Heroes and Heroines
New disc of Handel arias from Solomon, Ariodante, Hercules, Alcina COR16025
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“As time goes by, I find Harry Christophers’ music-making more and more captivating”
BBC RADIO 3 CD REVIEW

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Three composers testing vocal technique as never before, in music that’s rapturous, mystical, fresh and erotic.
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THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

Spem in alium
Music for Monarchs and Magnates CORSACD16016
This disc draws together music by Tallis, Byrd, Gibbons and Tomkins, some of it never before recorded, some not performed since the time of its writing.

To find out more about The Sixteen, concert tours, or to buy CDs, visit www.thesixteen.com
When I was asked to put together a collection of American choral music which spanned the last 100 years, I adopted the same principle I do with so much of my programme planning and that is, a blend of the familiar with the less familiar. However, some of the composers may well be familiar to you but, I suspect, their choral music is not, save for the vocal version of Barber’s famous Adagio for Strings. Bernstein’s recording of this is timeless and an attempt to recreate this in a vocal way is almost impossible but I do believe we were up for the challenge. One of the great strengths of The Sixteen is their ability to sustain long phrases and melt into cadences and the text of the Agnus Dei, which Barber adopts for this version, constantly demands exactly that.

Those familiar names of Barber, Bernstein and Copland are here set alongside two quite extraordinary composers. Irving Fine was a contemporary of Copland and, although born a decade after the great master, he died some years before him. His music is a revelation to me; the style is, essentially, a blend of Boulanger’s teaching and Stravinsky’s influence but, a decade after the great master, he died some years before him. His music is a revelation to version, constantly demands exactly that.

He has written a number of works based around Alice (of Wonderland and Looking-glass celebration of its first quarter-century devoted magnum opus by the same name. This is pure schmaltz. Just sit back, relax and enjoy it!

An American Collection

When Leonard Bernstein died, one of the tributes broadcast was his own recording of Samuel Barber’s Adagio with the New York Philharmonic, a performance of electric slowness. The music originated in 1936 as the 2nd movement of Barber’s first String Quartet. Immediately convinced of its viability as a separate piece, he transcribed it for string orchestra; in the 1960s he returned to it again, setting it to the words ‘Agnus Dei’ from the Latin mass, and sacrificing none of its elegiac power.

If Barber represents a lyrical traditionalism in 20th century American music, Irving Fine has been included (by Copland) in an American ‘Stravinsky’ school in his neo-classical energy, counterpoint and rhythmic verve. He also possessed an acute sensibility, appropriate to a Harvard university professor, in his choice and setting of six poems by Ben Johnson. Born the posthumous son of a clergyman in 1572, Johnson is better known as a dramatist, though the Yale University edition of his Complete Poems says that he and Donne exerted a greater influence on English poetry than any other 17th century poet.

The cycle begins with a song from the Masque of Hymen, written in 1606 for the marriage of the Earl of Essex and Frances Howard (which in fact ended in scandal and divorce) and continues with lyrics describing the successive stages of entrancement, infatuation, jealousy, death and after in the poet’s unique blend of sharp observation, wit, (com)passion and an alchemical concern for oppositions and transmutations - matched at every turn by Fine’s vivid music.

In contrast to this overt sophistication, Steve Reich’s music consciously reflects the music of the (European) past, including its avant-garde. Strongly influenced by African drumming, Reich’s work explores a world of repeating, near-simultaneous rhythms. Here one performer repeats the same part throughout, while the other moves ahead in stages until rejoining the first; Reich himself wrote ‘It can thus be difficult to hear that the second performer is in fact always playing the same pattern as the first, though starting in a different place’.

The clapping in Bernstein’s incidental music for The Lark has quite another function: that of helping to evoke the medieval world of Joan of Arc, whose trial the original 1953 French play of Jean Anouilh described. It was adapted by Lillian Hellman in 1955, when the New York Times wrote ‘Leonard Bernstein’s musical recreation of Joan’s medieval voices gives the play a new dimension’. The French Choruses recreate typical popular music of the era, while the Latin move, as it were, inside Rheims Cathedral, replacing drums with bells; Bernstein writes expansive, often dissonant, even brash music in his own vein, hardly
resorting for a moment to pastiche, yet still brilliantly succeeds in capturing the flavour of a distant time.

