

"A musician taketh a point at his pleasure and wresteth and turneth it as he list, making either much or little of it according as shall see me best in his own conceit. In this may more art be showne than in any other musicke, because the composer is tide to nothing else but that he may add, diminish and alter at his own pleasure".

Purcell's astonishing Fantasies come at a much later date than Morley, of course, and that master would probably have been amazed at the harmonic boldness of Purcell. The Fantasies contain astringencies that surprise, even in these days of harmonic adventure.

Although short, Purcell's Fantasies have an emotional range and technical resource equal in experience to many a longer classical quartet, and they remain among the loveliest things in the literature of chamber music.

2. Trio Sonata in G. Arne  
Largo: Con spirito: Largo: Allegro.
3. Three-Part Mass. Byrd  
Kyrie Eleison: Gloria in Excelsis:  
Credo: Sanctus: Benedictus: Agnus Dei.

Although Byrd was in charge of music in the Protestant chapel of Queen Elizabeth, he was Catholic in sympathy, and wrote three settings of the Ordinary of the Mass. They are in three, four and five parts respectively, and are among the greatest achievements of English music. The old "cantus firmus" principle is abandoned, sections are linked by a "head-motif", and there are clear signs of the development of a modern harmonic outlook. Rhythmic impetus, fresh vigorous melodic outlines and a pungent use of dissonance characterize all three works, though the more massive effects are naturally to be found in the four and five part masses.

The qualities of Byrd's style are admirably exemplified in the "Sanctus" of the three-part Mass. Two rising voices against a stable third part express the mystical adoration of the "Sanctus", vigorous angular lines and rhythmic vitality suggest the joy and exuberance of the "Pleni", the "Benedictus" is full of grace, and the "Osanna" spacious and majestic .... "a strangely fascinating mixture of ruggedness and tenderness".

4. Sonata for violin and piano. Elgar  
Allegro: Romance: Allegro non troppo.

This work was written in 1918, and is the only one of its kind in the output of the composer. The first movement is in sonata form, based on a vigorous first subject, and a tranquil second, which is related by inversion to the former. The Romance is a highly personal movement, the uncertain tonality of its opening creating a poetic and wayward fantasy, and contrasting effectively with the clear broad melody which follows. After an impassioned climax, the mood of the opening returns, and resolves into the major key. The last movement begins tranquilly, and contrapuntally, but soon more vigorous material appears. Before the brilliant coda, the opening material returns, *molto più lento*, in the minor key. This passage is Elgar's lament for the dedicatee of the sonata, Mrs. Marie Joshua, who died a few days after the composer had written the dedication. The beauty of the work lies above all in the writing for violin. The piano part is adequate rather than original, and owes its style very clearly to that of Schumann and Brahms, but the violin is treated with an affectionate understanding which is very individual, and especially in the *andante*, intensely moving in effect.

5. Canticle III. "Still Falls The Rain" Britten

This work was written in 1954, and dedicated to the memory of the pianist, Noel Mewton-Wood. Its first performance the following year was given by Peter Pears, Dennis Brain and the composer. The structure of the work is unusual, and consists of a number of variations for horn and piano on the theme given at the beginning, whilst between the variations are verses of Edith Sitwell's poem, in recitative style. In the last variation, horn and voice are brought together. The scheme is reminiscent of that used in the opera "The Turn of the Screw" written during the same year.

The poem has the explanatory title, "The Raids, 1940, Night and Dawn", and relates the sufferings of war to those of Christ on the Cross. The variations explore the diverse aspects of the dramatic imagery, ranging from the sombre meditation of the opening, to the re-iterated "pulse of the heart" of the second verse, the sinister muted "last faint spark in the self-murdered heart" of the fifth. Like the War Requiem, the work ends serenely, with the hope of ultimate reconciliation.



Friday, April 3rd, 8 p.m.

SYMPHONY CONCERT

JOHN CLEGG (piano)  
THE ST. BEES FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA  
(Leader: Colin Gough)  
Conductor: DONALD LEGGAT

PART ONE

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 1 in D minor Brahms  
Maestoso: Adagio: Rondo, Allegro non troppo.

This concerto, the first of Brahms' major symphonic works, was first performed in 1859, though it had occupied the attention of the composer for at least six years. The main work was done between 1854-6, the years of the insanity and death of his friend, Schumann, and the concerto reflects to some extent Brahms' reaction to these events.

The mood of the first movement is tragic, with a tension emphasized by the sustained trills which characterize the opening theme given by the orchestra. The piano enters with a ruminative arioso, which is followed eventually by a calm chordal melody in the relative major. The development is marked by more forceful writing for the piano, but there is no concession to virtuoso bravura, and all the material is firmly moulded in symphonic structure.

The Adagio, in D major, is serene and meditative, though not without darker implications, but the rondo returns to the tragic mood of the first movement. The main theme is an energetic and rhythmic motif, with a semiquaver figuration which gives the music a contrapuntal aspect. This characteristic reappears in the minor version of the melody of the central episode. There is a cadenza ("quasi Fantasia") before the final statement of the rondo theme, and the vigorous coda.

PART TWO

1. "Conflicts" (first performance) Martin Dalby  
Conducted by the Composer.

Completed in January, this work was written specifically for the St. Bees Festival, 1964. The title, "Conflict," refers both to the internal structures of the three separate movements and to their inter-relationship. The three gestures forming the thematic material of the first movement, Andante con moto, at first directly contrast each other, then develop, combining to arouse an abrupt, brief climax. From this point the themes disintegrate, the movement ending, poised.

There is no final cadence; the timpani shatter the atmosphere, and thus the second movement Presto begins its turbulent course, stricken with myriads of thematic fragments and tottering rhythms. There are brief moments of quiet, brief moments of violence and brief moments where the music appears to be static. The movement quickly boils to a savage climax, disappearing in a spiral of blue smoke.

