



Carsten Schmidt, artistic director

2009 Summer Sounds

Angelic Consorts

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Wednesday August 26 at 7pm  
Trinity Episcopal Church

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**with**

Amadi Azikiwe, viola	Beth Chandler, flute
Garry Clarke, Baroque violin	Katharine Dain, soprano
Martin Davids, Baroque violin	Gabriel Dobner, piano
Carl Donakowski, cello	Erin Keefe, violin
Gesa Kordes, Baroque viola	Madison Singers, directed by Patrick Walders
Anthony Manzo, Baroque bass	Kevin McMillan, baritone
Vladimir Mendelssohn, viola	Janice Minor, clarinet
Diane Pascal, violin	Lori Piitz, harmonium
Roger Roe, oboe	David Schrader, organ
Carsten Schmidt, conductor	

## PROGRAM

*Ave Verum Corpus*, K. 618

Madison Singers, Clarke, Davids,  
Kordes, Manzo, Schrader

W. A. Mozart (1756-91)

Phantasy Quartet, op. 2

Roe, Keefe, Mendelssohn, Donakowski

Benjamin Britten (1913-76)

Organ Concerto in F Major, op. 4 no. 4

Schrader, Clarke, Davids,  
Kordes, Manzo

G. F. Handel (1685-1759)

### *Intermission*

*Sequenza III*, for solo voice

Dain

Luciano Berio (1925-2003)

*Songs of a Wayfarer*, arranged for voice and  
chamber ensemble by Arnold Schoenberg

1. Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht
2. Ging heut' Morgen über's Feld
3. Ich hab' ein glühend Messer
4. Die zwei blauen Augen

McMillan, Pascal, Keefe, Azikiwe,  
Donakowski, Manzo, Chandler,  
Minor, Dobner, Piitz, Schmidt

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

## NOTES

### MOZART

Over the years so many superlatives have been used in reference to Mozart's brief work for chorus, strings, and organ, *Ave verum corpus*. Yet even today the sheer sonic beauty and deft melodic writing leave one pleasantly speechless. I, too, find myself falling back on tired clichés as I try to capture in words what Mozart so brilliantly captured in sound. So pure is the composer's vision of the text, so simple and concise the tonal structure upon which he builds this pearl. Of course, one can analyze the piece step-by-step, even chord-by-chord, paying particular attention to the focal points of dissonance and chromaticism. Such points earn their expressive intensification by virtue of the text, such as "*cujus latus perforatum unda fluxit et sanguine*" ("whose pierced side overflowed with water and blood"). But to undertake such analysis is to seek the skeleton when what one really treasures is the flesh and blood, the sensuous corpus upon which Mozart—and perhaps a Creator still more divine—has breathed life. The work shows the enlightened Mozart (a Freemason) at his most devout, writing, as one critic has commented, "without the slightest skepticism."

*Ave verum corpus* was written in June 1791 for Anton Stoll, a minor choirmaster in the town of Baden who apparently helped Frau Mozart during her periodic vacations to the baths. That detail is not trivial, but it may be more significant to note that the commission for a grand *Requiem* mass for the dead came to Mozart during the same weeks in the summer of 1791. The *Requiem* would never be completed by the composer, but the short *Ave verum corpus*—a kind of trial run for his renewed faith in sacred music—survives in utter completion, an ideal blend of devotional outbursts and classical restraint.

### BRITTEN

Suffolk-born composer Benjamin Britten produced an amazing amount of music as a youth, roughly 800 pieces prior to his published opus 1! Talent was clear from the beginning and brought him into contact with influential teachers and performers from a young age. He had already mastered the viola and begun writing numerous chamber works for all combinations of duo and trio textures. At 14 he was placed in the hands of Frank Bridge, a leading voice in the older generation of English composers; Britten also had interactions with John Ireland and Ralph Vaughan Williams during a less enjoyable stint at the Royal College of Music. The distant influence of Gustav Mahler

was also keen and emerges in the heightened expressiveness of his youthful instrumental works.

