



The Crossing

Donald Nally – Conductor

Concert Program

Friday, September 8th, 2006, 8:00pm
Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill
8855 Germantown Pike, Philadelphia, PA



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Preces

¿Donde estás Hermano?Luigi Nono (1924-1990)

Psalms

Madrigali a cinque voce misteBruno Bettinelli (1913-2004)
O notte
Sia calmo il mio respiro
Filastrocca del villano

Prayer

Totus Tuus.....Henry Gorecki (b. 1933)

— Intermission - 10 minutes —

Canticles

Human HymnsJudith Weir (b. 1954)
Love bade me welcome
Like to the Falling of a Star

Anthem

January Writ Thomas Adès (b. 1971)

Prayer

Os Justi..... Anton Bruckner (1824 -1896)

Hymn

Te DeumJames MacMillan (b. 1959)

— The Ensemble —

Karen Blanchard
Steven Bradshaw
Jennifer Check
Brian Ming Chu
Erika Dettra

Jeff Dinsmore
Levi Hernandez
Chris Hodges
Luciano Laurentiu

Vincent Metallo
Frank Mitchell
Mark T. Panuccio
Robert Phillips

Lourin Plant
Susan Polack
Rebecca Siler
Rebecca Whitlow
Shari Alise Wilson

Donald Nally, Conductor

Scott Dettra, Organ

We'd like to thank

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of Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill for their generosity and hospitality.

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(www.BeSeenNow.com) for marketing and website wonders.



¿Donde estás Hermano?(1982)

Luigi Nono

Where is your brother? – Genesis 4:9

Luigi Nono shared with Berio and Dallapiccola an iconic position as an Italian modernist. He left a wealth of challenging, beautiful music which combines a wholly twentieth-century aesthetic with a richly bel canto, vocal foundation. His Romantic lineage is attributable to the strong influence of Webern's Germanic twelve-tone and serial techniques, yet he also employs electronic-sounding sonorities produced acoustically. The latter technique is evident in ¿Donde estás Hermano?, the Lord's question to Cain, which brought the infamous reply:

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The short, contemplative lament for four women, subtitled: "For the Disappeared of Argentina," reflects Nono's characteristic union of human rights concerns and art; it is a part of a growing international repertoire (including James MacMillan and Gunnar Eriksson) that musically addresses the loss of the young men of South American countries under military regimes. Ironically, the shortest and oldest work in our concert (written nearly 25 years ago) may sound the most 'modern.'

Madrigals for Five Mixed Voices

Bruno Bettinelli

O notte (1995)

Giuseppe Ungaretti, *Vita di un uomo* (1982)

Dall'ampia ansia dell'alba
svelata alberatura.
Svegliati con dolore,
autunni, moribonde dolcezze.
Foglie, sorelle foglie,
vi ascolto nel lamento.
O gioventù,
passata è appena l'ora del distacco.
Cieli alti della gioventù,
libero slancio.
E già sono deserto.
Perso in questa curva malinconia.
Ma la notte sperde le lontananze.
Oceanici silenzi,
astrali nidi d'illusione.
O notte.

Out of the boundless eagerness of daybreak
emerge trees in silhouette.
Anguished awakenings.
Autumns, dying sweetness.
Leaves, sister leaves,
I hear your laments.
O youths,
just past the moment of separation.
Open skies of youth,
free élan.
And already I am deserted.
Lost in this curving sadness.
But night disperses distances.
Oceanic silences,
Astral nests of wishes.
O night.



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Sia calmo il mio respiro (1993)

Anna Eva Gosso

Sia calmo il mio respiro
mentre il mare singhiozza
sulla riva
l'onda breve.
Sento sul braccio
il soffio carezzevole di maggio
e il tuo tocco lieve.
Immoto resta il cuore
nell'ora
che lenta si raggruma.

My breath is calm
as the sea sobs
a brief wave
on the river bank.
I feel on my arm
the caressing breath of May
and your light touch.
My heart remains still
in the hour
that slowly thickens.

(Note – the beautiful imagery of 'raggruma' – literally 'clots' – is difficult to capture succinctly: perhaps, 'the hour slowly becomes heavy and lifeless.')

