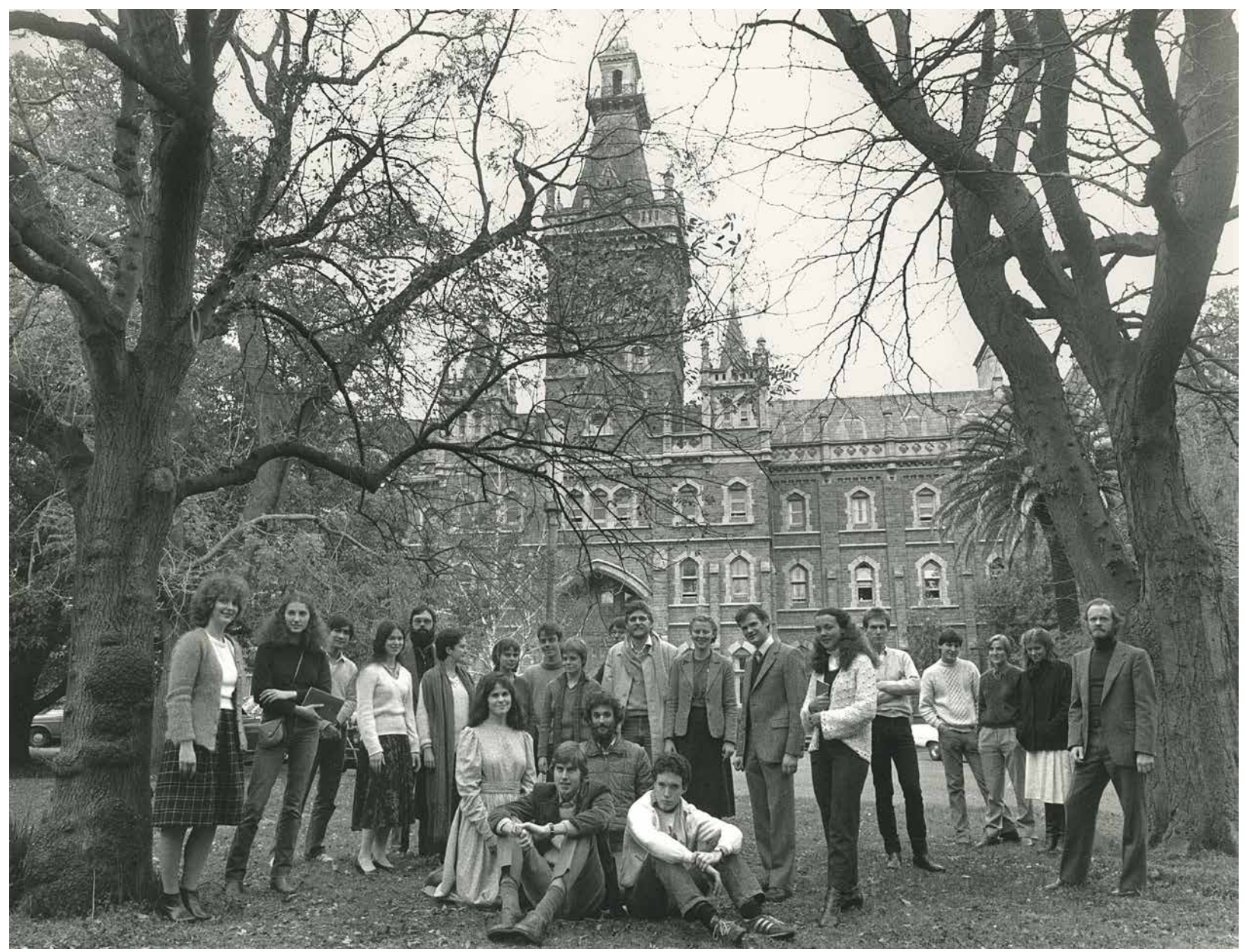


The Choir of Ormond College Melbourne



directed by Douglas Lawrence

anon

1 *Rejoice in the Lord Alway*

Thomas Morley (1557-1603)

2 *Nolo Mortem Peccatoris*

Ludovico Grossi da Viadana (1564-1645)