In his parallel career as a conductor, Bernstein championed many of the earlier works of Aaron Copland, and as a composer at one stage regarded him as a 'substitute father'. Unlike Bernstein, but like many other Americans, Copland went to Paris at the age of 20, and found Nadia Boulanger, whose inspiration was such that he persuaded many compatriots to follow. Before returning to America in 1924, where he became a ceaseless promoter of new, native-American music and one of its compositional giants, he wrote four motets (published only in 1979) to texts of 20, and found Nadia Boulanger, whose compatriots to follow. Before returning to America in 1924, where he became a ceaseless promoter of new, native-American music and one of its compositional giants, he wrote four motets (published only in 1979) to texts of 20, and found Nadia Boulanger, whose compatriots to follow. Before returning to America in 1924, where he became a ceaseless promoter of new, native-American music and one of its compositional giants, he wrote four motets (published only in 1979) to texts of 20, and found Nadia Boulanger, whose compatriots to follow. Before returning to America in 1924, where he became a ceaseless promoter of new, native-American music and one of its compositional giants, he wrote four motets (published only in 1979) to texts of.

The last - and youngest - of the composers in this collection, David del Tredici is not the only composer (Fine wrote two sets of Alice-inspired music) or indeed artist or writer (take W.H.Auden's essay Today's 'WonderWorld' Needs Alice, or the 1966 song White Rabbit by Grace Slick, lead singer of the Jefferson Airplane, which ends, misquoting the Dormouse, 'Feed your head') to find compulsive Lewis Carroll's world of multiplicatory illusions, rigorous logic and child-like fantasy, but he has been among the most assiduous. Acrostic Song is the last section of Final Alice, itself the fifth of six large works (and originally for soprano, folk group and orchestra) based on the 'Alice' books. It sets the epilogue poem to Through the Looking Glass, the first letters of the lines spell the name Alice Pleasure Liddell, the 'real' Alice. Del Tredici brings together with considerable daring an unabashedly sentimental tune and a thoroughly modern experience of nostalgia and ambiguity; life is a dream, but...

Finnegan's Wake should it be left uncompleted. Barber emulates the varied emotions of these small portraits, breathless and airy at first, then dirgelike and tragic, and last (The Coolin, subtitled The Fair Haired One) soft, loving and lifting.

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NICHOLAS ROBERTSON

SAMUEL BARBER (1910-1981)

Agnus Dei
Solo soprano: Ruth Dean

8.25

IRVING FINE (1914-1962)

THE HOUR-Glass

3.13

O know to end as to begin
Soloists: Nicola Jenkin, Ruth Dean, Caroline Trevor, Helen Templeton, Nicholas Robertson, Simon Bichall

Have you seen the white lily grow?
Solo trio: Nicola Jenkin, Ruth Dean, Caroline Trevor

1.38

1.19

Against Jealousy
Solo quartet: Nicola Jenkin, Caroline Trevor, Nicholas Robertson, Roger Cleverdon

3.15

A CROSTIC SONG FROM ‘FINAL ALICE’

Lament

2.44

The Hour-Glass

2.03

STEVE REICH (b.1936)

Clapping Music

5.31

Benedict Hoffnung, William Lockhart

LEONARD BERNSTEIN (1918-1992)

CHORUSES FROM ‘THE LARK’

Part I: French Choruses

Spring Song

1.52

1.17

Soldier’s Song

0.48

Part II: Latin Choruses

Prelude

1.54

Benedictus

1.13

Sanctus

1.09

Requiem

1.11

Gloria

1.21

Soloists: Nicola Jenkin, Nigel Short, Benedict Hoffnung (drum & bells) William Lockhart (bells)

AARON COPLAND (1900-1990)

FOUR MOTETS

Help us, O Lord

2.51

Thou, O Jehovah, abideth forever

1.53

Have mercy on us, O my Lord

3.58

Sing ye praises to our King

1.49

Solo quartet: Carys Lane, Nigel Short, Nicholas Robertson, Simon Bichall

SAMUEL BARBER (1910-1981)

