

Sub Rosa - Mansfield College Chapel, 16 December 2001

Oxford Girls' Choir and men's chorus

Christ Church Festival Baroque Orchestra

directed by Richard Vendome and Penelope Martin-Smith
with Adrian Inscoc (organ)



Our Christmas Concert this year includes works both old and new. Tippett's Spirituals and Arvo Pärt's Littlemore Tractus provide a powerful reflection on the events of September 11th. Stevie Wishart's Sub Rosa is an exciting new OGC commission. Haydn's Missa Sancti Nicolae is an old choir favorite, heard this year with period instruments.

Richard Vendome

Five Spirituals (from *A Child of our Time*) - Michael Tippett (1905-98)

(Catherine Young, soprano, Alice Armitage, alto, Martin Noel Davies, tenor, Robert Gullifer, bass)

1. Steal away
2. Nobody knows
3. Go down, Moses
4. By and by
5. Deep river

Michael Tippett, like Benjamin Britten, was a conscientious objector during the second World War. He began work on his oratorio *A Child of Our Time* in reaction to the Nazi pogrom in Paris at the start of hostilities. The language of the negro spiritual is suffused with his own maturing style, producing a kaleidoscope of effects from the "blues" chord of the minor seventh and much doubling of voices at the octave.

the Training Choir (directed by Penelope Martin-Smith)

Badgers and hedgehogs - Andrew Carter

Butterflies and moths - Andrew Carter

The birds' lament - Richard Rodney Bennett

Sub Rosa (2001) - Stevie Wishart

(Victoria Couper, soloist; directed by Louisa Nye)

1. Secret spaces
2. Twisted values
3. Moniso

Sub Rosa by Stevie Wishart is scored for female voices in up to 14 parts. It was commissioned for OGC by the Foundation for Sport and the Arts, and was [premiered](#) by the choir at the Chapelle Royale in Brussels on 29 August this year. Like much of Stevie's music, *Sub Rosa* creates a shifting layered soundscape in which voices are heard in various combinations. The texts were suggested by members of the choir.

Stevie Wishart has worked with the choir for several years on a project to record the complete Hildegard of Bingen. She now divides her time between Brussels and Sydney.

Littlemore Tractus (2001) - Arvo Pärt

"May He support us all the day long, till the shades lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done! Then in his mercy may He give us safe lodging and a holy rest, and peace at the last."

The Estonian composer Arvo Pärt was commissioned by the Vicar of Littlemore, Bernhard Schünemann, to write *Littlemore Tractus* to celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of his predecessor, John Henry Newman, in 1801. The well-known text comes from Newman's sermon "Wisdom and Innocence" given at Littlemore Church (founded by him in 1836) shortly before his conversion to Catholicism in 1845.

God rest ye, merry gentlemen (audience and choir)

- interval with refreshments -

Ding, dong, merrily on high - trad. French arr. Richard Vendome

While shepherds watched their flocks (audience and choir)

I saw three ships - Reginald Jacques, arr. Richard Vendome
(Kimberley Waechtler, Sasha Brown, John Tucker, soloists)

O del mio dolce ardor (from *Paride ed Elena*) C.W. Gluck (1714-87)
(Charlotte Roberts, soprano)

Missa Sancti Nicolae - Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

1. Kyrie (*Clare McQuitty, soprano, Louisa Nye, alto, Alan Armitage, tenor, Christopher Franks, bass*)
2. Gloria (*Hannah Nye, soprano*)
3. Credo (*Sophie Kent, soprano, Miranda Jewess, alto, John Tucker, tenor, Christopher Franks, bass*)
4. Sanctus
5. Benedictus (*Gaia Marcus, soprano, Isobel*)

Piper, alto, John Tucker, tenor, Christopher Franks, bass)

6. *Agnus Dei (Katriona Birtill, soprano, Daisy Venables, alto, Alan Armitage, tenor, Christopher Franks, bass)*

During his long career, Joseph Haydn composed at least fourteen masses, the earliest dating from c.1749 (*Missa brevis*) and the last from 1802 (*Harmoniemesse*). The *Missa Sancti Nicolae* dates from 1772, the end of Haydn's intense *Sturm und Drang* period; from now on there were fewer symphonies in minor keys and no more string quartets for a decade. Perhaps Haydn was relieved to return to the more functional world of church music; in the *Missa Sancti Nicolae* we hear him at his most joyful, celebrating the name-day of his patron, Prince Nikolaus Esterházy (St Nicholas' Day, 6th December). His melodic gift is apparent throughout, and nowhere more so than in the beautiful *Benedictus*; only in the *Crucifixus* do we experience a true solemnity.

male voices

Alan Armitage, Tony Blakeborough, Roger Cutts, Martin Noel Davies, Christopher Franks, Robert Gullifer, Adrian Inscoc, Peter Kent, John Nye, James Ross, John Tucker

Christ Church Festival Baroque Ensemble

Violins - Heather Birt, Felicity Cormac, Aidan Thomson
Cello - Judith Dallosso
Oboes - Mick Benda, Margaret Malpas
Horns - Richard Whitehouse, Robin Whitehouse
Organ continuo - Richard Vendome

chamber organ by David Bolton and Richard Vendome