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Jay Wilkey and Maurice Hinson in a Guest Artist Recital

Jay Wilkey

Maurice Hinson

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OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents

Jay Wilkey, **baritone**

Maurice Hinson, **pianist**

in

GUEST ARTIST RECITAL

Recital Hall

Mabee Fine Arts Center

Monday, February 10, 1975

8:00 P. M.

PROGRAM

Evening Hymn (Harmonia Sacra) *Henry Purcell*
Realized by Benjamin Britten (1659 - 1695)

Songs and Proverbs of William Blake, Op. 74 *Benjamin Britten*
(b. 1913)

Proverb: The pride of the peacock
Song: London
Proverb: Prisons are built
Song: The Chimney-Sweeper
Proverb: The bird a nest
Song: A Poison Tree
Proverb: Think in the morning
Song: The Tyger
Proverb: The tygers of wrath
Song: The Fly
Proverb: The hours of folly
Song: Ah, Sun-Flower
Proverb: To see a World
Song: Every Night and Every Morn

Dr. Wilkey

INTERMISSION

Mazurka in c-sharp minor, Op. 63, No. 3
Mazurka in a minor, Op. 17, No. 4
Nocturne in c-sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 1
Scherzo in E, Op. 54

Frédéric Francois Chopin
(1810 - 1849)

Dr. Hinson

Vier Lieder, Op. 2

Arnold Schoenberg
(1874 - 1951)

Erwartung (Dehmel)
Schenk mir deinen goldenen Kamm (Dehmel)
Erhebung (Dehmel)
Waldsonne (Schlaf)

Dr. Wilkey

NOTES

Nearly every solo song Benjamin Britten has written was influenced by the voice and musicianship of his friend and artistic partner, Peter Pears. If not specifically dedicated to him, Pears probably sang the first performance, edited the vocal line (as is the case with the many Purcell songs for which Britten realised the keyboard part), provided the English translation of a foreign text (such as the Pushkin poems of THE POET'S ECHO) or selected the poems (for example, the Blake songs at hand tonight).

THE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF WILLIAM BLAKE and THE POET'S ECHO are two song cycles which emerged out of the experience of composing and performing the WAR REQUIEM, commissioned for the consecration of the rebuilt Coventry Cathedral, May, 1962. The Blake songs were composed for Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, the Pushkin songs for Galina Vishnevskaya, who, along with Pears, were the soloists conceived for the REQUIEM — the three nationalities were meant to provide significant extra-musical connotations at this event.

Blake's poetry is an enigmatic puzzle. Who knows what it means? Nevertheless, one is convinced that some deep, mystical insights are to be gained through the repetition of these brooding texts. Certain themes do recur throughout this cycle — a respect for nature's ways; the conviction that man is not far removed from nature's wilds; a distrust of man's social institutions, such as church, state, family, and social conventions or manners; a suspicion that only the poor and simple know God mystically, that the rich and educated have their reward in the flesh. Perhaps, the pragmatic American is well advised to approach these fatalistic, world-weary musings through the total symbolisms of Britten, much as many find Goethe more profound through the medium of Schubert's settings.

Musically, the tonal materials are derived from a twelve-tone row, which is divided into three four-note segments. The proverbs are all based rather strictly on these three segments which are sometimes used as "melodies," sometimes as "chords." The songs are more loosely derived. In each case, a tonal center, a scale or melodic pattern, or a harmonic structure is based on one or more of the three segments.

* * * * *

In the person of Frederic Francois Chopin we find a unique example of a composer who wrote almost solely for the piano — who yet is universally accorded a place among the great. Chopin was a superb inventor of melody. Every note in his music, essential or ornamental, is imbued with song. His passage-work will almost invariably reveal itself as rapidly moving melodies. His harmonies were magnificently rich, shimmering, and even seemed harsh to many of Chopin's contemporaries such as Schumann, Berlioz and Mendelssohn.

