 1949, he is renowned as a choral conductor and composer in his native region. This work, a setting of a short Eucharistic hymn from the thirteenth century, is a perfect illustration of his ability to create lyrically tuneful and harmonically pleasing compositions.

Born in 1970, American Eric Whitacre has emerged as an important choral composer in the last five years. His pieces tend to be harmonically complex, often calling for multiple division of parts. Whitacre originally conceived **Sleep**, published in 2002, as a setting of

Robert Frost's poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," but the Frost Estate "sternly forbade" the use of the poem. Not wishing to wait until 2038 when the poem would enter the public domain, Whitacre prevailed upon his friend, the poet Charles Anthony Silvestri, to write a text which would fit both the structure of the music and the nuances of the Frost poem. The composition captures the drowsy moments and flickering images which precede the state of sleep, until the final chords drift gently off into silence.

Imant Raminsh arrived in Canada from his native Latvia in 1948 at the age of five, and is now a resident of the Okanagan valley in British Columbia. He has established himself as a major Canadian composer and his choral works are widely admired and performed in Canada and Scandinavia. **Come, my light**, a setting of a seventeenth-century text by St Dimitrii of Rostov, contains soaring melodies illuminated by different sections of the choir, and clustered harmonies which at times become quite complex. The piece is episodic, with marked changes of mood and pace, but Raminsh returns again and again to the opening motif, "Come, my light," before he finishes in a gloriously expressive refrain declaring "Thou alone art my king and Lord."

Five Spirituals

To open the second half of our concert, we have chosen fresh settings of five familiar spirituals. One-time Winnipeg resident (and Renaissance Voices member), Esther Beresford, arranged **Lord, I want to be a Christian** to complement a much more subdued version which the Norwood United Church Choir was preparing. Between a Thursday night rehearsal and Sunday morning worship, she had put together this

complex, energetic, still-unpublished arrangement!

Diane Loomer is a much-admired Vancouver choral conductor whose gentle, prayerful arrangement of **Soon Ah will be done wi' the troubles of the worl'** opens with an alto solo, a resolute statement that death will bring a welcome release from endless toil and hardship and an opportunity to once again meet long lost relatives. The work's final measures echo Dvorak's "goin' home."

In the 1950s and 60s, the great American choral conductor, Robert Shaw, collaborated with the wonderfully dynamic arranger, Alice Parker; together they set a large number of American classics, primarily folk songs and spirituals. **I want to die easy** expresses the ecstatic hope that death will bring release and a flight into heaven. Its wonderful spirit and energy alternates between lyrical melodic lines and rhythmically-driven outbursts of confidence; the piece ends with a quiet repetition of the prevailing wish to be "easy when I die."

Fela Sowande was an extremely accomplished composer and musician who studied and performed in England for many years in the mid-twentieth century before returning to his native Nigeria. This exquisite arrangement of **Sometimes I feel like a motherless child** comes from a set of spirituals published in 1955, now sadly out of print. Mezzo soprano and tenor solos emerge out of a rich choral underlay in which voices cascade upon each other in restless phrases.

Many fine arrangements of **Witness** have appeared over the past few years, but this arrangement by the distinguished American composer, Edwin Fissinger, is as exciting as any. Although the verses tend to be straightforward, he punctuates the melody with wonderful harmonic outbursts of "Witness." The

open-hearted jubilation provides a fitting close to this emotional ride.

Four Frivolous Fancies

Our final fling of frivolity opens with a delightful, tongue-in-cheek rendering of the familiar French-Canadian playsong, **Alouette**. Swedish conductor and composer, Robert Sund (who incidentally will be a major guest at next year's choral conference, *Podium 2004*), plays around with the song, aping different styles: pompously serious, Mozartian, French Impressionistic, Russian and finally Handelian. It's a delightful bit of hilarity.

