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Concert: The King's Singers

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ITHACA COLLEGE CONCERTS 1990-91

THE KING'S SINGERS

David Hurley, Countertenor
Alastair Hume, Countertenor
Bob Chilcott, Tenor
Bruce Russell, Baritone
Simon Carrington, Baritone
Stephen Connolly, Bass

I.

Folksongs of North America

THE FELLER FROM FORTUNE
SHE'S LIKE THE SWALLOW
I BOUGHT ME A CAT
THE GIFT TO BE SIMPLE

II.

Great Masters of the English Renaissance
Sacred Music from Tudor England

TERRA TREMUIT
O LORD, MAKE THY SERVANT ELIZABETH OUR QUEEN
SING JOYFULLY UNTO GOD OUR STRENGTH

AVE MARIA

III.

HANDMADE PROVERBS

CRIES OF LONDON
INTERMISSION

IV.

SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN OPERA

Paul Drayton
(b. 1944)

V.

Arrangements in Close Harmony
Selections from the Lighter Side of the Repertoire

Walter Ford Hall Auditorium
Thursday, March 21, 1991
8:15 p.m.

The King's Singers are represented by IMG Artists, New York.
The King's Singers record for EMI/Angel.
Recording Distributor for American Concerts:
DJ Records, P. O. Box 95, McMinnville, OR 97128

King's Singers Mailing List:
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3108 Ross Road
Ames, Iowa 50010
PROGRAM NOTES

I.
Folksongs of North America
Arranged by Robert Chilcott

Tonight's choice of four songs has been almost impossible to make, given the tremendous wealth of material available both in Canada and the United States. The influences and sources of folk material are extraordinarily far ranging, from the French flavor of many Canadian songs, to the predominately English influence of many tunes well-loved in America. All have their regional and frequently religious characteristics, and make the selection process somewhat arbitrary, given the quantity we had to choose from!

We start with two contrasting Canadian songs. The Feller from Fortune is a colorful song, reminiscent of an Irish jig, which reflects life in the fishing port of Newfoundland. Indeed, the fish turn out to be not the only catch for the popular "Feller!" This is followed by a sad love song, also from Newfoundland, She's Like the Swallow, in which a girl gives a rose to her love, only to discover that his love for her is not true.

From American folksongs, we have chosen the lively and somewhat chauvinistic song I Bought Me a Cat, with its barnyard noises adding to the flavor of the words (which we have taken the liberty of watering down somewhat!). Finally the set ends with the beautiful message of the Shaker song, The Gift to be Simple.

II.
Great Masters of the English Renaissance
Sacred Music from Tudor England

William Byrd (1543-1623) was perhaps the greatest "Master" of the period and all the available evidence indicates that he was recognized as such by his contemporaries. He remained a Roman Catholic all his life, despite England's "conversion" to the Protestant faith, and continued writing music for the Catholic liturgy throughout his career. He was probably discreet in his adherence to Rome and his faith did not prevent him from writing music for his new Anglican rite. Undoubtedly though, his genius was at its height in his music for the Catholic Church.

Robert Parsons (c. 1530-1570), a composer of church music and pieces for viols, was also highly thought of among his contemporaries because of the richness of his harmonies and the ingenuity of his contrapuntal writing. He was named Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in 1563, but suffered an untimely death seven years later in a drowning accident in the River Trent. It was Byrd who replaced Parsons as the next Gentleman of the Chapel Royal and two years later he was appointed organist, a position he shared with his "Master," Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-1585). Both men contributed some of the finest liturgical music ever written, which was published under an exclusive license granted them by Queen
Elizabeth. In spite of his Catholic sympathies, "Mr. Byrd, the most celebrated musician and organist of the English nation," held his position at the Chapel Royal until his death in 1623.

III.

Toru Takemitsu. *Handmade Proverbs*

This work was commissioned by The King's Singers and is dedicated to them. The text is quoted from the *Handmade Proverbs* by Shuzo Takiguchi, and translated into English by Kenneth Lyons. The composer suggests that all songs should be sung without a break, as one whole piece. The world premiere performance was given in Japan in January 1987, and the commission was made possible by the generosity of Sumitomo Life International Ltd.

