

RHODES COLLEGE

presents

Rhodes MasterSingers Chorale

Timothy W. Sharp, Conductor

David Ramsey, Associate Conductor
and Accompanist

Cantata Misericordium, Op. 69
Benjamin Britten

Requiem, Op. 48
Gabriel Fauré

February 24, 2002

3:00 p. m.

St. Peter's Catholic Church

Memphis, Tennessee

March 3, 2002

3:00 p. m.

Temple Adas Israel

Brownsville, Tennessee

PROGRAM

Cantata Misericordium, Op. 69

Benjamin Britten
(1913-1976)

Libretto by Patrick Wilkinson

Randal Rushing, tenor
Barry Fowler, baritone

CHORUS

Beati misericordes.
Beati qui dolore corporis
afflictis succurrunt.
Audite vocem Romani:

TENOR

'Deus est mortali iuvare mortalem.'

CHORUS

Audite vocem Iudaei:

BARYTONUS

'Proximum tuum, sicut te ipsum, ama.'

TENOR ET BARYTONUS

At proximus meus quis est?

CHORUS

Iesu parabola iam nobis fiat fabula.

CHORUS

En viator qui descendit
ab Ierusalem in Iericho.

VIATOR (*Barytonus*)

Ah quam longa est haec via,
quam per deserta loca.
Terret me solitudo, terret omnis rupes,
omne arbustum. Insidias timeo.
Heus, asine, propera, propera.

CHORUS

Cave, viator, cave! Latent istis
in umbris latrones.
Iam prodeunt, iam circumstant.
Cave, viator, cave!

CHORUS

*Blessed are the merciful.
Blessed are those who succour
the afflicted in body.
Hear the voice of a Roman:*

TENOR

'For man to love man is God.'

CHORUS

Hear the voice of a Jew:

BARITONE

'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'

TENOR AND BARITONE

But who is my neighbor?

CHORUS

Let us now enact the parable of Jesus.

CHORUS

*Behold a traveler going down
from Jerusalem to Jericho.*

TRAVELER (*Baritone*)

*Ah how long this way is, how desolate
the country! I am afraid of the
solitude, of every rock,
of every shrub. I fear an ambush.
Hey, donkey, hurry, hurry.*

CHORUS

*Beware, traveler, beware!
Robbers are lurking in those shadows.
Now they are coming forward,
now they are surrounding you.
Beware, traveler, beware!*

VIATOR

Qui estis homines? Cur me sic intuemini?
Atat! Plaga!
Atatae! Pugnis, fustibus vapulo.
Iam spoliior, nudor.
Quo fugit asinus? Eheu relinquo
humi prostratus,
semivivus, solus, inops.

CHORUS

Ubi nunc latrones isti? Quam cito
ex oculis elapsi sunt.
Solitudo ubique, solitudo et silentium.
quis huic succurret
in tanta vastitate?

TRAVELER

What men are you?
Why do you look at me like that?
Oh, a blow! Oh! Oh! Fists and cudgels!
Robbed and stripped!
Where has my ass gone? Alas, I am left
prostrate on the ground, half dead,
alone, and helpless.

CHORUS

Where have those robbers gone?
How quickly they have vanished.
Solitude everywhere, solitude and silence.
Who will help this man
in such a wilderness?

Passage of time : Orchestra

CHORUS

Bono nunc animo es, viator.
Nam tibi appropinquat
Iter faciens qui habitu est sacerdos
Is certe sublevabit.
Compella eum.

CHORUS

Be of good cheer, traveler:
there is someone approaching
along the road who by his dress is a priest.
Surely he will rescue you.
Hail him.

VIATOR

Subveni, ah subveni: ne patere me mori.

TRAVELER

Help, oh help me: do not let me die.

CHORUS

Dure sacerdos, quid oculos avertis?
Quid procul praeteris?
Ut praeterit, ut abit ex oculis
homo sacerrimus.

CHORUS

Hard-hearted priest, why do you look away,
why do you pass by on the other side?
See, he is passing by, he is vanishing from sight,
the accursed holy man!

Passage of time: Orchestra

CHORUS

En alter in conspectum venit.
Tolle rursus, abiecte, animos.
Qui accedit est Levita.
Is certe sublevabit.

CHORUS

Look, another is coming in sight.
Raise your spirits, outcast, again.
The man who is coming is a Levite.
He surely will rescue you.

VIATOR

Fer opem, fer opem atrociter
mihi vulnerato.