The third movement, Adagio, is the central feature of the work. Its structure is simple: a single theme treads its way, leading eventually to a short climax. The ultimate irony is in the sudden short coda where previously unheard, elusive themes scurry about the orchestra, somewhere amidst the activity, the work comes quietly to an end.

M.D.

2. Symphony in C. Bizet  
Allegro vivo: Adagio: Allegro vivace: Allegro vivace.

Bizet wrote this delightful work at the age of 17, but the manuscript lay neglected in the Paris Conservatoire until 1935, in which year it was first performed. The first movement indicates clearly its ancestry ... the Beethoven shape of the opening idea, the Schubertian features of the second subject, and the Schumannesque development, but the music is never merely imitative. The adagio presents a lyrical theme for the oboe and a soaring string melody, with a curious fugal centre section. The closing bars are especially felicitous in their orchestral and chromatic colouring. The scherzo is vivacious, and its material forms the basis of the trio, which has a drone bass. The finale is inventive in material, its weakness again being the repetitive nature of the development section. The skilful orchestration, the conciseness of form, and the melodic charm, however, justify the popularity of the work in concert programmes of recent years.



**Saturday, April 4th, 11 a.m.**

RECORDINGS FROM PREVIOUS FESTIVAL PROGRAMMES

There will be no charge. Coffee will be served.

**Saturday, April 4th, 2-30 p.m.**

**In the Priory Church**

(by kind permission of the Vicar and Churchwardens)

ORGAN RECITAL

by  
MICHAEL FRITH

with  
FRANK TOMBS (bass)

MICHAEL FRITH:

Fantasia in F minor, K.608

Mozart

Les eaux de la grace

Messaïen

Joie et clarté des corps glorieux

Messaïen

FRANK TOMBS:

Recitative and Aria (Cantata No. 82)

Bach

"It is enough"

"Slumber On"

MICHAEL FRITH:

Benedictus

(Dialogue sur les grands jeux)

Conperin

Modale Suite

Flor Peeters

**Saturday, April 3rd, 8 p.m.**

in

ST. NICHOLAS' CHURCH, WHITEHAVEN

by kind permission of the Vicar and Churchwardens

CAROLINE CRAWSHAW (soprano)

MIRIAM HORNE (contralto)

DAVID MINTON (tenor)

GORDON CLINTON (bass)

A section of the Choir of

TAVERHAM HALL PREPARATORY  
SCHOOL

THE CHOIR OF ST. BEES SCHOOL

THE ST. BEES FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

(Leader: Colin Gough)

Conductor: DONALD LEGGAT

MESSIAH

Handel (Shaw's edition)

Handel's most famous work was composed in the astonishingly short period of 24 days (August 22nd—Sept. 14th, 1741). As often, borrowings and adaptations from his previous works provided some of the material, and it is also worth remembering that the original orchestral accompaniment was very lightly scored. The mammoth forces which are frequently brought to bear upon "Messiah" in no way interpret it as envisaged by Handel, and often serve only to submerge the text, and much of the music, in an indeterminate haze of sound.



It is by no means a typical work of the composer. It was written in sharp contrast to the series of operas and quasi-operatic oratorios of the 1730's, and is contemplative rather than narrative in nature. The text is Jacobean, dignified and measured, by contrast with the extravagant libretti which Handel was accustomed to set. The music, likewise, avoids the elaboration of vocal ornamentation of previous works, and this restraint is matched in the orchestration.

"Messiah" was composed for performance in Dublin, where a musical society held concerts for the relief of the poor, the sick, and imprisoned debtors. It thus has its origin in the philanthropy which was one of the most attractive aspects of 18th Century England. The receipts from the first performance totalled £400. In London, the work was by no means so successful at first, and had only six performances to 1749. It was not published until 1767. By then, it was establishing itself firmly in public favour, and in 1784 was given in Westminster Abbey as part of the Handel Commemoration of that year.

The sanctification of the oratorio, symbolized by the prefixing of the definite article, was the achievement of the 19th Century, which assimilated it into the romantic ambience of "Elijah" and other lesser works of the period. Gratifying to amateur performers, ennobling in sentiment, it did more than any other musical composition to relieve the drabness of life in the industrial areas, providing an emotional and imaginative counterpart to the religious evangelism of the time.

Today, perhaps, the time has come to restore "Messiah" to its 18th Century context, and thereby to do greater justice to Handel, not only in relation to this work, but also to much other fine music which has been overshadowed. There can be no "definitive" performance. Handel was too much a practising interpreter, too much at the mercy of available performers, and too sensitive to improvements suggested by experience, to commit himself to a rigid definition.

It can safely be assured, however, that a valid interpretation today must rest firmly within the limits of 18th Century practice, in order that its pristine originality and imagination may be recreated.

1. Overture.
2. Comfort ye my people.
3. Every valley shall be exalted.
4. And the glory of the Lord.
5. Thus saith the Lord.
6. But who may abide the day of His coming?
7. Behold, a virgin shall conceive.
8. O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion.
9. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth.
10. The people that walked in darkness.
11. For unto us a child is born.
12. Pastoral Symphony.
13. a. There were shepherds.  
b. And lo, the Angel of the Lord.
14. And the angel said.
15. And suddenly there was with the angel.
16. Glory to God.
17. Rejoice greatly.
18. He shall feed His flock.
19. Behold the Lamb of God.
20. He was despised.
21. Surely He hath borne our griefs.
22. And with His stripes we are healed.
23. Thy rebuke hath broken his heart.
24. Behold and see if there be any sorrow.
25. He was cut off.
26. But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell.

*Short Interval*