The *Phantasy* for oboe and string trio is among Britten's earliest published pieces, appearing as it did when he was barely 20 years old. It is a student work written in the fall of 1932 under the guidelines of a specific competition. The Cobbett Prize was a contest to write a multi-sectional single movement piece, lasting less than twelve minutes, and with a fairly balanced texture (i.e., not just a melody and accompaniment). It was offered by the noted arts patron Walter Cobbett, who believed that the 17<sup>th</sup>-century genre known as the *Fancy* played a critical role in the development of England's chamber music; Cobbett thus sought to encourage a new generation of *fancy* composition. Within a year of completion, the *Phantasy* was programmed at the prestigious International Society for Contemporary Music (April 1934), and the success of that performance launched Britten's career in the larger musical world.

The *Phantasy* grows imperceptibly from the slightest idea: a simple rising-third interval in the cello. Next comes a repeated pitch motive for viola, playing pizzicato, and eventually a falling third interval in the violin. Britten's measured unfolding of the thematic material functions like an incantation, while the minimum of pitch material draws all attention to the hypnotic rhythms. Onto this burgeoning world enters the wistful melody for oboe, whose very timbre and sustained notes mark it out for special significance. This haunting melody recurs toward the final section of the piece, but beforehand Britten builds to a furious climax on the energy of a new rhythmic idea developed in the *Phantasy's* middle section. The whole work projects a cyclical design: beginning and ending with the simplest intervals and the soporific "tick-tock" rhythm.

## **BERIO**

In some ways it is difficult to write anything definitive about Luciano Berio's *Sequenza III* for solo voice (1965), since it forcefully and unerringly straddles the fuzzy boundary between concert music and avant-garde theater. From the very beginning Berio obscures the formality of the conventional performance, as he indicates in his notes to the interpreter: "The performer (a singer, an actor or both) appears on stage already muttering as though pursuing an off-stage thought. She stops muttering when the applause of the public is subsiding." On the other hand, the *Sequenza* eschews so many expectations that one could fill a volume with flights of fancy about its structure, meaning, and significance. Where, indeed, to begin?

A likely point of reference—the text by poet Markus Kutter—hardly helps clarify the matter, for Berio takes an already fragmentary message and further evaporates its fragile cohesiveness:

Give me	a few words	for a woman
to sing	a truth	allowing us
to build a house	without worrying	before night comes.

The composer builds gradually from the smallest levels, rapping on phonemes like *[to]*, *[co]*, *[for]*, *[us]*, and *[be]*, until he reaches the level of complete words. To pull this piece off requires incredible vocal agility and maturity, as well as a thorough command of all the voice's sonic capabilities—from sung pitches, both closed and open mouth, to trilled nonsense syllables, laughter, sighs, and coughing. The paradox, of course, is that what may appear on first hearing as a chaotic jumble of Dadaist vocalizing is actually notated with insane precision by Berio. The composer recorded many of his own reflections on this piece, which make for insightful reading. As he puts it:

The voice always carries with it an excess of connotations.... In *Sequenza III* I tried to assimilate into a musical process many aspects of everyday vocal behavior, trivial ones included.... [E]mphasis is placed on the sound symbolism of vocal gestures, on the “shadows of meaning” that accompany them, on the associations and conflicts to which they give rise. Because of this, *Sequenza III* can also be seen as a study in musical dramaturgy whose prime concern is, in a certain sense, the relationship between the interpreter and her own voice.

## HANDEL

It is fair to say that Handel never wrote his organ concertos with a traditional concert performance in mind, at least in the way we experience concerts today. And while he is generally given credit for inventing the organ concerto as a genre, most of their initial performances came in the early 1730s as “incidental music” during his oratorios. Handel's organ skills are never in question: he was only outdone by J. S. Bach among his contemporaries and once, so the story goes, won a famous organ contest against Domenico Scarlatti (though Scarlatti got the better of him at the harpsichord).