Filastrocca del villano (Carol of Rudeness, 1993)

Bettinelli

La mi' moglie mi combatte...
dice: "Al ciuco manca 'l fiato
e la mucca non dà latte,
il cavallo s'è azzoppato...
e nel grano 'l merlo becca
e nel cielo, troppo terso
scotta 'l sole, brucia, secca...
e ogni cosa va all'inverso!..."
Stanco sono, ahimé, ma solo
canto al vento, gusto 'l vino
resto allegro e mi consolo...
con le doglie del vicino.

My wife, my combatant,
says to me: "The mule is out of breath
and the cow gives no milk,
the horse is crippled...
and the blackbird pecks at our grain,
and the sky is too clear so
the sun scorches, searing and dry,
and everything is turned inside out!..."
I'm tired, ah, but I just go on
singing into the wind, drinking wine,
being cheerful, and assuaging myself...
with the headaches of my neighbor!

Better known as the rigorous teacher of Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Muti, and Maurizio Pollini, Bettinelli was nevertheless a prolific composer. His firm resolve that writing was primarily finding the correct form to fit the idea – and therefore eschewing whatever the fashion of the day might be – inspired a wide range of compositional styles; these late works, written in his eighties, somewhat surprisingly evoke the memory of Claudio Monteverdi's early-17th-c. madrigals: the music is lean and economic, with a sober use of carefully placed dissonance in which the counterpoint is always subservient to pure expression. Often this creates a harmonic world that, when heard through the veil of these Renaissance implications, invokes a kind of living museum – the hues and clarity of da Vinci in the expressive language of Rothko, or the eye of Michelangelo remolded by Brancusi – not in its abstraction, but rather in its realism, raw and base, able to capture the vagueness or specificity of emotions, of humor, and of memory.



Totus tuus Op. 60 (1987)

Henryk Gorecki

Maria!

Totus tuus sum, Maria,
Mater nostri, Redemptoris,
Virgo Dei, virgo pia
Mater mundi Salvatoris.
Tutus tuus sum, Maria.

Mary!

I am completely yours, Mary
Mother of our Redeemer,
Virgin Mother of God, blessed virgin,
Mother of the world's Savior.
I am completely yours, Mary!

- Maria Bogulsawska

Gorecki met phenomenal fame when his Symphony No. 3 (1976) became a popular radio request, eventually selling millions of recordings. The symphony is written in a simple, diatonic language that is quite removed from Gorecki's earlier avant garde style. Totus tuus follows this latter language of spiritual minimalism; sparse, clear, and repetitive. Based on chants of the Polish church, the work was composed to celebrate the third visit of Pope John Paul II to his homeland. It was the Pope's motto; of it he wrote: "Totus tuus. This phrase is not only an expression of piety, or simply an expression of devotion. It is more. During the Second World War, while I was employed as a factory worker, I came to be attracted to Marian devotion. At first, it had seemed to me that I should distance myself a bit from the Marian devotion of my childhood, in order to focus more on Christ. Thanks to Saint Louis of Montfort, I came to understand that true devotion to the Mother of God is actually Christocentric, indeed, it is very profoundly rooted in the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity, and the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption." (Crossing the Threshold of Hope, 1994)

Two Human Hymns (1994)

Judith Weir

1. Love Bade me Welcome

George Herbert (1593-1633)

Love bade me welcome, but my soul drew back
Guilty of dust and sin.

But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
If I lack'd any thing.

A guest, I answered, 'worthy to be here:'
Love said, 'You shall be he.'

'I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on thee.'

Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
'Who made the eyes but I?'

'Truth, Lord, but I have marred them: let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.'

'And know you not,' says Love, 'who bore the blame?'

'My dear, then I will serve.'

'You must sit down,' says Love, 'and taste my meat:'

So I did sit and eat.

2. Like to the Falling of a Star

Henry King (1599-1669)

(original title: Sic vita – Such is life)

Like to the falling of a star,

Or as the flights of eagles are;

Or like the fresh Spring's gaudy hue;

Or silver drops of morning dew;

Or like the wind that chafes the flood;

Or bubbles which on water stood;

Even such is man, whose borrowed light

Is straight called in, and paid to night.

The wind blows out; the bubble dies;

The Spring entombed in Autumn lies.

The dew dries up; the star is shot;

The flight is past and man forgot.



