

James Westman is currently studying at the Opera Division at the University of Toronto. He had a lengthy career as a boy treble, appearing as a soloist with distinguished choirs such as the Vienna Boys' Choir and the American Boy Choir, and performing with major Symphony Orchestras. He was the first boy treble to perform and record Mahler's *Fourth Symphony*, Fourth Movement (normally sung by soprano) with the Boston Symphony under Benjamin Zander. More recently he has appeared with Tafelmusik, The Orpheus Choir, the Niagara Symphony, and the Gentlemen and Boys of St James Cathedral, and can be heard as the baritone soloist in their recording of Theodore Dubois' *Les Sept Paroles du Christ*. He has participated in master classes at Aldeburgh, and sang in the Aldeburgh Festival production of Purcell's *Fairy Queen*. This is Mr Westman's second appearance with The Aldeburgh Connection.

The members of the **Accordes String Quartet** are Fujiko Imajishi (violin), Marie Bérard (violin), Douglas Perry (viola) and David Hetherington (cello). The Quartet has appeared in the Toronto Symphony Associates *Three Small Concerts*, has participated in the Thomson Hall Chamber Music Series, as well as performing in various other venues in Ontario. It is heard frequently with *New Music Concerts*, and appears regularly on CBC and CJRT FM. Always searching for new repertoire, Accordes has commissioned works, and regularly premieres new compositions. Its concentration on contemporary music has allowed the group to give the Canadian, and sometimes world, premieres of string quartets by composers such as Elliott Carter, Ben Johnson, Peter Paul Koprowski, Brian Cherney, Peter Michael Hamel and Ann Southam. The Quartet's next appearance will take place on December 3 for *New Music Concerts* in the DuMaurier Theatre, in a programme of music by Henri Dutilleux.

Cover illustration: Frontispiece to Marin de Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle*, 1636



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THE ALDEBURGH CONNECTION

with

NEW MUSIC CONCERTS

ORPHEUS THEN AND NOW



WALTER HALL

Sunday, November 12, 1995

2:30 p.m.

ORPHEUS THEN AND NOW

Music of Henry Purcell and Sir Michael Tippett

VALDINE ANDERSON, soprano BENJAMIN BUTTERFIELD, tenor

JAMES WESTMAN, baritone

STEPHEN RALLS and BRUCE UBUKATA, piano

and

THE ACCORDES STRING QUARTET

Fujiko Imajishi, Marie Bérard, violins

Douglas Perry, viola David Hetherington, cello



It is an apt and very happy conjunction of events that leads us, in Sir Michael Tippett's ninetieth birthday year, to be engaged also in tercentenary celebrations of Henry Purcell (1659-95). Tippett was one of the foremost in the middle years of this century to engage in the revival of Purcell's music, and he has always acknowledged his love and reverence for the seventeenth century master. Our concert this afternoon mingles music by both composers, with vocal and instrumental music by Tippett that spans half a century. We are delighted that our collaboration with New Music Concerts has made possible the inclusion of the most recent of his chamber works, the *Fifth String Quartet*.

His two major song cycles were both written for Peter Pears and Benjamin Britten; *Boyhood's End*, the earlier, was described by Tippett as 'a Purcellian cantata'. Britten, of course, was also a Purcell enthusiast. Both he and Tippett were conscious of the debt they owed Purcell, particularly by reason of his extraordinary powers of word-setting. *Saul and the Witch at Endor* represents the imaginative style of Britten's realisations. Apart from this, all the Purcell works today are performed in the editions prepared by Tippett and Walter Bergmann in the 1940's.

Soon after Purcell's death, a volume of his songs was published under the title of *Orpheus Britannicus*. Sir Michael Tippett is the Orpheus of our times, the magical power of whose music, like that of the Greek poet, can tame warring souls, and who can call up beauty out of the darkest shadows of the spirit.