TRAVELER

Give me aid, give me aid;
I am terribly wounded.

CHORUS

O ferrea hominum corda! Hic quoque
conspexit iacentem, praeteriit,
accleravit gradum. Timetne
cadaveris ne tactu polluaturn?
I nunc, sacrosancte Levita,

CHORUS

Oh the hard hearts of men! This one too
saw him lying there, passed by and
hastened his pace. Is he afraid
of being polluted by touching a corpse?
Go on, sacrosanct Levite,

legis tuae praescriptiones
inhumanas observa.

*observe the inhuman prescriptions
of your law.*

Passage of time : Orchestra

CHORUS

Ecce, tertius apparet – sed languescit
spes auxilii : nam propior
contemptus
Samaritanus. Quid interest
Samaritani Iudaei negotia
suscipere molesta?

CHORUS

*See now, a third is appearing –
but hope of relief is fading: videtur esse
for from near he is seen to be only
a despised Samaritan. What interest
has a Samaritan in taking up
the troublesome affairs of a Jew?*

VIATOR

Miserere mei, hospes, afflicti.

TRAVELER

Pity me, stranger, pity me: I am suffering.

SAMARITANUS (*Tenor*)

Ah, di boni! Quid audio?
Quid ante pedes iam video?
Iacet hic nescioquis immania
passus. Age, primum
haec vulnera adligem.
Ubi mihi vinum? Ubi oleum?
Sursum, iam sursum imponam
te in tergum iumentum, mei.

SAMARITAN (*Tenor*)

*Ah, good gods! What do I hear?
What do I see before my feet?
Here lies someone
who has been horribly treated.
Come, first let me bind up
these wounds. Where is my
wine, my oil? Up, now I will
lift you up to the back of my breast.*

CHORUS

Vincit, ecce, vincit tandem misericordia.
Hic pedes ipse comitatur eum
in deversorium.

CHORUS

*Triumph! Mercy is triumphing at last.
This man is accompanying him
to an inn himself on foot.*

SAMARITANUS

Ohe, caupo, siquid audis: aperi portam.
Viatorem Adfero a latronibus
spoliatum. Aperi, quaeso...
Benigne.
Para nobis cenam, caupo,
para cubuculum, amabo.
Mihi cras abeundum erit.
Cura hunc dum convalescat.
Dabo tibi duos denarios.

SAMARITAN

*Ho, innkeeper, do you hear? Open the door.
I have with me a traveler
who has been stripped by robbers.
Open, please... Thank you.
Prepare us supper, innkeeper,
and a room, please.
Tomorrow I shall have to go on.
Look after this man till he gets better.
I will give you two denarii.*

VIATOR

Iam rursus revivesco. Iam spes
in animum redit.
Optime hospitum, quis es?
Unde es gentum?
Salvus quomodo tibi gratias
referam dignas?

TRAVELER

*I am coming back to life again.
Hope is reviving in me.
Best of strangers, who are you?
From what people do you come?
I am saved, and how
can I thank you worthily?*

SAMARITANUS

Quis sim, unde sim gentium,
parce quaerere.

Dormi nunc, amice, dormi:
iniuriarum obliviscere.

SAMARITAN

*Who I am, and what my people,
ask no more.*

*Sleep now, my friend, sleep:
forget your injuries.*

CHORUS

Mitis huius adiutoris qui servavit saucium.

Proximumque sibi duxit

hospitem incognitum,

O si similes existant

ubicumque gentium!

Morbus gliscit, Mars incedit,

fames late superat ;

Sed mortales, alter quando

alterum sic sublevat, e dolore

procreata caritas consociat.

CHORUS

O that men like this gentle helper,

who saved a wounded man

and treated as his neighbor

an unknown stranger,

may be found all over the world.

Disease is spreading, war is stalking,

famine reigns far and wide.

But when one mortal

relieves another like this,

charity springing from pain unites them.

TENOR ET BARYTONUS

Quis sit proximus tuus iam scis.

TENOR AND BARITONE

Who your neighbor is, now you know.

CHORUS

Vade et tu fac similiter.

CHORUS

Go and do likewise.



Requiem, Op. 48

Gabriel Fauré
(1845-1924)

Barry Fowler, baritone
Dorothy Wells, soprano

INTROITUS

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

*Rest eternal grant them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine on them.*

Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Sion,
et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem.

*To thee praise is due, O God, in Zion,
and to thee vows are recited in Jerusalem.*

Exaudi orationem meam;
ad te omnis caro veniet.

