



**HODIE**

The collaboration of the **BROADWAY SYMPHONY** and the **SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS** has become a respected musical force in the Pacific Northwest. This company of volunteer artists is dedicated to the presentation of exciting and polished musical performances. Each ensemble rehearses at University Unitarian Church, where they enjoy the status of artists-in-residence, and where they further develop their repertoire under conductor George Shangrow. Membership is by audition, and general auditions for vacant positions are held every August and September. On several occasions each season, smaller ensembles are formed from the main ensembles for the performance of chamber music. Especially important to the Broadway Symphony/Seattle Chamber Singers is the support and presentation of local performing artists and the work of local composers.

**GEORGE SHANGROW**, Music Director and Conductor of the Broadway Symphony and Seattle Chamber Singers, is a native of Seattle who founded the chorus (in 1968) and the orchestra (in 1978) in order to give Seattle area artists and audiences a chance to hear and perform great works of music. In addition to acclaimed performances of the classical music repertoire for both chorus and orchestra, he has brought to Seattle world premieres of operas, choral works, and symphonies by Seattle's most gifted local composers. Mr. Shangrow has toured Europe as a conductor and keyboard artist; appeared as a guest conductor with the Seattle Symphony, Northwest Chamber Orchestra, and East Texas University Opera; and lectures frequently for the Seattle Opera and Symphony. As Director of Music for University Unitarian Church, Mr. Shangrow is a leader in the performance of sacred music, and as the guiding producer of The Bach Year in Seattle (1985) he brought to our city the world's most extensive celebration of the music of J. S. Bach.

Soprano **POLLY DETELS** has extensive performing credits in the Pacific Northwest and Texas, where she now lives and works. She has also appeared in recitals in Europe, the Midwest, and on the East Coast. Ms. Detels is currently on the faculty at East Texas State University where she teaches voice and music literature and is head of the opera program, assembling credits in production, translation, direction, and scenic design. She has appeared as a soloist with the Broadway Symphony/Seattle Chamber Singers on many occasions in the past, most recently in the leading role in the world premiere of Huntly Beyer's opera *Stories Told to a Lover*.

**BARTON GREEN** returns as tenor soloist for the Broadway Symphony/Seattle Chamber Singers with whom he has sung Bach's *St. John Passion*, *Magnificat*, *B Minor Mass* and *Christmas Oratorio* as well as Haydn's *The Seasons*. A graduate of the University of Washington, he has been seen in *Tosca*, *Eugene Onegin* and *Otello* with the Seattle Opera. With the Tacoma-Pierce County Opera he sang the title role of *Tamino in The Magic Flute* and *Jenik in The Bartered Bride*. Recent engagements include *Carmen* with the Seattle Opera and the role of the Prince in *Prokofiev's Love for Three Oranges* in Berkeley, California.

**MICHAEL DELOS**, bass-baritone, is one of America's busiest young singers, with concert and opera credits throughout the United States and Canada. Trained in Vienna, Delos has made a specialty of the Bach repertoire. In the 1985 Tri-centenary year, he performed the *St. Matthew Passion* with noted conductor Margaret Hillis, as well as the *Christmas Oratorio*, *St. John Passion* and *B Minor Mass* in Washington, Oregon, and California. A mainstay of the Seattle Opera since 1979, Delos also performs regularly with the opera companies of Chicago, Vancouver, Portland and Boise, and is currently under contract to the New York City Opera. Mr. Delos has appeared frequently with the Broadway Symphony/Seattle Chamber Singers, most recently in Haydn's *The Seasons*.

**THE BROADWAY SYMPHONY**  
and the  
**SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS**  
George Shangrow, conductor

present

**A Concert for Christmas**

) HODIE ..... Ralph Vaughan Williams  
Polly Detels, *Soprano*  
Barton Green, *Tenor*  
Michael Delos, *Bass-baritone*

**INTERMISSION**

A CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL ..... arr. Leroy Anderson

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL ..... arr. David Willcocks

GOD REST YOU, MERRY GENTLEMEN ..... arr. David Willcocks

CHRISTMAS DAY ..... Gustav Holst

THE FIRST NOWELL ..... arr. David Willcocks

CHRISTMAS MEDLEY ..... arr. Bruce Chase

*It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas*

*Silver Bells*

*The Christmas Song*

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING ..... arr. David Willcocks

) SLEIGH RIDE ..... Leroy Anderson

December 4 & 6, 1987

St. Alphonsus Church

This performance of *Hodie* is by permission from Oxford University Press

## Program Notes

by Gary Fladmoer

### Ralph Vaughan Williams (*Hodie (This Day)*)

Ralph Vaughan Williams once said of himself that "the composer must not shut himself up and think about art, he must live with his fellows and make his art an expression of the whole life of the community." In that one remark Vaughan Williams concisely described the very essence of his own musical style, a musical language which blended the elements of English folksong, English hymnody, and English literature of the seventeenth century into expressions which brought the composer to the forefront among English nationalist composers of the twentieth century.