A biographical note by Tippett's publishers, Schott & Co.:

Michael Tippett was born in London, 2nd January 1905, but his childhood was divided between Suffolk, the South of France and Italy. He was taught to play the piano as a child and realised very early on that he wished to become a composer. But he did not come into contact with most of the classical repertoire until he entered the Royal College of Music in 1923, where he studied composition and conducting. Tippett left the RCM in 1928 and for some years taught French and music at a private school. He was dissatisfied with his compositions of this period, withdrew them from publication and in 1930 returned to the Royal College of Music to take up private lessons with R.O. Morris.

His first published works, the *First String Quartet* (1935, revised 1943) and *Piano Sonata No. 1* (1936-37) show evidence of the skill in counterpoint which he had developed during this period of intensive study. The years immediately before the Second World War gave direction and momentum to his political and social beliefs. The result was the oratorio *A Child of our Time*, which proved his ability to identify with, and articulate, feelings in the public world, as eloquently as more personal inspirations.

In 1940 he was appointed director at Morley College, London, a post he held until 1951. Meanwhile, in 1943 he served a prison sentence at Wormwood Scrubs for failing to comply with the conditions of registration as a conscientious objector (i.e. to undertake non-combatant military duties, etc.). He has remained associated ever since with the cause of pacifism.

After the war Tippett turned to more personal projects. The *Symphony No. 1* was completed in 1945, and the next six years were devoted to his first opera *The Midsummer Marriage*. He continued to compose prolifically for the next forty-five years. His output includes four more operas, three more piano sonatas, symphonies and quartets, his largest work for the concert hall, *The Mask of Time* (1980-82), and the *Triple Concerto* (1978-79), *The Blue Guitar* for guitar solo and *Festal Brass with Blues* for brass band.

Tippett was knighted in 1966 and became Companion of Honour in 1979. At the end of 1983 he was awarded the Order of Merit by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

In his late 80's, Tippett completed two major works: a fifth opera *New Year*, which received its world premiere at Houston in October 1989; and a work commissioned for the centennials of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Carnegie Hall, New York, a setting for soprano and orchestra of W.B. Yeats's poem *Byzantium*, premiered April 1991. His *String Quartet No. 5* was premiered May 1992 in Sheffield, and *The Rose Lake*, an orchestral work commissioned jointly by the BBC and the Boston and Toronto Symphonies was premiered this year.

A Purcell sequence

Sonata No. 9 in F, 'The Golden Sonata' (*Sonatas in Four Parts*) (first movement)

Purcell's *Sonatas in Four Parts* were composed in about 1680, but not published until 1697.

Music for a while

A song composed for *Oedipus*, a tragedy by Dryden and Lee.

'The Golden Sonata' (second movement)

There ne'er was so wretched a lover

'A Two Part Song. The words by Mr Congreve.'

If music be the food of love

From *Gentleman's Journal*, June 1692. The words, except for the first line from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, are by a Colonel Heveningham.

'The Golden Sonata' (last movement)

Boyhood's End

Sir Michael Tippett (b. 1905)

This work was written in 1943, and is a cantata for solo voice and piano. This means that there are alternating sections of recitative and arioso. The important point in a solo cantata is that there should be a central 'I' singing from a single situation. This situation and the central 'I' I found in some words from a chapter headed *Boyhood's End* in W.H. Hudson's autobiography *Far Away and Long Ago*, in which Hudson as an old man recalls his childhood in the Argentine. Here Hudson as an old man looks back on the recollected emotions of his 15th birthday, when he first became afraid that he might lose his peculiar contact with nature. They describe something of what that contact meant to the boy of 15.

