

# *SHEPHERD SINGERS*

*Richard Bado, guest conductor*

*Thomas Jaber, organist*

*Tuesday, February 28, 1995*

*8:00 p.m.*

*Stude Concert Hall*

RICE UNIVERSITY

the  
Shepherd  
School  
of Music

## A PROGRAM OF WORKS FOR CHORUS

BY BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913-1976)

### *Festival Te Deum, Op. 32*

Kimberly Gratland, mezzo-soprano

*We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to the Lord. All the earth doth worship Thee, the Father everlasting. To Thee all angels cry aloud, the Heavens and all the powers therein. To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry, Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of Sabaoth! Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory. The glorious company of the Apostles praise thee. The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise Thee. The noble company of Martyrs praise Thee. The Holy Church throughout the world doth acknowledge Thee the Father of an infinite majesty, Thine honorable, true, and only Son; Also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. When Thou lookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's Womb. When Thou had'st overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father. We believe that Thou shall come to be our judge. We therefore pray Thee help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood. Make them to be numbered with Thy Saints in glory everlasting. O Lord save Thy people and bless Thine heritage. Govern them and lift them up forever. Day by day we magnify Thee and we worship Thy name ever world without end. Vouchsafe O Lord to keep us this day without sin, O Lord have mercy upon us, O Lord, as our trust is in Thee. O Lord in Thee I trusted. Let me never be confounded.*

### *Hymn to St. Cecilia, Op. 27 (W. H. Auden)*

Rebecca Coberly, soprano

Cameron Aiken, tenor

Mary Cowart, mezzo-soprano

Philip Bouknight, bass

*I. In a garden shady this holy lady with reverent cadence and subtle psalm, like a black swan as death came on poured forth her song in perfect calm: and by ocean's margin this innocent virgin constructed an organ to enlarge her prayer, and notes tremendous from her great engine thundered out on the Roman air. Blonde Aphrodite rose up excited, moved to delight by the melody, white as an orchid she rode quite naked in an oyster shell on top of the sea; at sounds so entrancing the angels dancing came out of their trance into time again, and around the wicked in Hell's abysses the huge flame flickered and eased their pain. Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions to all musicians, appear and inspire: translated Daughter, come down and startle composing mortals with immortal fire.*

*II. I cannot grow; I have no shadow to run away from, I only play. I cannot err; there is no creature whom I belong to, whom I could wrong. I am defeat when it knows it can now do nothing by suffering. All you lived through, dancing because you no longer need it for any deed. I shall never be different. Love me. Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions to all musicians, appear and inspire: translated Daughter, come down and startle composing mortals with immortal fire.*

*III. O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall, O calm of spaces unafraid of weight, where sorrow is herself, forgetting all the gaucheness of her adolescent state, where Hope within the altogether strange from every outworn image is*



released, and Dread born whole and normal like a beast into a world of truths that never change: restore our fallen day; O re-arrange. O dear white children as casual as birds, playing among the ruined languages, so small beside their large confusing words, so gay against the greater silences of dreadful things you did: O hang the head, impetuous child with the tremendous brain, O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain, lost innocence who wished your lover dead, weep for the lives your wishes never led. O cry created as the bow of sin is drawn across our trembling violin. O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain. O law drummed out by hearts against the still long winter of our intellectual will. That what was may never be here again. O flute that throbs the thanksgiving breath of convalescents on the shores of death. O bless the freedom that you never choose. O trumpets that unguarded children blow about the fortress of their inner foe. O wear your tribulation like a rose. Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions to all musicians, appear and inspire; translated Daughter, come down and startle composing mortals with immortal fire.

