

Rogue Valley Chorale

A graphic of a xylophone is positioned between the words 'Rogue' and 'Chorale' in the title.

LYNN SJOLUND
Director

SPRING CONCERT

May 3, 1987

4:00 p.m.

Eastwood Baptist Church
675 North Keeneway Drive
Medford, Oregon

PROGRAM

Missa: Tu Es Petrus Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

Kyrie

Gloria

Credo

Sanctus

Agnus Dei

No Man Is An Island Jean Berger

It Is Good To Be Merry

Regina McDonald - Soloist

Brazilian Psalm

INTERMISSION

Lark Aaron Copland

Sean Warren - Soloist

Gypsy Songs, Op. 103 Johannes Brahms

1. Gypsy Ho!
2. Where the Rima River Rolls
3. Would You Like To Know
4. Heaven Alone Can Tell
5. Darkeyed Lad
6. Roses Grow All In A Row
7. Dearest, Dost Thou Ever Call
8. Hark The Wind Sighs
9. Far and Wide No Kind Glance I Find
10. Tho' the Moon's Face Clouded Be
11. Rosy Clouds of Evening Veil

Carol Davidson - Pianist

PROGRAM NOTES

The music style which came to dominate music activities of the Church and court during the late Renaissance was that of the Netherlands. Two elements of that style are imitative counterpoint, in which text phrases are usually overlapped, and the parody technique, in which a variety of secular material is introduced into liturgical music. Conservative leaders of the Church became increasingly disturbed by such developments, for in the first case, the text was made largely unintelligible because of the text-phrase over-lappings, and in the other, the sanctity of worship was diluted by the presence of popular tunes and secular madrigal fragments in the sacred forms.

The Protestant Reformation, activated by Martin Luther in 1517, made it clear that certain practices of the Church needed revision. In 1545 a Counterreformational Council was called at Trent to deal with these problems. The Council lasted, with numerous long interruptions, until 1563, the relationship between music and sacred texts coming under discussion in its final year. Although the recommendations that resulted were very general and went no further than calling for greater intelligibility of the text and the avoidance of impure (that is, secular) influences in the music, they did hasten the development of a Mediterranean style — restrained, pure, and balanced — that was carried to its highest point by Palestrina.

Born Giovanni Pierluigi about 1525 in Palestrina, a small town near Rome, the composer later added the name of his birthplace to his own. Unlike most of the other great composers of the Renaissance, Palestrina never left his homeland, Rome and its environs. He was educated as a choirboy at Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, but at about 19, in 1544, he returned to the town of his birth to take up his first position as organist and singer at the cathedral there. The Bishop of Palestrina at that time was elected Pope and took the name Julius III in 1551; shortly thereafter he called the young composer back to Rome to become master of the chapel which sang at services in St. Peter's. For the rest of his life Palestrina worked for one or another church or institution in Rome.

Palestrina was not a priest; but he was once tempted to become one, when in his mid 50's and shortly after his wife, two sons, and two brothers died in the plagues of the late 1570's that almost killed him as well. In 1581, after his first wife's death, he took minor orders, although not vows of celibacy; but he had a sudden change of heart and married the widow of a wealthy furrier. For a decade after his second marriage, he assisted his wife in managing her fur business, in addition to fulfilling his responsibilities as a church musician and composer.

Of Palestrina's 104 masses, 43 were published in his lifetime. The *Tu Es Petrus* was composed in 1572 and is a parody mass based on a sacred motet of the same title by Palestrina. The mass is written for three six-voice antiphonal (alternating) choirs.

JEAN BERGER, born in 1909, grew up in Alsace-Lorraine and attended the universities of Heidelberg and Vienna. He received a PhD in musicology from Heidelberg in 1931. For two years after the outbreak of World War II he taught at the Conservatorio Brasileiro de Musica in Rio de Janeiro. After becoming an American citizen in 1943, he held teaching posts at the University of Illinois, Urbana, and the University of Colorado.

Berger describes his idiom as "unflinchingly tonal." Yet his choral works avoid an academic style, preferring "a pragmatic blend of Franco-German folk music, South American melody and rhythm, and polyphonic modality." *Brazilian Psalm* (1941) has entered the standard American choral repertory, and it remains Berger's most popular composition.

AARON COPLAND, born in 1900, composed *The Lark* during a period he describes as his "tendency toward an imposed simplicity."