3 *Exsultate Justi*

Adrian Batten (ca. 1585-1637)

4 *Deliver us, O Lord our God*

5 *O Sing joyfully*

William Byrd (1543-1623) – from the Second Service

6 *Magnificat*

7 *Nunc Dimittis*

Boris Ord (1897-1961)

8 *Adam Lay Ybounden*

Edward Bairstow (1874-1946)

9 *Let all Mortal Flesh keep Silence*

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

10 *A Hymn to the Virgin*

Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

11 *Let all Mortal Flesh keep Silence*

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

12 *Lord, Thou has been our Refuge*



Founded in 1982 by the present choirmaster, Douglas Lawrence, the Choir of Ormond College consists of 22 auditioned members, drawn mostly from the student body of the college. The choir gives a number of public concerts each year, “performing such works as J.S. Bach’s cantata, *Christ lag in Todesbanden*, the ‘Nelson’ Mass of Haydn and Handel’s Messiah with the Camerata Lorenzo Chamber Orchestra. As well as this, the group has an important function in the religious life of the college, providing appropriate liturgical music for the services held in the chapel each week during term. In this context, the choir specialises in music composed during two great periods of English church music: the sixteenth and twentieth centuries.

Tracks 1-7

The formation of the Church of England and its insistence on English as the primary language of the liturgy led to a demise of many of the musical forms associated with the Roman Church. Accordingly, composers were obliged to modify existing forms or evolve new ones to adequately set the English language. As a result, liturgical music of this time focuses on two principal forms, the anthem and the service, replacing the Latin motet and the plainchant rendering of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis.

‘Rejoice in the Lord Alway’, once erroneously attributed to John Redford, is representative of the anthem style at this time. The word setting is mainly syllabic, with rhythmic impetus being provided by the use of imitation, as at the beginning of the piece. The text is taken from Phillippians, Chapter IV (vv. 4-7).

Adrian Batten (ca. 1585-1637) was organist of St. Paul’s Cathedral, London and a composer of much church music. He is represented here by two anthems which display the contemporary predilection for simple homophonic settings which make for easy intelligibility. The first, ‘o Sing Joyfully’, is an aptly extrovert setting of Psalm 81 (vv. 1-4) which exhorts the congregation to ‘make a cheerful noise unto the God of Jacob’, while ‘Deliver us, o Lord our God’ is a contrastingly reserved setting of

Psalm 106 (vv. 5-6).

William Byrd (1543-1623) was also an organist, both at Lincoln Cathedral and in the Chapel Royal of Queen Elizabeth, and is considered one of the very greatest composers of his time. His Second Service is a setting of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis and is representative of the formal conception of these canticles at the time. Whereas the anthems composed in the sixteenth century were largely written without independent accompaniment, the service is accompanied by the organ throughout and uses soloistic writing for different sections of the choir.

Like Batten, Thomas Morley (1557-1603) was organist of St. Paul’s and like Byrd, was granted a monopoly on the printing of music by the Queen. It is also possible that Morley was acquainted with Shakespeare, as it is known that Morley’s settings of some of the lyrics were used in contemporary productions. ‘Nolo Mortem Peccatoris’ has been described as a secular motet, despite its use of English text in all verses but the first. It manifests many of the stylistic characteristics of its time, including an example of harmonic ‘word-painting’ where a semitonal dissonance is sounded in the alto and tenor parts at the words ‘Father, behold my painful smart’.

‘Exsultate Justi’, by Ludovico Grossi da Viadana (1564-1645) shows the extent to which the counter reformation affected the development of the motet in Europe.

The Council of Trent, 1545-63, like Archbishop Cranmer in England, saw intelligibility of text as more desirable than the complex polyphony of Palestrina and the *ars perfecta*. The result is a work like Viadana's, homophonic with syllabic setting of the words. In this respect the motet is stylistically very close to the sixteenth century anthem. The text of this piece, as is the case with the anthems presented here, is from the Psalms, in this instance Psalm 32 (vv. 1-3) which exhorts the people to 'Raise your voices and sound His praise'.