(note by the composer)

Text:

What, then, did I want? What did I ask to have? If the question had been put to me then, and if I had been capable of expressing what was in me, I should have replied: I want only to keep what I have; to rise each morning and look out on the sky and the grassy dew-wet earth from day to day, from year to year. To watch each June and July for spring, to feel the same old sweet surprise and delight at the appearance of each familiar flower, every new-born insect, every bird returned once more from the north. To listen in a trance of delight to the wild notes of the golden plover coming once more to the great plain, flying, flying south, flock succeeding flock the whole day long. Oh, those wild beautiful cries of the golden plover! I could exclaim with Hafiz, with but one word changed, 'If after a thousand years that sound should float over my tomb, my bones uprising in their gladness would dance in the sepulchre!' To climb trees and put my hand

down in the deep hot nest of the Bienteveo and feel the hot eggs — the five long pointed cream-coloured eggs with chocolate spots and splashes at the larger end. To lie on a grassy bank with the blue water between me and the beds of tall bulrushes, listening to the mysterious sounds of the wind and of hidden rails and coots and courlans conversing together in strange human-like tones; to let my sight dwell and feast on the camalote flower amid its floating masses of moist vivid green leaves — the large alamanda-like flower of a purest divine yellow that when plucked, leaves you with nothing but a green stem in your hand. To ride at noon on the hottest days, when the whole earth is a-glitter with illusory water, and see the cattle and horses in thousands covering the plain at their watering places, to visit some haunt of large birds at that still, hot hour and see storks, ibises, grey herons, egrets of a dazzling whiteness, and rose coloured spoonbills and flamingoes, standing in the shallow water in which their motionless forms are reflected. To lie on my back on the rust-brown grass in January, to gaze up at the wide hot whitey-blue sky, peopled with millions and myriads of glistening balls of thistle-down, ever, ever floating by; to gaze and gaze until they are to me living things and I, in an ecstasy, am with them, floating in that immense shining void!

String Quartet No. 5

Tippett

Tippett's *String Quartet No 5* is cast in two contrasting movements. The first of these is the more assertive, consisting of the sort of dramatic thematic confrontations typical of a classical sonata allegro movement with moments of what Meirion Bowen has described as 'fantasia-like side stepping into unexpected domains'.

The extended second movement is more reflective in its nature. It bears a touching poetic inscription 'Chante, rossignol, chante, toi qui as le coeur gai' (Sing, nightingale, sing, you with the heart so gay). Formally it most closely resembles a rondo form, with a dance-like refrain which the composer has indicated is a veiled reference to Purcell's 'Welcome to all the pleasures' *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* (1683), a composition Sir Michael had in fact performed at Morley College in 1940.



INTERMISSION

during which tea will be served in the Torel Room



Saul and the Witch at Endor (*a paraphrase on I Samuel 28*)
Purcell, realised by Benjamin Britten (1913-76)

Purcell's dramatic *scena* dates from about 1693. It was probably intended, not for church use, but to be performed in an aristocratic household, perhaps even as a quasi-dramatic presentation at court. It tells the story of King Saul's attempt to receive comfort from the ghost of the prophet, Samuel, and instead receiving the news of his, and his son's, imminent death.

Britten's realisation is rich and atmospheric, more of a recomposition than are Tippett's editions of Purcell.

The Heart's Assurance (*Sidney Keyes, Alun Lewis*) **Tippett**

This piece was written in 1950-1 and contrasts with *Boyhood's End* in that it is a song cycle for voice and piano. Instead of the continuous line of the cantata, separate songs are joined together solely by unity of mood. There are two poets, Alun Lewis and Sidney Keyes, both of whom were killed in the last war. The unity of mood which entirely joins these poets together is what I have called the experience of 'Love under the shadow of death'. This theme was dominant in the poetry produced under the stress of the last war, as contrasted with the bitterness expressed by Siegfried Sassoon, and the pity expressed by Wilfred Owen, in the 1914-18 war. I tried to express in the setting of these poems their dominant quality, the threat which death gave to love, for that is the collective emotion which these young poets seem to be expressing through their individual songs.

(note by the composer)

1. Song (*Alun Lewis*)

Oh journey-man, Oh journey-man,
 Before this endless belt began
 Its cruel revolutions, you and she
 Naked in Eden shook the apple tree.

Oh, lonely wife, Oh lonely wife,
 Before your lover left this life
 He took you in his gentle arms.
 How trivial then were Life's alarms.