*Handmade Proverbs*

**Your Eyes**

Your eyes, your hands, your breasts ... you are twins in yourself.

**Three Bonzes**

Three bonzes, three years facing a wall and living on air. Three beggars asked them for leftovers.

**Cinderella's Misfortune**

Listen to a little girl singing in the ant lion's pit: The echo distorts some phrases—Cinderella's misfortune.

**A Farewell Gift**

A farewell gift, a drop of dew fallen in the palm of your hand: The hour is a second.

Luciano Berio. *Cries of London*

These five light-hearted settings of traditional London street cries were made between August, 1973 and November, 1974. The one which now stands at the end of the score was, in fact, the first to be composed: Berio wrote it for a concert given by The King's Singers at the Edinburgh Festival in 1973; the remainder was commissioned by The King's Singers with the aid of a grant from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Those familiar with Berio's vocal music will know that he has had a lifelong fondness for the simplicity of folk-music. His folk-song arrangements made for the singer Cathy Berberian are by now well known (though not so well known is the fact that two or three of the songs were actually written in the folk idiom by Berio himself). One of the composer's earliest wholly characteristic pieces, *El mar la mar* of 1952, evokes the flavor of the Mediterranean folk style,
combining its fresh simplicity with the first seeds of an evolving serial language; while the recent stage work, Opera, incorporates a lullaby in a traditional Sicilian text, sung in an appropriately nasal manner. Cries of London has affinities with all these works. Typically, its surface simplicity conceals a more complex approach to word-setting—one which avoids the "illustrative," and instead invites the listener to explore the actual sound-properties of the texts.

The first "Cry" provides a clear illustration of Berio's technique. The melodic line is shared between tenor and bass, while the remaining voices "comment" on the text by enunciating its predominant vowel-sounds. At the center of the piece, the "commenting" voices actually anticipate the text, forming a quasi-instrumental tremolo out of the rapid repetition of the words "buy" and "any." This deliberate blurring of the distinction between vocal and instrumental sounds is common to most of Berio's recent music involving voices.

The second "Cry" is the simplest of the set: over a continuous drone on the interval of a perfect fourth, the first counter-tenor unfolds a melody "like a folk tune, with a touch of ecstasy." This setting meets its obverse side, as it were, in the fourth "Cry"—a further version of the same text which, in contrast to the fresh lightness of the first setting, has a predominately dark sound (though like all these pieces it retains a strong sense of humor—as its ending, "as low as possible, with obvious difficulty," clearly shows). The presenting of two contrasting settings of one text is, incidentally, something that Berio had already carried out in two of his most celebrated works, Circles and Sinfonia.

The central "Cry" is the most Italianate of the set (which is not to suggest that any of these London street-cries are particularly English in flavor!): according to a note in the score, it should be sung with a Neapolitan accent and mannerism. The word on which Berio concentrates here is "garlic," with the "commenting" voices stressing the rolled "r" and the long "a" sounds.

The work ends with the most dramatic of the five "Cries," and—appropriately enough for these troubled times—it's one that introduces a somewhat "sour" note whenever the subject of money is mentioned (as it most emphatically is at the start of the piece). Having begun fortissimo, with rapidly repeated shouts of "money" and "penny," the piece subsides into a pianissimo conclusion.

Misha Donat (Author's copyright)

Paul Drayton. Six Characters in Search of an Opera

A rare example of a small-scale operatic extravaganza, this work was written to mark the Twentieth Anniversary of The King's Singers and to exploit to the full their skill in musical and theatrical parody.

After a brief overture—really a collage of eight operatic tunes—the opening chorus expands on the difficulties of stage production with limited resources, then introduces the scene as the interior of a "takeaway" Chinese restaurant. The waitress, Flutterby, extols her exotic cuisine and explains that she is waiting
with pathetic fidelity for the return of her lover. She will not yield to her suitor, the out-of-work and overweight bullfighter, Don Lopillo, and she cuts short his ardent pleadings by reminding him that she is due for an appointment with her hairdresser, the irrepressible Neville from Seville.