### **Rejoice in the Lamb, Op. 30 (Christopher Smart)**

Kimberly Gratland, mezzo-soprano    Jason Scarcella, tenor  
 Mary Cowart, mezzo-soprano    Raymond Granlund, bass

#### **CHORUS**

Rejoice in God, O ye tongues; give the glory to the Lord, and the lamb. Nations, and languages and every creature, in which is the breath of life. Let man and beast appear before him, and magnify his name together. Let Nimrod, the mighty hunter, bind a leopard to the altar, and consecrate his spear to the Lord. Let Ishmael dedicate a Tyger, and give praise for the liberty in which the Lord has let him at large. Let Balaam appear with an Ass, and bless the Lord his people and his creatures for a reward eternal. Let Daniel come forth with a Lion, and praise God with all his might through faith in Christ Jesus. Let Ithamar minister with a Chamois, and bless the name of Him, that cloatheth the naked. Let Jakim with the Satyr bless God in the dance. Let David bless with the Bear — The beginning of victory to the Lord — to the Lord perfection of excellence — Hallelujah from the heart of God, and from the hand of the artist inimitable, and from the echo of the heavenly harp in sweetness magnificent and mighty.

#### **TREBLE SOLO**

For I will consider my cat Jeoffry. For he is the servant of the Living God, duly and daily serving him. For at the first glance of the glory of God in the East he worships in his way. For this is done by wreathing his body seven times round with elegant quickness. For he knows that God is his Saviour. For God has blessed him in the variety of his movements. For there is nothing sweeter than his peace when at rest. For I am possessed of a cat, surpassing in beauty, from whom I take occasion to bless Almighty God.

#### **ALTO SOLO**

For the Mouse is a creature of great personal valour. For — this is a true case — Cat takes female mouse — male mouse will not depart, but stands threat'ning and daring.... If you will let her go, I will engage you, as prodigious a creature as you are. For the mouse is a creature of great personal valour. For the mouse is of an hospitable disposition.



## TENOR SOLO

*For the flowers are great blessings. For the flowers have their angels even the words of God's Creation. For the flower glorifies God and the root parries the adversary. For there is a language of flowers. For flowers are peculiarly the poetry of Christ.*

## CHORUS

*For I am under the same accusation with my Saviour – for they said, he is besides himself. For the officers of the peace are at variance with me, and the watchman smites me with his staff. For Silly fellow! Silly fellow! is against me and belongeth neither to me nor to my family. For I am in twelve HARSHIPS, but he that was born of a virgin shall deliver me out of all.*

## RECITATIVE (BASS SOLO) AND CHORUS

*For H is a spirit and therefore he is God. For K is king and therefore he is God. For L is love and therefore he is God. For M is musick and therefore he is God. For the instruments are by their rhimes. For the shawm rhimes are lawn fawn moon boon and the like. For the harp rhimes are sing ring string and the like. For the cymbal rhimes are bell well toll soul and the like. For the flute rhimes are tooth youth suit mute and the like. For the Bassoon rhimes are pass class and the like. For the dulcimer rhimes are grace place beat heat and the like. For the Clarinet rhimes are clean seen and the like. For the trumpet rhimes are sound bound soar more and the like. For the TRUMPET of God is a blessed intelligence and so are all the instruments in HEAVEN. For God the father Almighty plays upon the HARP of stupendous magnitude and melody. For at that time malignity ceases and the devils themselves are at peace. For this time is perceptible to man by a remarkable stillness and serenity of soul.*

## CHORUS

*Hallelujah from the heart of God, and from the hand of the artist inimitable, and from the echo of the heavenly harp is sweetness magnifical and mighty.*

## SHEPHERD SINGERS

*Thomas Jaber, director*

Soprano	Mezzo-Soprano	Tenor	Bass-Baritone
Sara Bayer	Mary Cowart	Cameron Aiken	Donald Barkauskas
Anna Christy	Kirsten DeHart	Zachary Bruton	Philip Bouknight
Rebecca Coberly	Gina Goff	Ryan Minor	Hyun-Kwan Chung
Stephanie Dillard	Kimberly Gratland	Paul Neal	Matthew George
Anne Dreyer	Angelia LaRock	Jonathan Pearl	Raymond Granlund
Karen Foster	Shawna Peterson	Creighton Rumph	Jameson James
Michelle Herbert	Suzanne Stockman	Jason Scarcella	John Krueger (guest)
Tracy Rhodus		Oliver Soell	Benjamin Smith
		George Zener	