Oh soldier-lad, Oh soldier-lad,
 Before the soul of things turned bad,
 She offered you so modestly
 A shining apple from the tree.

And though Death taps down every
 street
 Familiar as the postman on his beat,
 Remember this, remember this
 That Life has trembled in a kiss
 From Genesis to Genesis,
 And what's transfigured will live on
 Long after Death has come and gone.

2. The Heart's Assurance (*Sidney Keyes*)

O never trust the heart's assurance
 Trust only the heart's fear
 And what I'm saying is,
 Go back, go back my lovely
 Though you will never hear.

For the careless heart is bound with
 chains
 And terribly cast down:
 The beast of pride is hunted out
 And baited through the town.

O never trust your pride of movement,
 Trust only pride's distress.
 The only holy limbs are the broken
 fingers
 Still raised to praise and bless.

3. Compassion (*Alun Lewis*)

She in the hurling night
 With lucid simple hands,
 Stroked away his fright
 Loosed his blood-soaked bands.
 And seriously aware
 Of the terror she caressed
 Drew his matted hair
 Gladly to her breast.

And he who babbled Death
 Shivered and grew still
 In the meadows of her breath
 Restoring his dark will.
 Nor did she ever stir
 In the storm's calm centre
 To feel the tail, hooves, fur
 Of the god-faced centaur.

4. The Dancer (*Alun Lewis*)

'He's in his grave and on his head
 I dance', the lovely dancer said.
 'My feet like fireflies illumine
 The choking blackness of his tomb.

'Had he not died we would have wed
 And still I'd dance', the dancer said,
 'To keep his creeping sterile doom
 Out of the darkness of my womb.

'Our love was always ringed with dread
 Of death' the lovely dancer said.
 'And so I danced for his delight,
 And scorched the blackened core of night
 With passion bright', the dancer said,
 'And now I dance to earn my bread.'

5. Remember your Lovers (*Sidney Keyes*)

Young men walking the open streets
 Of death's republic, remember your lovers.
 When you foresaw with vision prescient
 The planet pain rising across your sky
 We fused your sight in our soft burning beauty:
 We laid you down in meadows drunk with cowslips
 And led you in the ways of our bright city.

Young men who wander death's vague meadows,
 Remember your lovers who gave you more than flowers.
 When you woke grave chilled at midnight
 To pace the pavement of your bitter dream
 We brought you back to bed and brought you home
 From the dark antechamber of desire
 Into our lust as bright as candle flame.

Young men who lie in the carven beds of death,
 Remember your lovers who gave you more than dreams.
 From the sun sheltering your careless head
 Or from the painted devil your quick eye,
 We led you out of terror tenderly
 And fooled you into peace with our soft words
 And gave you all we had and let you die.

Young men drunk with death's unquenchable wisdom,
 Remember your lovers who gave you more than love.



Today's concert is being recorded for broadcast at a later date on CBC Stereo's *The Arts Tonight*.

A concert performed by The Aldeburgh Connection at the Elora Festival last July, including two of the *Canticles* and other music by Britten will be broadcast on *Mostly Music* (CBC Stereo) on November 14 at 9 am.

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There are three more concerts in this Series — January 21: *The Princess and the Sewing Machine* (the life of the Princesse de Polignac) with **Catherine Robbin** (mezzo), **David Pomeroy** (tenor) and **Brett Polegato** (baritone); March 3: *Lady Blarney* (the travels of Anna Jameson) with **Monica Whicher** (soprano), and **Jennifer Phipps** (narrator), and May 12: *Voices of Spring* with **Sally Dibblee** (soprano), **Anita Krause** (mezzo) and **The Elora Festival Singers**. If you would like to subscribe to the rest of the Series, please send your ticket stub from today's concert along with \$47/\$36 students and seniors to:

The Aldeburgh Connection, 56 Fulton Avenue, Toronto. M4K 1X5
 Tel. (416) 423-9318.