Vaughan Williams was born in Down Ampney, England, in 1872. He attended the Royal College of Music where he studied with Hubert Parry and Charles Villiers Stanford. He then studied for a time in Berlin with Max Bruch. After receiving a doctorate from Cambridge in 1901, Vaughan Williams served as organist at the St. Barnabas Church in London, founded and led a choral and orchestral society, edited the *English Hymnal*, and began his career as a composer. In 1904 he first became acquainted with the folksongs of the Tudor period of English history. The music made such an impression upon him that he joined the Folk-Song Society and dedicated himself to the study and research of this music. His own compositional goal became that of writing ambitious compositions in which he might showcase the rich heritage of the English folksong. In 1908, while still disenchanted with his own composing skills, he went to Paris and studied for eight months with Maurice Ravel. This experience gave him new confidence and solidified the view that he could best reach his goal of nationalistic expression in music by making the English folksong his point of departure. His approach served him well in an active compositional career which ended only with his death in 1958, his eighty-sixth year.

*Hodie* is the last of the great large-scale choral works which Vaughan Williams composed. Written during 1953 and 1954, it was first performed when the composer was nearly eighty-two, and James Day, one of the several biographers of Vaughan Williams, suggests that the music might better have been viewed as the product of a man twenty-two than one of eighty-two. Such an analysis is indicative of the youthful exuberance which pervades the work.

A cantata for Christmas, *Hodie* is scored for large orchestra, organ, soprano, tenor, baritone, treble voices, and chorus. As he had done in the text of his *Dona Nobis Pacem*, Vaughan Williams melded verses from the Scriptures with poetic accounts of the nativity. The result was the combination of beautifully simple narration of the Christmas story with profoundly moving expressions of adoration for a child whose birth would change the lives of people for centuries to come.

The work opens with a Prologue which proclaims with festive rejoicing the birth of Christ. Vaughan Williams chose the text from the *Vespers for Christmas Day* which reads "Nowell! Hodie Christus natus est" — Nowell! This day Christ is born. To conclude the movement he adds a contrasting "Alleluia" which features off-the-beat chordal accompaniment and modal scale patterns which lend an air of mystery to the music.

The second movement is a narration of the verses from the gospels of Matthew and Luke which tell of the anguish of Joseph at his discovery of Mary's pregnancy and his reassurances by the angel of the Lord.

The soprano then sings a tender song, "It was the winter wild, while the Heaven-born child, all meanly wrapt, in the rude manger lies." The text is Milton's *From Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*.

Additional narration follows. This time it is a passage from the second chapter of Luke which relates the story of the taxation decree of Caesar Augustus and the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem to comply with the decree. While there Mary gave birth to a son, wrapping him in swaddling clothes and laying him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

A text by Miles Coverdale, after Martin Luther, serves as the inspiration for the fifth movement, a chorale, "The blessed Son of God only in a crib full poor did lie." This is followed by the narration of the story of the appearance of the angel of the Lord to the shepherds in the field, their fear and reassurance, their adoration of the child in Bethlehem, and their own telling of the story of Christ's birth.

The imagery of the manger scene and the adoration of the child as seen through present-day eyes are depicted in the seventh movement, "The Oxen." The text is a poem by Thomas Hardy, "Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock. 'Now they are all on their knees,' an elder said as we sat in a flock by the embers in hearth side ease."

A brief narration from the second chapter of Luke follows telling of the return of the shepherds from their visit to the manger and their glorifying and praising of God for all they had heard and seen.

Their song is heard in a setting of the poetry of George Herbert, "The shepherds sing; and shall I silent be? My god, no hymn for thee? My soul's a shepherd too: a flock it feeds of thoughts and words, and deeds."

Another verse from the second chapter of Luke tells of Mary's consideration of the events she had experienced and serves as the introduction to the lullaby, "Sweet was the song the Virgin sang." This leads to the hymn setting of William Drummond's "Bright Portals," the text of which begins, "Bright portals of the sky, emboss'd with sparkling stars, doors of eternity, with diamantine bars, your arras rich uphold, Loose all your bolts and springs, open wide your leaves of gold, that in your roofs may come the King of Kings."

Narration again appears to tell of the journey of wise men from the east to seek out the new-born king and worship him. The story is then told musically in "The March of the Three Kings." The text, "From kingdoms of wisdom secret and far com Caspar, Melchior, Balthasar; they ride through time, they ride through night led by the star's foretelling light," is from a poem by Ursula Vaughan Williams, whom the composer had married in 1953 at the age of eighty.

A verse of anonymous authorship and one by Ursula Vaughan Williams combine to furnish the text to the fifteenth movement, a chorale which calls us to wake from the dreams of night to the Light brought into the world by the birth of Christ.

The cantata closes with an epilogue. First, the gospel of John tells us of the Word being made flesh in Christ. Then Vaughan Williams returns to Milton's *From Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* to give us a universal vision of peace for all seasons. In "Ring out, ye crystal spheres," we are exhorted to musically rejoice at the events of the first Christmas.

The music is full of the joy and goodwill of a good man. Cecil Gray probably summed up the essence of Ralph Vaughan Williams as it appears in *Hodie* when he wrote, "He flounders about in the sea of his ideas like a vast and ungainly porpoise, with great puffing and blowing; yet in the end, after tremendous efforts and an almost heroic tenacity, there emerges, dripping and exhausted from the struggle, a real and lovable personality, unassuming, modest, and almost apologetic. His personality is wholly and without admixture English, and this is at once his virtue and his defect."

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