

BENNINGTON COLLEGE

presents

March 30, 1960

A FACULTY CONCERT

The Carriage Barn

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FIVE POLYPHONIC SONGS

Josquin Des Prez

1. O Jesu, Fili David
2. La Plus des Plus
3. De Tous Biens Plaine
4. Parfons Regretz
5. Bergerotte Savoytienne

Frank Baker, Tenor
James Payton oboe
Charles Thompson Jr. bassoon
Gunnar Schonbeck clarinet
Orrea Pernel viola
George Finckel cello
Paul Boepple, Conductor

SONATA No. 3 for Violoncello and Piano (first performance)

Nowak

Four movements

George Finckel - Lionel Nowak

** INTERMISSION **

TRIO in C minor, Opus 66

Mendelssohn

Allegro energico e con fuoco
Andante espressivo
Molto allegro quasi presto
Allegro appassionato

Orrea Pernel George Finckel
Lionel Nowak

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Five Polyphonic Songs

Josquin Des Prez
1440/50 - 1521

It is often assumed that vocal music of the so-called "A Cappella" period was performed without instrumental participation whatever. Convincing evidence has come to light that this was not the case. Circumstances and places where a cappella performance of church music was obligatory did exist, but they were comparatively rare. As for secular music, the use of instruments supporting or substituting for voices was the rule rather than the exception. The favorite way to perform chansons and madrigals was to entrust the tenor or, less frequently, the top part to a solo singer while the remaining voices were played on melodic instruments of suitable range, or on the lute or the harpsichord. A score in those days was merely the blueprint of a polyphonic design. Instrumentation, dynamics, ornamentation and, to some extent, even the choice of sharps and flats were left entirely to the performer.

For the performance of this group of Chansons, Rondeaux and Ballads we have chosen Viola, Cell^o, Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon in various combinations, while in each piece the Tenor part alone will be sung. (For all these, except the clarinet, there were close "relatives" amongst the instruments of the Renaissance.)

Josquin Des Prez (1440/50 - 1521) was perhaps the greatest and most original polyphonist of the 15th and 16th centuries. Although he was a "modern", far ahead of his day, his Chansons, Ballads, Motets and Masses were performed to the corners of Europe when he was still alive. His influence on the second half of the 16th century was overwhelming and can even be felt in Monteverdi's music, a hundred years later.

Five Polyphonic Songs

O JESU, FILI DAVID (4 voices)
On a German folk song (From Matthew 15:22-28)

O Lord, thou Son of David,
have mercy on me:
My daughter is grievously troubled
by a devil. . .
Even the dogs eat of the crumbs
that fall from their master's table. . . .
O woman, great is thy faith.

LA PLUS DES PLUS (3 voices)
(Rondeau)

Best of the best, unequalled one,
My heart has surrendered
To serve thee as long as it lives;
No other desire shall it ever have,
Whatever ill may befall it.

DE TOUS BIENS PLAINE (4 voices)
The two upper voices are from a popular Rondeau by Hayne van Ghizeghem
(c.1445-c.1479). To these Josquin added a satirical canon for two low
instruments.

With all blessings my mistress is endowed,
All owe her tribute of honor;
For likewise bestowed with virtues
No goddess ever was.

PARFONS REGRETZ (5 voices)
(Chanson)

Deep regrets and bitter joy
Come to me wherever I be!
Make haste, without deceit,
To pierce my heart
That it may drown in grief and tears.

BERGEROTTE SAVOYSIENNE (4 voices)
(Ballade)

"Savoyard shepherdess
Who watches sheep in the meadow,
I give thee shoes
and a little hood;
Tell me, wilt thou love me,
Reward or no reward?"

"I am the parson's neighbor
Nothing one can say to me
Will change my mind;
I will not love for Duke or
King.
God almighty, thus it be,
Reward or no reward."