Oscar Escalada is a major Argentinian composer, much respected for his choral compositions. In **Tangueando**, Escalada sets nonsense syllables in various rhythmic and melodic patterns to capture the character of the tango. The emphasis is not on text but on instrumental effects, and the whole piece builds, through two abrupt key changes, to a dazzling climax.

Bo-Peep, another well-known nursery song, is set here by English composer, Ward Gardner, as a fugue in the style of Pachelbel (yes, the canon guy). The inevitable ending becomes a model of ovine harmony.

We end our romp with what composer, Andrew Carter, calls a conflation, a word he would have invented if he could have. In **Two for the price of one**, the unlikely combination of two old folk songs—"There was an old man named Michael Finnigin" and "This old man, he played one"—creates some pretty strange moments, where we all kick up "an awful dini-gin" playing "nick nack paddywhack" on everything you can imagine!

Thanks for joining us in celebrating spring, the season of passions. Happy Mother's Day!

Texts

The anthems and motets in the first half of our programme present dense, evocative texts, from Scripture and Latin rites to seventeenth-century poetry to contemporary contemplative works.

These writings explore the full range of passion—joy, anguish, courage, longing, consolation, tranquillity—and offer a perfect counterpoint to the musical language which accompanies them.

All people clap your hands (Psalm 47: 1, 5)

All people, clap your hands, sing loud unto the Lord with a joyful voice.
God is gone up with triumph, e'en the Lord with the sound of the trumpet.
Praise the Lord with harp, sing unto Him with viol and instruments of music.
Let us rejoice in the living God from this time forth for evermore, Amen.

When David heard (II Samuel 18: 33)

When David heard that Absalom was slain,
he went up to his chamber over the gate, and wept;
and thus he said: O my son Absalom!
Would God that I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son!

Hosanna to the Son of David (Matthew 21: 9)

Hosanna to the Son of David.
Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, Thou that sittest in the highest heav'ns.
Hosanna in excelsis Deo.

My soul, there is a country (Henry Vaughan)

My soul, there is a country far beyond the stars,
where stands a winged sentry, all skilful in the wars:
There, above noise and danger, sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles
And One, born in a manger commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious friend, and O my soul awake!
Did in pure love descend to die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither, there grows the flow'r of peace,
The Rose that cannot wither, thy fortress, thy ease.
Leave then thy foolish ranges, for none can thee secure
But One who never changes, Thy God, thy life, thy cure.

When Mary thro' the garden went (Mary E. Coleridge)

When Mary thro' the garden went,
There was no sound of any bird,
And yet, because the night was spent,
The little grasses lightly stirred,
The flowers awoke, the lilies heard.

When Mary thro' the garden went,
The dew lay still on flower and grass,
The waving palms above her sent
Their fragrance out as she did pass.
No light upon their branches was.

I my Best-Beloved's am

(Latin text: nuptial responses, Tridentine rite; English text: Francis Quarles, 1592-1644)

*Confirma hoc, Deus, quod operatus es in nobis.
A templo sancto tuo quod est in Jerusalem.
Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison.
Salvos fac servos tuos. Deus meus, sperantes in te.
Mitte eis, Domine, auxilium de sancto:
Et de Sion tuere eos.
Esto eis, Domine, turris fortitudinis:
A facie inimici. Domine, exaudi
orationem meam:
Et clamor meus ad te veniat.
Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Amen.*

Nor time, nor place, nor chance, nor death can bow
My least desires unto the least remove;
He's firmly mine by oath, I his by vow;
He's mine by faith, and I am his by love;
He's mine by water, I am his by wine;
Thus I my Best-Beloved's am, thus he is mine.

He is my altar, I his holy place;
I am his guest, and he my living food;
I'm his by penitence, he mine by grace;
I'm his by purchase, he is mine by blood;
He's my supporting elm, and I his vine:
Thus I my Best-Beloved's am, thus he is mine.