Neville introduces himself with an Italianate display of vocal bravura, while the "chorus" anxiously reflects that their numbers are diminishing as the principals proliferate. Don Lopillo now recognizes Neville as his long-lost brother, but their delighted recognition is interrupted as Flutterby reminds them that she is still waiting for her hair appointment.

All are now horrorstruck as they hear the approach of Grimgirdle, a formidable local Amazon who is baying for vengeance since Neville botched her hairdo. Her dire threats subside long enough for her to recall sadly how she was once loved by Don Lopillo, then after a little sympathy from the chorus, she resumes her cursing with renewed energy.

A stranger now enters and expresses his surprise at the pandemonium, but as he orders his supper, he is recognized by Flutterby as her long-lost lover, Donald G. O'Varney, and they are united in a passionate duet: after years as a libertine, he admits he is a failure—a rake who has made no progress—and so he has returned to claim her.

The final character, tired of being a one-man chorus, now appears and introduces himself as a poor, unsuccessful painter, who has abandoned his bohemian life to become a policeman. He is about to arrest them all for causing a disturbance when his attention is drawn to the imposing figure of Grimgirdle. They are both overwhelmed by an intense Wagnerian passion, and amid the urgings of the rest of the ensemble, they fall into each other's arms.

The denouement is achieved. La comedia e finita. Only the finale remains. The two pairs of lovers are united, the two brothers sing of their intention to return to Spain, and all express their joy in a spontaneous outburst of flawless six-part counterpoint.

**DRAMATIS PERSONAE**

FLUTTERBY, a Chinese Waitress
DON LOPILLO, a Bullfighter
NEVILLE, a Hairdresser
GRIMGIRDLE, an Amazon
DONALD G. O'VARNEY, an Irish Rake
JOHN CONSTABLE, a Poor Painter

David Hurley
Bruce Russell
Bob Chilcott
Alastair Hume
Simon Carrington
Stephen Connolly

TIME: THE PRESENT
Paul Drayton began piano lessons at the age of eleven and passed the LRAM performers' diploma at the age of sixteen. After reading music at Oxford University he was for six years Director of Music at the New College Choir School, then joined the music staff at Stowe School near Buckingham.

His work as a composer has been widely performed in the United Kingdom and Europe, as well as in the United States, Australia and Japan. There have been a number of broadcasts of his music, which ranges from works for children to a full-length opera written on a major bursary from the Arts Council of Great Britain.

Commissions have come from many different quarters including the Three Choirs Festival, the Norfolk Triennial Festival, Washington Cathedral, the United States, The King's Singers, and a wide variety of individual instrumentalists and singers. He has still found time to work as a solo pianist and accompanist, equally at home with concerto appearances, lecture recitals or occasionally a jazz trio.

V.
Arrangements in Close Harmony
Selections from the Lighter Side of the Repertoire

The King's Singers like to end their program with such a selection, which might consist of anything from arrangements of folk songs and spirituals, to standard evergreens and contemporary pop material.

THE ARTISTS

England's phenomenally successful six-man vocal ensemble, The King's Singers, has performed everything from Renaissance to Rock for millions of delighted fans all over the world. Now in their 23rd season, they continue to affirm their place among the world's premiere vocal ensembles with a full schedule of performances, recordings and major television appearances. After nearly a quarter century, their devoted following is ever-growing due to their imaginative programming, remarkable musicianship, and flawless delivery.

Since their initial professional season in 1968, the ensemble, which was formed at King's College, Cambridge, has developed the most diverse repertoire of any vocal group in the world. With more than fifty recordings and a Grammy nomination to their credit, and new CD's and cassettes appearing regularly on the EMI/Angel label, The King's Singers have just completed recording an album of songs by Gershwin and Arlen with the renowned jazz pianist George Shearing, to be released in 1991. Their latest release (Fall 1990) is a collection of waltzes and polkas by Johann Strauss, featuring guitarist Manuel Barrueco, clarinetist Sabine Meyer, and bassist Georg Hortnagel.