REINCARNATIONS

Mary Hynes

1.44

Anthony O’Daly

3.27

The Coolin

3.06

DAVID DEL TREDICI (b.1937)

Acrostic Song from ‘Final Alice’
Solo soprano: Sarah Leonard

5.45

whisper chorus: Fiona Clarke, Nicola-Jane Kemp

Total playing time

65.12
THE SIXTEEN

SOPRANO
Fiona Clarke, Sophie Daneman
Ruth Dean, Nicola Jenkin
Nicola-Jane Kemp
Carys Lane

ALTO
Philip Newton
Nigel Short
Helen Templeton
Caroline Trevor

TENOR
Philip Daggett
Duncan MacKenzie
Thomas Phillips
Nicolas Robertson

PERCUSSION
Benedict Hoffnung
William Lockhart

BASS
Simon Birchall
Michael Bundy
Roger Clevedon
Timothy Jones

SOLO SOPRANO
Sarah Leonard

SAMUEL BARBER

1. Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
Miserere nobis,
Dona nobis pacem.

IRVING FINE
THE HOUR GLASS

2. Have you seen the white lily grow

Have you seen the white lily grow,
Before rude hands have touched it?
Have you seen the fall of the snow
Before the soil hath smutched it?

Have you felt the wool of beaver
Or swan’s-down ever?
Have you tasted the bag of the bee?
O so fair, so soft, so sweet is she!
Have you seen the white lily grow?
3. O do not wanton with those eyes

O do not wanton with those eyes, 
Lest I be sick with seeing; 
Nor cast them down, but let them rise, 
Lest shame destroy their being. 
O be not angry with those fires, 
For then their threats will kill me; 
Nor look too kind on my desires, 
For then my hopes will spill me. 
O do not steep them in my tears, 
For so will sorrow slay me; 
Nor spread them as distract with fears, 
Mine own enough betray me.

4. Against Jealousy

Wretched and foolish jealousy, 
How cam'st thou thus to enter me? 
I ne'er was of thy kind, 
Nor have I yet the narrow mind 
To vent that poor desire, 
That others should not warm them at my fire, 
I wish the sun should shine 
On all men's fruit and flow'rs, as well as mine. 
Wretched and foolish jealousy, 
How cam'st thou thus to enter me?

5. Lament

But under the disguise of love!
Thou sayest thou only cam'st to prove 
What my affections were, 
Think'st thou that love is helped by fear? 
Go get thee quickly forth, 
Love's sickness and his noted want of worth, 
Seek doubting men to please. 
I ne'er will owe my health to a disease. 
Wretched, foolish jealousy!

6. The Hour-Glass

Do but consider this small dust, 
Here running in the glass by atom's moved; 
Could you believe that this the body ever was 
Of one that loved? 
And in his mistress' flame, playing like a fly, 
Burned into cinders by her eye? 
Yes, and in death, as in life, unblest, 
In death, as in life, to have it exprest. 
Every ashes of lovers find no rest.

LEONARD BERNSTEIN
CHORUSES FROM "THE LARK"

7. Part I: French Choruses

1. Spring Song
Revecy venir le printemps. 
Laudate Dominum. Alleluia.

2. Court Song
Fi, mari de vostre amour. 
Cor j'ai ami, noble et de bel amour. 
Tout l'aime aussi. 
Fi, mari.

8. Part II: Latin Choruses

1. Prelude
Exaudi orationem meam, Domine. 
Qui tollis peccata mundi, 
miserere nobis. 

2. Benedictus
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. 
Osanna in excelsis. 

3. Sanctus
Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, 
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
4. Requiem

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine.
Et lux perpetua lucet eis.

5. Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Regi nostro clarissimo.
Regi nostro illustissimo.
Regi clarissimo electo Dei.

AARON COPLAND
FOUR MOTETS

1. Help us, O Lord

Help us, O Lord,
For with Thee is the fount of life.
In Thy light shall we see light.
Let us march and try our ways.
Turn to God, turn to God.
It is good that man should wait.
It is good that man should hope

For the salvation of the Lord.
Help us, O Lord. Ah!