There are also two concerts remaining in our Recital Series in the Glenn Gould Studio. On March 25, we will perform the five *Canticles* of Benjamin Britten with **Daniel Taylor** (countertenor), **Benjamin Butterfield** (tenor), **Brett Polegato** (baritone), **Judy Loman** (harp) and **James Sommerville** (horn). On April 30, baritone **Russell Braun** will sing Brahms's song cycle *Die schöne Magelone*. For tickets (\$20/\$15), please contact the Glenn Gould Studio at (416) 205-5555.

Our recently released CD, by CBC Records, features music heard in these concerts by Schumann, Brahms and John Greer. Copies are available for sale in the lobby during intermission and following the concert. The price is \$18, including all taxes.

Box office revenues cover only a portion of our operating budget; the rest must be raised through donations, grants and corporate funding. You may become a **Patron** by donating \$100 or more; \$35 or more (\$50 or more for dual membership) will qualify you to become a **Friend**. You will receive information on our activities, and all donations will be acknowledged with a receipt for income tax purposes. Other donations and suggestions for corporate sponsorship will also be gratefully received. Your support is vital in helping to ensure the continuation of these concerts.

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Aldeburgh is the small town on the east coast of England where Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears and Eric Crozier founded the Festival of Music which flourishes to this day. Artistic directors **Stephen Ralls** and **Bruce Ubukata** have visited and worked there for many summers, as have a large number of the singers appearing with The Aldeburgh Connection.

New Music Concerts was founded in 1971 by composer Norma Beecroft and the internationally acclaimed Canadian flutist and composer, Robert Aitken, its present Artistic Director, to promote interest in contemporary music. It has produced over 180 Toronto concerts of the music of our time by Canadian and international composers; most of these may be heard on CBC FM's *Two New Hours*. Added to this are numerous tours of Canada, the United States and Europe, seven recordings (the latest, *O Bali*, was released in 1993 on the CBC label), and lectures, films, mixed media presentations, forums, reading weekends and music theatre.

Valdine Anderson is much in demand as an interpreter of new music. Recent performances include Gorecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* with the TSO, Harry Freedman's *Spirit Song* with Music Toronto, several works by Harrison Birtwistle with New Music Concerts, R. Murray Schafer's *Gitanjali* with the Winnipeg Symphony, and the North American premier of Louis Andriessen's *Hadewych* with Vancouver New Music and also at the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival. In Cheltenham this year she starred in Thomas Adès new opera *Powder Her Face*. She will be heard later this year in Gorecki's *Good Night* with the London Sinfonietta in Milan, and at the Southbank Arts Centre in London with the same orchestra in a birthday celebration for contemporary composer Kurtág. She also appears in concert and opera across Canada, and will be making her debut with English National Opera in 1997. Ms Anderson is a frequent recitalist, and was a featured soloist at the 1992 Aldeburgh Festival, where she returned to sing Britten's *Spring Symphony* in June 1995.

Benjamin Butterfield's recent operatic roles have included *Così fan Tutte*, *Don Pasquale*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Eugene Onegin* for Pacific Opera Victoria, *Martha* with Opera in Concert, *Le Comte Ory* with the COC, *Tamerlano* at Glimmerglass and *Dido and Aeneas* with Opera Atelier, here in Toronto, and in their recent performances in London and Versailles. He will be heard in the upcoming COC production of *Pagliacci*, as Tamino and Ferrando in Opera Hamilton's *The Magic Flute* and *Così fan tutte*, in *Fledermaus* with Edmonton Opera and as Don Ottavio in Opera Atelier's *Don Giovanni*. Recent concert highlights have included Mendelssohn's *Die erste Walpurgisnacht* with the Oratorio Society of New York, *Carmina Burana* at Carnegie Hall and Purcell's *Fairy Queen* with the Toronto Chamber Society. Later this year he will sing Britten's *War Requiem* with the McGill Symphony in Montreal and at the National Arts Centre. Mr Butterfield appears frequently with The Aldeburgh Connection, and will be heard later this year in their performance of Britten's five *Canticles*.