Chopin is at his best and most characteristic in the short forms and the mazurkas are outstanding examples of this form. He wrote some fifty-one of these dances. They are inspired by Polish folk-music, not by literal repetition of tunes but they evolved through a process whereby Chopin distilled national flavors from native material. The Op. 63, No. 3 mazurka has all the qualities of the late mazurkas: modalities and rhythmic asperities that contrast sharply with the highly sophisticated Western chromaticisms in which they are embedded. The coda to this piece contains imitative counterpoint of a

strict order – a canon between the soprano and alto voices. The early Op. 17 No. 4 mazurka has a melancholy slow introduction and conclusion that ends on the first inversion of the tonic chord in the relative major key. This work has one of the most plaintive melodies ever conceived by Chopin.

As with the mazurkas, one feels that in the nocturnes Chopin was less concerned with pianistic considerations, and more with his most intimate thoughts and feelings. It is clear that the nocturnes derive in great measure from his very personal style of playing, contemporary accounts of which invariably stress the extreme delicacy and the beauty of sound he could achieve in cantabile passages. The nocturne in c-sharp minor, Op. 27 No. 1 is one of the most evocative of the entire set of 19 written by Chopin. The beginning is a picture of the night with a deep and mysterious stillness pervading opening bars. This piece has a central episode marked *piu mosso*, which, after a restless and agitated beginning, moves to a vehement climax before returning to the initial theme. The gloom of the opening is soon dispelled, with the music sliding imperceptibly into C-sharp major, and the piece ends in an atmosphere of serenity and calm.

An example of Chopin's work with the larger forms is the fourth of the Scherzos in E Major, Op. 54. Wierzynski, in his book *The Life and Death of Chopin*, says of this work that it "embodies an emotion so perfectly sublimated that one can find in it what one pleases, joy or grief, happiness or despair." This somewhat wild remark is perhaps not so silly as it seems at first glance, since frequently a piece of music does not convey the same impression to every listener.

A motif of the five opening notes holds this work together, by reasserting itself from time to time, sometimes quaintly distorted. This phrase is followed by three other ideas, quite distinct in themselves though very fleeting in effect. Passages of running arabesque which Chopin can rarely deny himself intervene, and the music dances, with many repetitions, through remote keys, in an irresponsible and carefree way. The trio or midsection centers around the key of c-sharp minor. A recapitulation brings back the opening section with minor variants and ornamentation, before taking a new turn that leads to an extensive coda. This last of the scherzi is a magnificent composition and bears a wonderful testimony to the uniqueness of Chopin's great creative art.

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FOUR SONGS, OPUS 2

These songs of 1896-98 are dedicated "to my teacher and friend Alexander von Zemlinsky," later Schoenberg's brother-in-law. These include settings of two poems by Richard Dehmel, who wrote the poem on which Verklärte Nacht is based and two by Johannes Schlaf, best known as a playwright and story-writer in the Ueberbrettl movement.

In "Expectation" a delicate, impressionistic scene of two lovers, a proposal, and a pleasant good-by is sketched. Musically the piece grows from an undulating tonic-quartal chord (consisting of four leading-tones over a pedal E-flat) progression, an arabesque figure in the treble of the piano, and a double appoggiatura pattern derived from the above progression.

The second song portrays a rather sensual conversation between Jesus and Mary Magdalene in which he asks for her heart. The motivic germ is a succession of chords reminiscent of the famous Tristan progression, perhaps implying a kind of mutual death pact. A more likely Wagnerian precedent is the baptism scene in Parsifal where the Kundry-Parsifal relationship is somewhat analogous to that of Mary and Jesus.

The "Elevation" setting is lushly romantic in keeping with the words; however, the subtlety of Schoenberg's thematic development and the piano (soft) ending save the song from degenerating into pure Kitsch.

The "Forest Sur" is the most charming of the group with its innocent Viennese, almost Schubertian, quality. The middle section captures the same chromatic freshness—a contradiction in terms (?) — that Wagner managed in Meistersinger, before returning to the original Gemutlichkeit.