The works representing this tendency range from *El Salon Mexico* (1936) to *Appalachian Spring* (1944). The prevailing trend was toward a more direct musical style using quotation or simulation of folk tunes in music to be performed outside the concert hall — ballet, theater, radio, and film.

The Lark, written in 1938, was commissioned by the Dessoff Choir. The first performance, however, was in April, 1943, when the Collegiate Chorale under Robert Shaw sang the premiere at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

JOHANNES BRAHMS, son of a doublebass player, was born in Hamburg on May 7, 1833. He began his piano studies at the age of eight and at thirteen played in taverns to bolster the modest budget of the family. In 1853, he became piano accompanist for the Hungarian violinist, Eduard Remenyi, with whom he toured Germany. It was through Remenyi that Brahms first became interested in Hungarian and gypsy folk music, an influence that stayed with him to the end of his life. Brahms spent fifteen years as a teacher and a concert player. In 1863, he settled in Vienna, where he conducted the *Singakademie* (1863-1864) and the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* (1872-1875). But he preferred independence in service of free composing and spent the rest of his years as a free-lancer. A bachelor, he died from a cancer on April 2, 1897.

Brahm's impulse to compose the *Gypsy Songs* was prompted by a book of twenty-five Hungarian folk-melodies selected by Hugo Conrat with piano accompaniment and German translation. Brahms was delighted with the words of these folk-songs and wrote fresh settings for fifteen of them; eleven of these make up op. 103.

Eduard Hanslick, Viennese music critic and contemporary champion of Brahms' music, described the songs in the following nineteenth century prose: "The *Zigeunerlieder* are a little romance, the events in which we are not told, the persons in which are not named, and yet which we understand perfectly and never forget. The first song begins with a wild cry of 'Ho Gypsy!' The tenor sings his solo, the quartet repeats the strophe . . . In the following quartet, 'Where the Rima River Rolls,' there is still a lingering echo of the passionate mood. But the gypsy lad seems soon to have found another love: the minor mode is followed by the merry key of D major, furious lamentation by light-hearted love making, 'Would You Like To Know When My Dearest Is Most Sweet?' Whereupon his lady love joins in a merry mood, 'Heaven Alone Can Tell How,' after which all the voices unite in exuberant jollity: 'Dark-Eyed Lad His Blue-Eyed Sweetheart Hastens to the Dance.' Next follow two of the loveliest numbers, two gems, one full of playful mockery, the other overflowing with serious, deep feeling. Could anything be daintier than the song, 'Roses Grow All In A Row,' or anything more full of soul than the 'Leave Me Not, Deceive Me Not'? An echo of the mood still hovers on the melancholy mood in G minor, 'Hark The Wind Sighs,' which opens such a note of sincerity in the major key, in the words of blessing: 'God Keep You.' The next piece displays the same alternation between G minor and G major, but again with quite a different color. It opens wildly and stormily with all the voices singing in unison, 'Far And Wide No Kind Glance I Find,' in the wildest and most exultant czardas rhythm. Once again longing and heartache prevail; a deep, fervent emotion quivers in the song, 'Though The Moon's Face Clouded Be,' the accompaniment of which has a suggestion of the distant, metallic tremolo of the cimbalom. The melody of the last piece, 'Rosy Clouds Of Evening,' rushes by, urged on, as it were, at every pause by two powerful, defiant chords. An incomparably poetic conclusion."

Program notes by Keith Campbell.

LYNN SJOLUND has served as the music director and conductor of the Rogue Valley Chorale since its organization in 1973. Mr. Sjolund has earned music degrees from the University of Oregon and has studied in Germany. He has directed choral performances on NBC radio as well as for local, state, and regional conventions prior to his recent retirement as Choral Director and chairman of the Fine Arts Department of Medford Senior High School. Mr. Sjolund has directed the Peter Britt Chorale and made several appearances at the Peter Britt Festival. He currently serves as Music Consultant to School District 549C of Medford and is President of the Northwest Division of the Music Educators National Conference after twice serving as President of the Oregon Music Educators Association.

CAROL DAVIDSON, accompanist, is elementary music specialist at Jacksonville and Wilson schools. She is a graduate of Medford Senior High and the University of Oregon School of Music (1982). Ms. Davidson serves as director of the Rogue Valley Discovery Chorus, and is a published composer of music for youth choirs and multi-image shows.