

 **Nantwich Choral Society** 

A 50th Anniversary Concert of Commemoration

In association with
OKUMENISCHE KANTOREI BISCHOF SHEIM



SATURDAY 6th MAY 1995

**The Parish Church of St. Mary, Nantwich
at 7.30pm.**

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY

OKUMENISCHE KANTOREI BISCHOF SHEIM

Fiona Vaughan, *soprano*

David Campbell, *baritone*

Andrew Mildinhall, *organ*

Conducted by
Hans - Joachim Steinbrück
and
Stephen Buckman

NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF MUSIC SOCIETIES



AND I SAW A NEW HEAVEN

Edgar Bainton

LOCUS ISTE

Anton Bruckner

GLORIA & SANCTUS from "The German Mass"

Franz Schubert

LO! THE FULL FINAL SACRIFICE

Gerald Finzi

VERLEIH UNS FRIEDEN

LOBE DEN HERREN

Hugo Distler

In the first part of this evening's concert Nantwich Choral Society and its German guests present a collection of pieces specifically chosen to illustrate the theme of Commemoration, Peace, Reconciliation and Hope.

The music of Bruckner and Schubert needs little introduction, however, that of Bainton, Finzi and Distler may be less familiar.

Edgar Bainton was born in London in 1880. He studied under Davies, Stanford and Wood at The Royal College of Music, and pursued a successful career as composer and conductor. Despite there being a large catalogue of orchestral, choral and piano works by Bainton, this short setting of words from Revelations is probably now his best known work.

Finzi's anthem Lo! the Full Final Sacrifice was composed in 1946. The work is being performed this evening in its original form, with organ accompaniment.

Finzi was by nature a passionately dedicated yet introverted man, happiest when working in contemplative isolation. Lo! the Full Final Sacrifice uses a text by Richard Crashaw, a 17th century English metaphysical poet, whose temperament was close to Finzi's own. By capturing the essence of each section of the poem and eschewing mere word-painting, Finzi puts the words into relief and actually heightens the mediaeval ecstasy of the poetry through the very restraint of his sometimes transcendently beautiful music.

Hugo Distler was born in Nuremburg in 1908. He was a composer and organist who was very much influenced by the musical traditions of Bach and Schutz. He composed many motets, and was first published while still a student at the Leipzig Conservatory. Distler's performing, composition and teaching were adversely affected by the hostility of the Nazis to the supporters of the Church, and of Church music. In 1937 he moved to Stuttgart where he taught at the Conservatory.

This appointment freed him from immediate war service. His reputation led to his being awarded the Professorship of Composition, Organ and Choral Conducting in Berlin in October 1940. Increasing government pressure caused him to suffer a severe spiritual depression. Hugo Distler committed suicide in 1942.

~ INTERVAL ~

REQUIEM

Gabriel Faure

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Introit & Kyrie | 5. Agnus Dei |
| 2. Offertoire | 6. Libera Me |
| 3. Sanctus | 7. In Paradisum |
| 4. Pie Jesu | |

Faure's "little requiem" is very different from any of the other well known 19th century settings of the mass for the dead, since it eschews the terrifying clamour of Verdi and Berlioz and yet is much more expressive and unacademic than Cherubini or Brahms. Instead, Faure, through his choice of texts and musical sonorities, emphasises eternal peace for the departed and consolation for the bereaved, in a very personal way. He himself said that he had "instinctively sought to escape from what is thought right and proper. After all the years of accompanying burial services on the organ, I know it by heart! I wanted to write something different."

Faure was, for a long time, organist and choirmaster of the Church of the Madeleine in Paris and his **REQUIEM** was first heard at a burial service there in January 1888. The first version did not yet include the **OFFERTOIRE** or the **LIBERA ME**. The "complete" work was first performed in January 1893.

The word "Requiem" ("rest") is the key to the whole work; it is the first and last word which the choir sings and occurs in every movement but the **OFFERTOIRE** and the **SANCTUS**. It is also probably why Faure chose to include the passages **PIE JESU** and **IN PARADISUM** which are not usually found in a Requiem Mass, the latter being taken from the Burial Service. Even the brief, but all the more dramatic, reference to the Day of Judgement in the **LIBERA ME** subsides into a repeat of the opening prayer "Rest eternal grant them, O Lord, and light perpetual shine on them", and at the end of the **AGNUS DEI** Faure repeats both the words and the music of the beginning of the **INTROIT**.

This is, above all, an intimate and tender Requiem. Faure himself said that "It is as gentle as I am myself."