Dates of composition for the concertos vary; we know better when they were first published. In this case, the F-major concerto, op. 4 no. 4, appeared

in London in 1738 though its origins clearly go back much earlier. And Handel certainly never felt strong misgivings about taking material from other sources (both his own and others' compositions) to be re-cast in his concertos and vice versa. The F-major concerto was completed in March 1735 and premiered during a performance of *Athalia* in April. The theme of the first movement is marked by its rhythm. He favored the melody enough to compose a choral version of it for *Alcina*, completed two weeks after the concerto. Only rarely does Handel opt for intricacies in voice leading or harmonic surprises, and never do such details derail the "perpetual motion" aesthetic that characterizes so many Baroque concerto first movements. Handel's music here bears direct comparison to Vivaldi, in particular the fairly autonomous roles played by *tutti* (ensemble) and *solo*, abundant use of harmonic sequence, limited tonal exploration, and reliance on a single theme.

Onto the basic *fast-slow-fast* framework of the Italian concerto form, Handel imposes elements of the four-movement church sonata, mostly in the third and fourth movements of his concerto. The third is a short recitative for solo organ into which Handel pours most of the concerto's edgy dissonances. It is worth noting that such movements would often have been improvised, like the cadenzas in larger movements. The point is to get from "A" (slow movement) to "B" (finale) in as interesting and dramatically contrasting a manner as possible. The recitative closes with a half cadence and proceeds without pause into the fugal finale. As demonstration of how Handel liked to borrow from himself, the theme of this fugue was reused as a choral Alleluia in another oratorio not long thereafter.

## MAHLER

I am always inspired by how Mahler works an uncanny magic with the briefest and simplest of musical motives. Consider the case of the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs of a Wayfarer), for which Mahler composed both music and texts in 1885 in the wake of a failed love affair. In the first song, "Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht," whose text vacillates between wallowing in wretchedness and the ecstasy of Nature's beauty, Mahler transforms a catchy dance-like theme into a psychological trigger point. The theme hints at the wedding dance that the protagonist would so dearly like to forget; the beloved, of course, is marrying and dancing with someone *e/se*. The theme provides rhythmic interest for the entire song—so lugubrious is the vocal line by comparison—and recurs near the end of most phrases as a kind of obsession. A brief respite comes in the brighter central section of the poem. Having a special insight as both poet and composer of the *Wayfarer*

songs, Mahler clearly found the oppositions between light and dark to be creatively powerful. Significantly, as in the structure of this song, darkness colors the outer sections, thus framing the middle section as a moment of fragile peace.

The primary melody of the second song, "Ging heut' Morgen über's Feld," is surely one of the composer's best and also one of his most optimistic. He used it as the main theme of his First Symphony. And here, in stark contrast to the opening song, sunnier feelings predominate as the text celebrates Nature's wonders. (Perhaps only Nature never broke Mahler's heart.) These moments, as I commented in last summer's performance of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, reveal Mahler's gift for capturing a pure, heartfelt and childlike awe in Nature. Of course, a new emotion gradually emerges before the end, and Mahler's treatment of that emotional transformation demonstrates again his genius for endowing the simplest musical gesture with profound psychological power. The first change occurs at "Nun fängt auch mein Glück wohl an?!" (Now will my happiness also begin?), which the voice sings in slow rhythm against a plodding E/F-sharp dissonance. The poem's hero obviously hesitates; Mahler repeats the theme in a new key, hoping (against hope?) for a better answer to the question. Sparse texture and pointed chromatics draw attention to every detail, laying bare the protagonist's emotional saturation. But Mahler reserves the finest touch for the end. He leaps the melody line up to high G-sharp, the highest pitch in the entire song, and then slowly lets it fall stepwise to conclusion. But the ending is poignantly inconclusive. Mahler stops the vocal line prematurely on dominant harmony, never reaching the sought-after tonic note, F-sharp. That peace comes only via the instrumental postlude.

The dramatic arch of the third song, "Ich hab' ein glühend Messer," again suggests to the composer an appropriate musical treatment, dominated on the surface by the refrain "o weh!" (alas!) which is nearly always vocalized with a falling half-step interval. These half steps continue even in the middle section, a dream-state where the young lover sees the beloved's tantalizing hair and eyes. As he awakes, the opening agitated motive reappears and the musical setting of her ringing laughter betrays just how painfully the protagonist (perhaps Mahler himself) felt rejection. The closing material slides gradually and chromatically downward toward the grave from which a last recurrence of the opening material—now played very slowly—cannot resurrect a brighter outcome.