The King's Singers are familiar to American television audiences through their regular guest appearances on "The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson," and via numerous specials including the Emmy Award-winning ABC Christmas special filmed in Salzburg with Julie Andrews, Placido Domingo, and John
Denver; "The King's Singers' Madrigal History Tour," a six-part "Arts and Entertainment" special; and a seven-part Yorkshire TV special, with special guest James Galway, to be aired here this season. They are also a favorite of PBS viewers who eagerly await rebroadcasts of their popular shows: "The King's Singers Holiday Special with the Kansas City Symphony;" "The King's Singers On Stage at Wolf Trap;" and "Evening at Pops" with the Boston Pops. In addition to being frequent guests on major nationally syndicated radio series such as "St. Paul Sunday Morning," they are the recipients of NPR's 1990 Lucien Wulsin Award for Best Performance by a Small Ensemble on NPR's "Performance Today" Series.

Highlights of past American tours have included appearances at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center (on the "Great Performers" Series), the Kennedy Center (both a cappella and with the National Symphony Orchestra), the Tanglewood Music Festival and on the Minnesota Orchestra series. They have also performed recently at such prestigious venues as the Orchestra Halls of Chicago and Detroit, the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, Jones Hall in Houston, the Symphony Halls of Boston and Atlanta, the Hollywood Bowl and Ambassador Auditorium in the Los Angeles area, Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco, and the Seattle Opera House. This past season, they made their debut at Shea Stadium in New York City, singing a brief program and The Star Spangled Banner prior to a baseball game between the New York Mets and the Houston Astros. In addition to the hundreds of a capella recitals they have given in the United States, they have also collaborated with many American orchestras including the Minnesota Orchestra, National Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Boston Pops, and the symphonies of Detroit, Kansas City, St. Louis, Toronto and Utah. This season, 1990-91, The King's Singers extensive itinerary takes them throughout Europe and North America, and their United States tours feature return engagements at the Kennedy Center (presented by Washington Performing Arts Society), the Hollywood Bowl, Ambassador Auditorium and the Minnesota Orchestra's recital series at Orchestra Hall, as well as their debut at San Francisco Performances' Herbst Theatre.

Since their inception, The King's Singers have been committed to performing works by twentieth-century composers and have substantially added to the vocal repertory by commissioning new works by such outstanding contemporary composers as Ned Rorem, Richard Rodney Bennett, Gunther Schuller, Gian-Carlo Menotti, Gyorgi Ligeti, William Mathias, Thea Musgrave, and Krzysztof Penderecki among others. While they are masters at performing new music, they are equally at home singing Renaissance madrigals, sacred and secular choral masterpieces, folk music in various languages, and their trademark "Arrangements in Close Harmony," consisting of a wealth of pop music.

The King's Singers bring their unrivaled combination of musical excellence and charisma as performers to everything they do. In fact, their recent release on CD entitled America, featuring the music of Paul Simon, and their Billboard best-selling CD's, The Beatles Connection and A Little Christmas Music (with special guest Kiri Te Kanawa) would seem to indicate that The King's Singers do it all!
David Hurley, countertenor, began his musical training at the age of eight as a chorister in Winchester Cathedral. He started singing alto at Winchester College, after which he went to New College Oxford as a Choral Scholar. With a degree in geography, he found his way back to Winchester, where he rejoined the Cathedral Choir, combining it with a career as a free-lance singer. When not singing, David enjoys riding other people's horses and sailing other people's boats. The newest member of the group, he joined The King's Singers in February 1990.

Alastair Hume, countertenor and founding member of The King's Singers along with Simon Carrington, joined the choir at Tonbridge School as an alto in his third year. This encouraged him to take the alto trial at King's College, Cambridge, where he was accepted in 1962. An accomplished double bass player, he was a member of both the National Youth Orchestra and the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra. In addition to being an expert (if sporadic) squash player, Alastair enjoys sailing and antique cars, and has an interest in Westholme Restaurant, Pilton, Somerset.