Tracks 8-12

The so-called English Renaissance in music began in the late nineteenth century and produced a number of distinctively English composers. A common interest among composers, particularly in the first half of the present century, was in the exploration of older British music. This took the form of the collection of folk music and the revival of music from the Tudor period.

The latter interest is evident in the setting of the old carol 'Adam Lay Ybounden' by Boris Ord (1897-1961). Ord was an organist, harpsichord player and scholar associated with Cambridge University. He was also a friend of Vaughan Williams, the untitled leader of the folk song movement, and this piece perhaps reflects that influence. It is a

simple unaccompanied strophic setting which, like much of the Renaissance music here, is syllabic and homophonic, with the exception of the concluding 'Deo Gratias'. The harmonic idiom is modal, which also suggests the influence of an earlier period.

Sir Edward Bairstow (1874-1946), a distinguished organist and scholar, was also a composer of some talent. His a capella setting of 'Let all Mortal Flesh keep Silence' reflects the influence of the European Romantic idiom on English music of the early part of this century, as the piece is characterised by enormous dynamic contrasts and a rich harmonic palette.

The unaccompanied eight-part anthem, 'A Hymn to the Virgin' was written in 1930 by the then sixteen year old Benjamin Britten (1913-1976), with text from a fifteenth century poem. The poem is unusual in its alternation of English and Latin lines, and Britten mirrors this in the division of the choir into two groups of four parts each, one group for each language. The style of the piece is strophic, each verse being set syllabically with strongly modal implications.

Ralph Vaughan Williams has been mentioned with regard to his interest in earlier music, and the influence of modal patterns is to be observed in the motet, 'Lord, Thou hast been our Refuge'. This work, for semi-chorus, chorus, trumpet

and organ, is a setting of verses from Psalm 90 in the semi-chorus, while the full chorus sings the hymn 'O God, our Help in Ages Past' to the tune St. Anne. This first section is unaccompanied and is followed by an interlude for organ. In the third section, trumpet and organ take up the St. Anne theme against the confident acclamation of the choir.

A friend of Vaughan Williams, and collaborator in the collection and arrangement of folk music was Gustav Holst (1874-1934). His setting of 'Let all Mortal Flesh keep Silence' for soprano, baritone, chorus and organ is in fact an arrangement of a French folk melody with four verses and a concluding Amen. The soloists for verses one and two respectively are choir members Lenore Stephens (soprano) and Peter Balabanski (baritone).

GORDON KERRY

Master of the Chapel Music:

Douglas Lawrence

Organ Scholar:

Graeme Lieschke

The trumpet player for this recording was Andrew Mott .

The cathedral organ heard in the works by Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams was built by the Melbourne firm of George Fincham and Sons in 1964. It has four manuals and 73 speaking stops.

The chamber organ heard in the 'Magnificat' and 'Nunc Dimittis' of William Byrd was built by Peter Collins of Redbourne, England. It has one keyboard and four speaking stops.

This recording was made in St. Patrick's Cathedral with the kind permission of the Dean, the Very Reverend F.M. Chamberlin and the Cathedral organist, Mr John Mallinson.

The recording was made in July 1983 using Sony digital equipment. Two of the 12 tracks required minor editing and were transferred to analog tape using dbx noise reduction and then returned to the final digital master which was used in cutting the disc. This, then, is a 10/12ths digital record!

Photographs of the choir:

Howard Birnstihl

Photograph of Douglas Lawrence:

David Parker

Sound engineer:

Martin Wright (Move Records)



The Choir

CANTORIS SOPRANOS

Megan McLaughlin, Anne Hunter, Janet Watson, Claire Wells

CANTORIS ALTOS

Sarah Thomas, Elizabeth Anderson

CANTORIS TENORS

Mark Duckworth, Peter Hagen

CANTORIS BASSES

John Waugh, Stephen Watson, Michael Kirkpatrick

DEGANI SOPRANOS

Caroline Leach, Lenore Stevens, Isobel Giles, Vicky Balabanski

DEGANI ALTOS

Julia Douglas, Katherine Wells

DEGANI TENORS

Gordon Kerry, Peter Balabanski

DEGANI BASSES

Terence Tan, Gary Ekkel, Neil Colliver