The same haunting blue eyes are back again in the final song of the set, "Die zwei blauen Augen." Mahler elects to depict the "blauen Augen" with a brooding, almost funereal march in E minor—another passage reused for the

First Symphony. The middle “journeying” section suggests a lighter optimism, and several hallmarks of Mahler’s brilliant lyricism are in evidence. But still the rapid shifts between major and minor mode leave a slightly unsettled feeling. The later melody, full and expansive at the mention of the linden tree, poignantly masks the double meaning of rest and “Alles wieder gut!” (all was well again!). Anyone interested in the German Romantic symbolism of the linden tree should start with Schubert’s well-known “Der Lindenbaum” from *Winterreise*. Here, as in Schubert’s setting, the linden connotes the peace of death, the only place where the tormented soul of unrequited love can find solace, where endless dreams ensure a happy outcome to all romantic efforts.

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## TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

### Mozart, Ave verum corpus

Ave verum Corpus natum  
de Maria Virgine:  
Vere passum, immolatum  
in Cruce pro homine.

Cuius latus perforatum  
fluxit aqua et sanguine:  
Esto nobis praegustatum  
mortis in examine.

O Iesu dulcis!  
O Iesu pie!  
O Iesu fili Mariae.

Hail, true body,  
born of the Virgin Mary:  
Truly suffered,  
died on the cross for mankind:

From whose pierced side  
flowed water and blood!  
Be for us a foretaste  
of death in the last hour!

O gentle Jesus!  
O holy Jesus!  
O Jesus, Son of Mary!

### Mahler, Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen

Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht  
Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht,  
Fröhliche Hochzeit macht,  
Hab' ich meinen traurigen Tag!  
Geh' ich in mein Kämmerlein,  
Dunkles Kämmerlein,  
Weine, wein' um meinen Schatz,  
Um meinen lieben Schatz!

Blümlein blau! Verdorre nicht!  
Vöglein süß! Du singst auf grüner Heide.  
Ach, wie ist die Welt so schön!  
Ziküth! Ziküth!  
Singet nicht! Blühet nicht!  
Lenz ist ja vorbei!  
Alles Singen ist nun aus.  
Des Abends, wenn ich schlafen geh',  
Denk' ich an mein Leide.  
An mein Leide!

### Songs of a Wayfarer

When my darling has her wedding-day  
When my darling has her wedding-day,  
her joyous wedding-day,  
I will have my day of mourning!  
I will go to my little room,  
my dark little room,  
and weep, weep for my darling,  
for my dear darling!

Blue flower! Do not wither!  
Sweet little bird - you sing on the green  
heath!  
Alas, how can the world be so fair?  
Chirp! Chirp!  
Do not sing; do not bloom!  
Spring is over.  
All singing must now be done.  
At night when I go to sleep,  
I think of my sorrow,  
of my sorrow!

Ging heut' Morgen über's Feld  
Ging heut' Morgen über's Feld,  
Tau noch auf den Gräsern hing;  
Sprach zu mir der lust'ge Fink:  
"Ei du! Gelt? Guten Morgen! Ei gelt?  
Du! Wird's nicht eine schöne Welt?  
Zink! Zink! Schön und flink!  
Wie mir doch die Welt gefällt!"

Auch die Glockenblum' am Feld  
Hat mir lustig, guter Ding',  
Mit den Glöckchen, klinge, kling,  
Ihren Morgengruß geschellt:  
"Wird's nicht eine schöne Welt?  
Kling, kling! Schönes Ding!  
Wie mir doch die Welt gefällt! Heia!"

Und da fing im Sonnenschein  
Gleich die Welt zu funkeln an;  
Alles Ton und Farbe gewann  
Im Sonnenschein!  
Blum' und Vogel, groß und klein!  
"Guten Tag, ist's nicht eine schöne Welt?  
Ei du, gelt? Schöne Welt?"