## PROGRAM NOTES

### ***Festival Te Deum***

Of all the small pieces Britten wrote while at work with his **Peter Grimes**, only **Festival Te Deum** of 1944 was given an *Opus* number, and this suggests the regard with which he viewed the piece. Written for the centenary of St. Mark's Church in Swindon, this three-section work uses as its text a translation of **Te Deum**, a 5th-century hymn of thanksgiving. The beginning, mainly in unison, employs a constant eighth-note pulse, which provides coherence not only to the constantly changing meters in the vocal lines but also to the completely different — though itself constant — meter in the organ. Notable are the opening notes of the singers (which return in the third section, along with their corresponding rhythms, to provide a sense of unity), the rising sequence on the word "Holy" (leading to the fortissimo "Lord God of Sabaoth" and back down to the dark "Heav'n and earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory"), and the contrast between the quasi-contrapuntal settings and the unison ones.

### ***Hymn to St. Cecilia***

Britten's birthday, November 22, is also St. Cecilia's Day, so it is somewhat fitting that the composer whom traditional lore would posit as having saved British music from the pitfalls of nationalism (read "non-Germanic tendencies") would write an ode to his muse, the patron saint of music. However, in his 1942 setting of the Auden poem, he was paying homage to not only St. Cecilia, but also Purcell and Handel, who wrote hymns to her as well. In an attempt to praise the spirit of all music, Britten combined both instrumental techniques, such as the glockenspiel-like scherzo of the middle section, and vocal techniques like word-painting (seen in the off-kilter setting of the words "the angels dancing" in the first section, and more obviously in the musical invocation of instruments in the third section). The poem is lengthy, and a setting of it runs the risk of being sprawling musically. Britten, however, gives the work cohesion by repeating the "Blessed Cecilia" section in all three parts to basically the same music, and by using the tenor's opening notes as a sort of cantus firmus, thereby providing not only thematic coherence but also a furthering of ties to the past through conscious use of an "old" technique.

### ***Rejoice in the Lamb***

The text of this mini cantata of 1943 comes from Christopher Smart, an 18th-century poet committed to an insane asylum (which is where the poem was written). Smart saw God as represented in all of nature, and so with beautiful earnestness he writes of his "cat Jeoffrey," who serves God "by wreathing his body seven times round with elegant quickness," and "the Mouse," "a creature of great personal valour." Smart even sees himself in these same terms, and in comparing the treatment of his insanity with the treatment of Christ, he writes, "For I am under the same accusation with my Saviour — For they said, he is besides himself." This text offered a great deal to Britten, who could — given the difficulties he had denying his homosexuality — presumably see himself represented in these lines as well. This is more implicit in the chromatic setting of the words "Silly Fellow": but who here is silly — Christopher Smart? Jesus?

Britten? or perhaps Peter Grimes, whose eponymous opera contains both similar themes and music? Britten's setting, like that of *Rejoice in the Lamb*, is reminiscent of Purcell, although in a different way; the "Hallelujah" refrain suggests Purcell's verse anthems. But this refrain works in a structural way, too, in that repeating the music provides a sense of structure to an otherwise impossibly heterogeneous — though brilliant — text.

— Notes by Ryan Minor

## BIOGRAPHY

RICHARD BADO, a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is Head of Music Staff and Chorus Master for the Houston Grand Opera. He also serves as the Musical Supervisor for the Houston Opera Studio. In 1989, Mr. Bado made his professional conducting debut in Cairo, Egypt, leading HGO's acclaimed production of *Show Boat* at the newly restored Cairo Opera House. He has since conducted performances of HGO's *Carousel*, *My Fair Lady*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, and a concert featuring soprano Stella Zambalis and members of the Houston Opera Studio. An accomplished pianist, Mr. Bado has appeared in recital with Cecilia Bartoli, Renee Fleming, and Marcello Giordani. A former member of the Houston Opera Studio, Mr. Bado holds music degrees from the Eastman School of Music and West Virginia University. He is currently an Artist Teacher at The Shepherd School of Music and has served on the music staff of the Opera Theater of St. Louis, Chautauqua Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Texas Opera Theater, Chautauqua Institution Music School, the Aspen Music Festival, and the Bronx Opera. In the 1989 season, he served as Music Director for the Galveston Island Outdoor Musicals.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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