*Hear my prayer,
unto thee all flesh shall come.*

KYRIE

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

OFFERTORIUM

Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae,
libera animas defunctorum
de poenis inferni,
et de profundo lacu.

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,
deliver the souls of the dead
from punishment in the inferno,
and from the infernal lake.

Libera eas de ore leonis,
ne absorbeat eas tartarus,
ne cadant in obscurum.

Deliver them from the mouth of the lion,
lest the abyss swallow them up,
lest they fall into the darkness.

Hostias et preces tibi,
Domine, laudis offerimus.

Sacrifices and prayers to thee,
O Lord, we offer with praise.

Tu suscipe pro animabus illis
quarum hodie memoriam facimus.

O receive them for the souls of those
whom today we commemorate.

Fac eas, Domine,
de morte transire ad vitam,
quam olim Abrahae promisisti,
et semini eius.

Make them, O Lord,
to pass from death to life,
as thou of old hast promised Abraham
and his seed.

SANCTUS

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.

Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of hosts.

Pleni sunt coeli et terra
gloria tua.

The heavens and earth are filled
with thy glory.

Hosanna in excelsis.

Hosanna in the highest.

PIE JESU

Pie Jesu Domine,
dona eis requiem,
requiem sempiternam.

Merciful Lord Jesus,
grant them rest,
rest everlasting.

AGNUS DEI

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona eis requiem,
requiem sempiternam.

Lamb of God,
who taketh away the sins of the world,
grant them rest,
rest everlasting.

LUX AETERNA

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine,
cum sanctis tuis in aeternum,
quia pius es.

Let light eternal shine on them, O Lord,
with thy saints forever,
for thou art merciful.

Requiem aeternam, dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Rest eternal grant them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine on them.

LIBERA ME

Libera me, Domine,
de morte aeterna,
in die illa tremenda
quando coeli movendi sunt et terra,
dum veneris judicare
saeculum per ignem.

Deliver me, O Lord,
from eternal death,
on that fearful day
when the heavens are moved and the earth,
when thou shalt come to judge
the world through fire.

Tremens factus sum ego, et timeo
dum discussio venerit,
atque ventura ira.

I am made to tremble, and I fear,
when the desolation shall come,
and also the coming wrath.

Dies illa, dies irae,
calamitatis et miseriae,
dies magna et amara valde.

That day, the day of wrath,
calamity, and misery,
that terrible and exceedingly bitter day.

Requiem aeternam, dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Rest eternal grant them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine on them.

IN PARADISUM

In paradisum deducant te angeli,
in tuo adventu
suscipiant te martyres,
et perducant te
in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem.

May the angels lead you into paradise,
may the martyrs receive you
in your coming,
and may they guide you
into the holy city, Jerusalem.

Chorus angelorum te suscipiat,
et cum Lazaro quondam paupere
aeternam habeas requiem.

May the chorus of angels receive you
and with Lazarus once poor
may you have eternal rest.

PROGRAM NOTES

Cantata Misericordium, Op. 69 (1963)

Benjamin Britten's mini-masterpiece *Cantata Misericordium* begins with the tempo marking "lento," dictating both the speed as well as the mood of this poignant work based upon the parable told in Luke 10:30-36. The story begins with the words "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves..." signaling

the familiar story of the Good Samaritan. These words begin the choral narrative section of the cantata, but only after the moral of the story is first outlined by the choir with the words "Beati misericordes" ["Blessed are the merciful"], also the text from Greek scriptures as given by Christ in the Beatitudes in his Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:7).

This small-scale choral work was first performed in 1963 which was within a year of the first performance of Britten's massive *War Requiem*. Both works have several musical characteristics in common, and it is obvious that many of the ideas in *Cantata Misericordium* were sketches Britten used for the composition of *War Requiem*. The subject matter of the shorter work makes it a fitting follow-up to the larger work which is perhaps Britten's best known and most profound musical statement. Compassion is the theme of both masterpieces, and nowhere are the similarities more pronounced and poignant as they are at the end of both works. At the conclusion of *War Requiem* we hear the haunting words "Sleep now" sung by the choir at a distance; at the conclusion of the *Cantata Misericordium* we hear the Samaritan sing the words "Dormi nunc, amice dormi" ["sleep now, friend, sleep"]. Similarly, *Cantata Misericordium* concludes with a statement of the overarching moral point "Quis sit proximus tuus iam scis" ["Who your neighbor is, now you know"].