Nun fängt auch mein Glück wohl an?  
Nein, nein, das ich mein',  
Mir nimmer blühen kann!

Ich hab' ein glühend Messer  
Ich hab' ein glühend Messer,  
Ein Messer in meiner Brust,  
O weh! Das schneid't so tief  
In jede Freud' und jede Lust.  
Ach, was ist das für ein böser Gast!  
Nimmer hält er Ruh', nimmer hält er Rast,  
Nicht bei Tag, noch bei Nacht, wenn ich  
schliefe. O Weh!

I walked across the fields this morning  
I walked across the fields this morning;  
dew still hung on every blade of grass.  
The merry finch spoke to me:  
"Hey! Isn't it? Good morning! Isn't it?  
You! Isn't it becoming a fine world?  
Chirp! Chirp! Fair and sharp!  
How the world delights me!"

Also, the bluebells in the field  
merrily with good spirits  
told out to me with bells (ding, ding)  
their morning greeting:  
"Isn't it becoming a fine world?  
Ding, ding! Fair thing!  
How the world delights me!"

And then, in the sunshine,  
the world suddenly began to glitter;  
everything gained sound and color  
in the sunshine!  
Flower and bird, great and small!  
"Good day, is it not a fine world?  
Hey, isn't it? A fair world?"

Now will my happiness also begin?  
No, no - the happiness I mean  
can never bloom!

I have a red-hot knife  
I have a red-hot knife,  
a knife in my breast.  
O woe! It cuts so deeply  
into every joy and delight.  
Alas, what an evil guest it is!  
Never does it rest or relax,  
not by day or by night, when I would  
sleep. O woe!

Ich hab' ein glühend Messer (cont.)

Wenn ich in dem Himmel seh',  
Seh' ich zwei blaue Augen stehn.  
O Weh! Wenn ich im gelben Felde geh',  
Seh' ich von fern das blonde Haar  
Im Winde wehn.  
O Weh!

Wenn ich aus dem Traum auffahr'  
Und höre klingen ihr silbern' Lachen,  
O Weh!  
Ich wollt', ich läg auf der schwarzen Bahr',  
Könnt' nimmer die Augen aufmachen!

Die zwei blauen Augen

Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz,  
Die haben mich in die weite Welt geschickt.  
Da muß ich Abschied nehmen vom aller-  
liebsten Platz!  
O Augen blau, warum habt ihr mich ange-  
blickt?  
Nun hab' ich ewig Leid und Grämen.

Ich bin ausgegangen in stiller Nacht  
Wohl über die dunkle Heide.  
Hat mir niemand Ade gesagt.  
Ade! Mein Gesell' war Lieb' und Leide!

Auf der Straße steht ein Lindenbaum,  
Da hab' ich zum ersten Mal im Schlaf geruht!  
Unter dem Lindenbaum,  
Der hat seine Blüten über mich geschneit,  
Da wußt' ich nicht, wie das Leben tut,  
War alles, alles wieder gut!  
Alles! Alles, Lieb und Leid  
Und Welt und Traum!

Texts by Gustav Mahler

I have a red-hot knife (cont.)

When I gaze up into the sky  
I see two blue eyes there.  
O woe! When I walk in the yellow field,  
I see from afar her blond hair  
waving in the wind.  
O woe!

When I start from a dream  
and hear the tinkle of her silvery laugh,  
O woe!  
Would that I lay on my black bier -  
That I could never again open my eyes!

The two blue eyes

The two blue eyes of my darling -  
they have sent me into the wide world.  
I had to take my leave of this well-beloved  
place!  
O blue eyes, why did you gaze on me?  
Now I will have eternal sorrow and grief.

I went out into the quiet night  
well across the dark heath.  
To me no one bade farewell.  
Farewell! My companions are love and  
sorrow!

On the road there stands a linden tree,  
and there for the first time I found rest in  
sleep! Under the linden tree  
that snowed its blossoms onto me -  
I did not know how life went on,  
and all was well again!  
All! All, love and sorrow  
and world and dream!

Translations © Emily Ezust