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Composed to celebrate the quincentenary of the University of Aberdeen, Judith Weir's Two Human Hymns (premiered 1995) draw on the metaphysical poetry of George Herbert and his contemporary Henry King. In "Love bade me welcome," Weir achieves an introspective quality in the choral writing, while beneath that surface the organ dances spontaneously in a manner that sounds improvised, demonstrating Weir's own virtuosity at the organ. The work seems to marry the two planes, tranquility and joy, providing yet another perspective on Herbert's oft-set poem. In "Like to the Falling of a Star," Weir celebrates the union of organ and voices in the British anthem tradition of Stanford and Howells. In both works, the stark faith of the metaphysicists – God, in spite of – is heard.

January Writ (2000)

Thomas Adès

Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told,
yet hath he seen no good; do not all go to one place? — Ecclesiastes 6:6

Written for London's Temple Church's Millennium Service on 20 January 2000 (20.00.2000), January Writ is a setting of the only scriptural reference to 'two thousand'. This is the epitome of Wisdom writing, typical of Koheleth (who writes in the following verse: "All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled."). Adès chooses a structure of shifting harmonies that move slowly and relentlessly up and down as sand in an hourglass. It is as if he is standing outside the topic – an observer – and the passing of time (which music marks by its 'presentness', always receding into the past) becomes the substance of the work, punctuated by brief glimpses of 'humanness' which the singers reveal through subtle shifts of dynamics and rhythm.

Os justi(1879)

Anton Bruckner

Os justi meditabitur sapientiam,
et lingua ejus loquetur judicium.
Lex Dei ejus in corde ipsius:
et non supplantabuntur gressus ejus. Alleluia.
Psalm 37:30-31

The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom,
and his tongue speaks what is just.
The law of his God is in his heart;
and his feet do not falter. Alleluia

In the same way that Thomas Adès creates a particular sound spectrum by confining his language to one modulating cadence repeated in various guises, Bruckner here creates striking effects through an equally strict but diametric musical doctrine that avoids modulation. The work is wholly unique for this composer, the ultra-Romantic symphonist, in that it is in the Lydian mode, employing no sharps or flats. Bruckner subscribed to the Cecilian movement, centered around Vienna's St. Florian for which the motet was composed, which aimed to bring the spare clarity of the music of the High Renaissance, particularly of Palestrina, to the church music of Austria. The concluding plainsong on Bruckner's added "Alleluia" links us to the chant, albeit in remarkably different shapes, in James MacMillan's Te Deum, to follow.



Te Deum (2001)

James MacMillan

We praise Thee, O God,
we acknowledge Thee to be 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 army of Martyrs praise Thee.

The holy Church throughout all 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 tookest upon Thee to deliver man
Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.

When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death
Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Book of Common Prayer, 1662

*attr. to Nicetas, Bishop of Remesiana (Serbia), c. early 5th century (formerly attr. to Sts.
Ambrose and Augustine on the occasion of the latter's baptism in 387)*

MacMillan's works have a close and fond association with the singers of The Crossing; many of them sang premieres of his works when he visited Philadelphia in 2002. His Te Deum was premiered that year (though completed the year prior) by the Choir of the Chapels Royal at the Tower of London to celebrate Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee. It is typical MacMillan; sparse solo writing with Scotch-like ornaments; overwhelming, crashing organ sonorities; sweeping polyphonic choral sections. MacMillan writes almost exclusively on religious – Roman Catholic – themes; even his orchestral works follow background programs of faith, sacrifice, and miracle. Thus, the use of chant-like themes and chorale-like sections is essential to the often-mystical atmospheres he creates. Here, he introduces a simple chorale-like theme that might, in another circumstance, be the base of an Orthodox response; it will return throughout and provide the climax as massive waves of sound crashing over us in swells of awe. In the end, the chorale returns quietly, as heard in the beginning, but the journey through the Te Deum has altered our hearing and it seems somehow more informed, more distant, celebrating the glory of the mystery – of being confounded.

Thou sittest at the right hand of God
in the glory of the Father.

We believe that Thou shalt 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 for ever.

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,
have mercy upon us.

O Lord, let Thy mercy lighten upon us
as our trust is in Thee.

O Lord, in Thee have I trusted;
let me never be confounded.