When Mary thro' the garden went,
Her eyes were dim.
The grass beneath her footsteps bent,
The solemn lilies, white and slim,
These also stood and wept for him.

When Mary thro' the garden went,
She sought within the garden ground,
One for Whom her heart was rent,
One Who for her sake was bound,
One Who sought, and she as found.

Confirm, O God, what thou hast wrought in us.
From thy holy temple which is in Jerusalem.
Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.
Save Thy servants, who hope in Thee, O my God.
Send them, O Lord, help from thy sanctuary:
And out of Sion strengthen them.
Be unto them, O Lord, a tower of strength:
In the face of the enemy. O Lord, hear
my prayer:
And let my cry come unto Thee.
Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Amen.

He gives me wealth, I give him all my vows;
I give him songs, he gives me length of days;
With wreaths of grace he crowns my
conquering brows;
And I his temples with a crown of praise,
Which he accepts as an everlasting sign,
That I my Best-Beloved's am; that he is mine.
Amen.

Ave verum corpus

*Ave verum Corpus, natum de Maria Virgine:
Vere passum immolatum in cruce
pro homine:
Cujus latus perforatum fluxit aqua
et sanguine:
Esto nobis prægustatum mortis in examine.
O Jesu dulcis! O Jesu pie!
O Jesu fili Mariæ. Amen.*

Sleep (Charles Anthony Silvestri)

The evening hangs beneath the moon,
A silver thread on darkened dune.
With closing eyes and resting head
I know that sleep is coming soon.

Upon my pillow, safe in bed,
A thousand pictures fill my head,
I cannot sleep, my mind's aflight;
And yet my limbs seem made of lead.

If there are noises in the night,
A frightening shadow, flickering light;
Then I surrender unto sleep,
Where clouds of dream give second sight.

What dreams may come, both dark and deep,
Of flying wings and soaring leap
As I surrender unto sleep...

Come, my light (St Dimitrii of Rostov, 17th c)

Come, my light, illumine my darkness,
Come, my life, and revive me from death,
Come my physician and heal my wounds.
Come, flame of divine love and burn up the thorns of my sins,
And kindle my heart with the flame of thy love,
Come, my king, and sit upon the throne of my heart and reign there,
For thou alone art my king, and my Lord!
Come, my light, illumine my darkness,
Come, my life, revive me from death,
For thou alone art my king. Thou alone art my Lord.
Thou alone art my king. Amen.

Hail, true body, born of the Virgin Mary:
Who truly suffered, sacrificed on the cross
for humankind:
From whose pierced side flowed water
and blood:
Be for us a foretaste of the trial of death.
O sweet Jesus! O blessed Jesus!
O Jesus, Son of Mary. Amen.





Renaissance Voices

Renaissance Voices, conducted by Derek Morphy, was formed in 1995 to prepare and perform music of the 16th and early 17th centuries. While this period is still a primary focus, the ensemble now has extended its repertoire range into many other choral genres.

Now in its seventh season, *Renaissance Voices* is a group of musical friends of diverse background and experience who enjoy getting together to sing. Our 2002 Advent Concert featured an exploration of choral music written in celebration of *Shepherds and Kings*. In the last two years we have performed the highly acclaimed *Misa Flamenca* with Theatre Flamenco, and last May, we joined the University of Manitoba Singers and the Winnipeg Boys' Choir in the Royal Winnipeg Ballet performance of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*. We were recently selected to sing at *Podium 2004*, the biennial conference of the Association of Canadian Choral Conductors, which will take place in Winnipeg.

Next season, *Renaissance Voices* will again present two concerts, one during the first weekend in Advent, and the other in the spring of 2004. Any singer interested in auditioning for the ensemble is invited to contact Derek Morphy (488-9355, dmorphy@merlin.mb.ca).

To stay in tune with *Renaissance Voices* activities and schedules, visit our website: <http://cybrary.uwinnipeg.ca/people/Dobson/RV/>