2. Thou, O Jehovah, abideth forever

Thou, O Jehovah, abideth forever.
God reigneth over all men and nations.
His throne doth last and doth guide all the ages.
Wherefore willst Thou forsake us ever?
When willst Thou forget us never?
Thou, O Jehovah, abideth forever
And all the length of our days
Will ever be our Saviour.
When then willst Thou forget us never?
Thou, O Jehovah, abideth forever.

3. Have mercy on us, O my Lord

Have mercy on us, O my Lord.
Be not far from us, O my God...
Give ear unto our humble prayer.
Attend and Judge us in Thy might.
Uphold us with Thy guiding hand.
Restore us to Thy kindly light.
Have mercy on us, O my Lord
Be not far from us, O my God.

4. Sing ye praises to our King

Sing ye praises to our King.
O sing ye praises to our King and Ruler.
Come and hear all ye men.
Come and hear my praises.
He doth bless all the earth.
Bringeth peace and comfort.
Shout unto God all ye men.
Shout unto God all your praises.
Come and praise Him all ye men.
Sing ye praises to our King.
Sing ye praises to our King and Ruler.

SAMUEL BARBER
REINCARNATIONS

1. Mary Hines

She is the sky of the sun!
She is the dart of love!
She is the love of my heart!
She is a rune! She is above
The women of the race of Eve,
As the sun is above the moon!
Lovely and airy the view from the hill
That looks down on Ballylea!
But no good sight is good, until
By great good luck you see
The blossom of branches walking towards you,
Airlily, airily.

2. Anthony O'Daly

Since your limbs were laid out
The stars do not shine!
The fish leap not out in the waves!
On our meadows the dew
Does not fall in the morn.
For Anthony O'Daly is dead!
Not a flower can be born!
Not a word can be said!
Not a tree have a leaf!
DAVID DEL TREDICI

Acrostic Song
from 'Final Alice'

A boat, beneath a sunny sky
Lingering onward dreamingly
In an evening of July -

Children three that nestle near,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Pleased a simple tale to hear -
Long has paled that sunny sky:
Echoes fade and memories die:
Autumn frosts have slain July.

Still she haunts me, phantomwise,
Alice moving under skies
Never seen by waking eyes.

Children yet, the tale to hear,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Lovingly shall nestle near.

In a Wonderland they lie,
dreaming as the days go by,
Dreaming as the summers die:

Ever drifting down the stream -
Lingering in the golden gleam -
Life, what is it but a dream?

Lewis Carroll
'Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There'

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BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

Spem in alium CORSACD16016
Music for Monarchs and Magnates
Music by Tallis, Byrd, Tomkins and Gibbons
The Sixteen
Harry Christophers

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE
Performance ***** Sound *****

AN OUTSTANDING DISC FROM START TO FINISH
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BBC RADIO 3, CD REVIEW

Heroes and Heroines, Handel Arias COR16025
Sarah Connolly
The Symphony of Harmony and Invention
Harry Christophers

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE
Performance ***** Sound *****

GRAMOPHONE
Editor’s Choice

The Sixteen
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

After twenty-five years of world-wide performance and recording, The Sixteen is recognised as one of the world’s greatest vocal ensembles. Its special reputation for performing early English polyphony, masterpieces of the Renaissance and a diversity of 20th century music is drawn from the passions of conductor and founder, Harry Christophers. Over eighty recordings, many prize-winning, reflect The Sixteen’s quality in a range of work spanning the music of six hundred years.
The Sixteen has toured throughout Europe, Japan, Australia and the Americas and has given regular performances at major concert halls and festivals worldwide, including the Barbican Centre, Sydney Opera House, and Vienna Musikverein; also the BBC Proms, and the festivals of Salzburg, Granada, Lucerne and Istanbul. The vigour and passion of its performance win new fans wherever it performs. At home in the UK, the group promotes A Choral Pilgrimage, a tour of our finest cathedrals bringing music back to the buildings for which it was written. The choir is enhanced by the existence of its own period instrument orchestra, The Symphony of Harmony and Invention, and through it Harry Christophers brings fresh insights to music including that of Purcell, Monteverdi, JS Bach and Handel. 2004 witnessed the launch of the group’s Handel in Oxford Festival, a weekend of concerts and events dedicated to the life of this great composer.

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