Bob Chilcott, tenor, was both a chorister and Choral Scholar at King's College, Cambridge. His main interest as a boy was cricket, and this stood him in good stead for his future amateur career in the game, playing for such teams as the Royal College of Music XI, the English Music Theatre XI, and the BBC 3rd XI. After Cambridge, he studied singing and composition with Alan Ridout at the Royal College of Music. Since then he has divided his career between two disciplines, joining The King's Singers in 1986 and continuing his arranging and composing work when time permits. He lives outside of Oxford, with his wife and two children, and his least favorite hobby is taking his old Alfa Romeo car to the garage to be fixed!

Bruce Russell, baritone, was a chorister at King's College, Cambridge, and continued his education at the Shrewsbury School. From there he gained a choral scholarship to Christ Church, Oxford, where he studied music. After three years in London, he returned to Oxford as a lay-clerk, combining this with teaching the flute as well as freelance singing. Up until joining The King's Singers full-time in January 1988, Bruce had been singing in the choir at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, while continuing teaching at Radley College. Married, he enjoys walking and exploring historic buildings.

Simon Carrington, baritone, has been, to his constant amazement, a co-director and creative force with The King's Singers since the group's inception over twenty years ago. Educated at Christ Church Cathedral School, King's School, Canterbury, and King's College, Cambridge, he drifted into a career in music as a double bass player, first with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, then as principal with the Monteverdi Orchestra, and other London chamber orchestras. He lives in an old thatched house in the Vale of Pewsey with his wife and two children—all musicians. He teaches singing irregularly at Marlborough College, conducts choirs when he can, and between times enjoys the Wiltshire countryside, inland waterways, gardening, and vintage cars, an interest he shares with Alastair Hume, a friend and colleague for over thirty years.
Stephen Connolly, bass, was a chorister and, at the age of six, a lay-clerk at Leeds Parish Church. He was also baritone soloist with the National Youth Choir of Great Britain. While in the North of England, he performed as a soloist with many choral societies, as well as pursuing his love of ensemble singing. On leaving school he accepted a scholarship at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where he studied singing with Rudolf Piernay. While at the Guildhall, he made his operatic debut in a production of Nicholas Maw's *The Rising of the Moon*. A King's Singer since 1988, his home now is in Gloucestershire, but he still relishes a trip back to his native Yorkshire, which enables him to indulge his passion for Real Ales, good Indian cuisine and authentic Yorkshire pudding!
CONCERT CALENDAR

MARCH
23  8:15  Guest Recital, Frederick Hemke, Saxophone
24  3:00  Brass Choir, Kim Dunnick, Conductor;
         Chorus, Andrew Housholder, Conductor;
         Orchestra, Charles Peltz, Conductor
25  8:15  Wind Ensemble of the Onondaga
         County Music Educators Association
26  8:15  Faculty Recital, Frank G. Campos, Trumpet
27  8:15  Guest Recital, Paul Henry, Guitar
28  8:15  Trombone ensembles of Eastman, Penn State,
         Ithaca City Schools, Ithaca College, and
         Ithaca College Alumni.

APRIL
1   8:15  Guest Recital, Marimolin, Marimba and Violin
2   8:15  Faculty Chamber Music Series
         Ithaca Wind Quintet
3   8:15  Faculty Chamber Music Series
         Ithaca Brass
4   8:15  Faculty Lecture/Recital, Leslie Jones, Piano
5   8:15  Jazz Workshop, Steve Brown, Musical Director
7   8:15  Faculty Recital, Angus Godwin, Baritone
8   8:15  Faculty Recital, opera arias and duets
9   8:15  Brass Choir, Kim Dunnick, Conductor
10  8:15  Guest Lecture, William Bolcom, Composer

In addition to the concerts listed above, music students give solo and chamber
recitals, which are free and open to the public. The Concert Line (274-3356)
provides supplemental information about these performances.

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ITHACA COLLEGE CONCERTS 1991-92*
(proposed)

September 4       New York Chamber Orchestra
October 22        Kalichstein, Laredo, Robinson Trio
February 11       New York Woodwind Quintet
March 21          Marian McPartland Trio

*admission charge