It was the occasion of London's Promenade Concerts in 1963 which announced a "new cantata for tenor, baritone, chorus and orchestra" for the concert on September 12. This date marked Britten's fiftieth birthday. While this particular premiere date is completely coincidental, it does not escape our attention of the fact that September 12 is a powerful date in the contemporary application of the subject and moral conclusion of this work. How is it possible after September 11 to read the words "Morbus gliscit, Mars incedit, fames late superat; sed mortales, alter quando alterum sic sublevat, e dolore procreata caritas consociat" ["Disease is spreading, war is stalking, famine reigns far and wide. But when one mortal relieves another like this, charity springing from pain unites them"] the same as before?

Britten himself conducted the work on September 12, with the soloists he had in mind in the composition of the tenor and baritone roles, tenor Peter Pears and baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, singing the solo lines. According to the title page of the score "Cantata Misericordium" was "composed for and first performed at the solemn ceremony on the commemoration day of the centenary of the Red Cross, Geneva, September 1st, 1963," where it was conducted by Ernest Ansermet.

Britten used Latin text throughout the work to set the parable. The libretto is by Patrick Wilkinson, and significantly, no translation or poetic transcription is provided throughout the score, indicating that the composer had no intention for the work to be sung in any language other than Latin. Even the notes on the title page which reveal the first performance and dedicatory information are given first in Latin. To stress the point even further, the score indicates "Londini in aedibus Boosey et Hawkes," Latin for "published in London by Boosey & Hawkes!"

A chamber orchestra made up of string quartet, strings, harp, piano and timpani provide dramatic accompaniment and picturesque interludes which are marked as "passage of time" throughout the work. The arrival of first the Priest, then the Levite, and finally the Samaritan is each time preceded by an orchestral interlude. Soloists provide the voice of

each of the principal characters, while the chorus serves as narrator and commentator throughout the drama.

It takes very little stretch of the imagination to see that this work could be classified as an oratorio, for if costume and set were provided, the piece could be counted as another brilliant Britten opera. However, the composer himself labeled the work a "cantata," a term for a form that is hardly used outside the circle of J. S. Bach's historic works for the church. Perhaps this label is Britten's commentary on the purpose of this masterpiece.

Requiem, Op. 48 (1888)

Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem* was begun in 1886 and finished early in 1888. The musical form of the mass for the dead was well established by Fauré's time, and variations on this form had already evolved as seen in the setting by Johannes Brahms. And, like the masterpieces by Fauré and Brahms, the other works under this heading bring immediate and signature aural images to mind with the recognizable combination of the composer's name and the form: Mozart's *Requiem*; Berlioz's *Requiem*; Rheinberger's *Requiem*; Verdi's *Requiem*; Brahms's *A German Requiem*; Duruflé's *Requiem*; Britten's *War Requiem*; Fauré's *Requiem*.

Unlike other requiems, however, Fauré's setting contains very little if any sense of doom or worry. Even the brief descent into hell during the "dies irae" ("day of wrath") movement has very little angst. This is not a work of doubt and darkness, but rather one of light and eternal peace. It expresses no fear of death, but rather depicts the warmth, comfort, and radiance of light perpetual.

The work begins with a powerful striking of a unison D in the orchestra, leading to a quiet D-minor entrance from the choral forces. The momentum gathers and moves toward the statement of "et lux perpetua" ("light perpetual"), which is the overarching image of the entire work. Violas carry most of the string work throughout the piece and are heard in this role early in the work. Fauré's extraordinary gift for melody is heard throughout every movement, but combined with his own gift is the influence of modal melodies and chant. The use of such melodic ideas gives the work an ancient flavor at times, adding to the historic comfort which characterizes the work.

Fauré uses musical techniques to move the audience from darkness to light. In the second movement he does this by orchestrating from the lowest end of the string section to an unaccompanied entrance of the middle voices of the choir. In addition, he takes the work back in time almost 500 years by the introduction of two-part canon and chant in these unaccompanied sections. It is Fauré's own voice we hear as the baritone enters with the plainchant text "Hostias." This was a very personal statement by Fauré, made clear in this movement. The choral forces come to Fauré to calm his soul, and a gentle, transforming "amen" brings peace at the conclusion of the movement.

Again in the "Sanctus" Fauré uses key and melodic progression to create a sense of movement from darkness to light. This time his melodic fragments continue to move up, one note at a time, until the powerful "hosanna" as well as the home key is reached. Orchestrally, Fauré moves away from the lower, richer sound of the cellos and violas, and now introduces the violin as solo instrument accompanied by harp. It is amazing how

high a violin sounds after hearing two movements of predominantly low string sonorities. The shimmer of harp, high strings and the brilliant "hosannas" shouted by the choir are a full opening of curtains, blinds, windows and all that would prevent light from flooding in.

It is hard to use the term "hit song" in the context of such a beautiful and moving work, but if the term ever applied, it applies to the "Pie Jesu" solo sung by soprano. The tempo is purposefully slow to bring out the gorgeous and long melodic phrases Fauré conceived. This is a hymn of simple and pure beauty, but it is a beauty of understanding and maturity, not one of naiveté, or innocence. To this end Fauré intended the solo to be sung by an adult female singer. The simplicity is also underscored by the simple pentatonic interjections heard in the orchestral interludes between the soloist's statements.

"Light" ["Lux"] makes its grandest and most direct entrance in the "Agnus Dei" movement. This time it enters as laser-pure, clean, direct, unison, and unaccompanied. The critical moment when "Lux" is sung is prepared by both the strings and the full chorus as a hymn-like chorale introduced by the strings and tenors. As if threatening the purity of this "light," a very thick harmonization follows the sound of the unison C sung by the sopranos. The work modulates down to A-flat and begins a harmonic spiral downward, moving away from the "light." The most poignant moment of angst throughout the work is then heard in the cry "quia pius es" ("for thou art merciful"), followed by a violent orchestral statement, leading the work to a powerful silence... and then to a return to the very beginning of the work with the repetition of the same sounds heard at the initial "Requiem aeternam." A cry of doubt has reentered the picture along with a statement of faith.

As the work progresses to the "Libera me" movement, which deals with the day of wrath and judgment aspect of the historic text, the movement is set in the same harmonic environment as the opening "Requiem aeternam." The reflective solo sung by the baritone, again Fauré's own baritone voice, is a beautiful but pensive aria, later shared by the entire choir. The drama of this movement is heightened by the beating of the heart heard in the pizzicato strings accompanying the solo line. Fauré does deal with the threat of darkness, but he does so quickly in his brief but vivid "Dies Irae" ["Day of Wrath"].

Darkness is quickly dispelled in the movement from the D-minor conclusion of the preceding movement to the D-Major introduction of the final "In Paradisum," assisted again by the shimmer of harp, upper strings, and sopranos in unison. There is no question that the listener has been transported to a place of eternal light as the angelic sopranos lift the sound higher and higher, and as the arpeggios proceed in what sounds like unmeasured time. The pulsing from the arpeggios in the orchestra as well as the organ wrap the listener in the comfort of a lullaby. Light surrounds the listener through sound. There is not even the remotest thought of darkness or death. A warm, comforting four-part male choral texture wraps around the soprano melody with three welcoming statements to "Jerusalem." The final cadence brings all of the musical forces to the resting key of D-Major, the historic key of joy, celebration, and light perpetual.

--notes by Tim Sharp

MasterSingers Chorale

Sopranos

Libby Austin
Jordan Badgett '03
Christine Bertz '98
Carole Blankenship '85
Becca Cox
Christine Dietz '02
Pam Dotson
Margaret Garner '05
Patty Harris
Elisabeth Lay
Lorinda Lewis
Erin Maguire
Sarah May '03
Shelley Miller '98
Keisha Moses '03
Sarah Pruett '02
Carolyn Ransford '98
Sowgand Sheikholeslami
Sheila Vamplin
Dorothy Wells '82

Tenors

Larry Ahokas
Jim Brinson '70
Lance Harris
Erin Johnston '04
Greg Koziel
David Lay
Kyle Linson
Allan Lummus
Drew Massengale
Scott Sadler
Isaac Thomas
Trey Thomas
Pat Walker

Altos

Raven Babcock '01
Joyce Baker
Amanda Brewer '01
Katie Castille '02
Susanna Cullen
Brook Fries
Amanda Hall '98
Marci Hendrix
Amber Isom-Thompson '96
Ellen Koziel
Sue Lease
Marie Lindquist
Joy Lingerfelt
Susan Mallory
Teresa Peter
Jean Schmidt
Oma Strickland
Maria Wright '95

Basses

Gordon Bigelow
Shane Burns
Bill Flores
Robert Harris
Robert Klingbeil '00
Christian Masters '04
Kevin Olsen '00
Robert Patterson
Jon Peter
J.O. Ray
Ben Scott '94
Brad Terhune '95
Dan Witherspoon '82