

BENNINGTON COLLEGE MUSIC DIVISION

Presents

A CONCERT

By

THE BENNINGTON CHORALE

Monday
June 7, 1982

8:15 p.m.
Greenwall Music Workshop

GREGORIAN CHANT.Jane Harvey, soloist
The Choir

GREGORIAN CHANT.....Molly Magai

GREGORIAN CHANT.....Kelly Sleadd, soloist
The Choir

Three Simple Songs

BACH

IF YOU ARE NEAR.....Jill Beckwith

O JESU SO KIND.....Kathy Gill

SONG OF PRAISE.....Bette Goldberg

JUDAS MERCATOR

TOMAS LUDOVICUS VITTORIA

PUERI HEBRAEORUM

GIOVANNI PALESTRINA

JESU DULCIS MEMORIA

TOMAS LUIS DE VITTORIA

BENNINGTON CHORALE
Michael Downs, Conductor

Three Songs of Haydn

SHE NEVER TOLD HER LOVE.....Susan Allancraig

COME GENTLE SPRING.....Robin Hackley
Michael Downs

MAN'S FATE-.....Susan Alancraig
Kathy Gill
Bette Goldberg

ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT

OLD WELSH AIR

SWEET AND LOW

JOSEPH BARNBY

THE BENNINGTON CHORALE

Michael Downs, Conductor
Christine Watson, Pianist

THE BENNINGTON CHORALE

First Soprano

Jane Harvey
Alice Hughes

Second Soprano

Cynthia Murphy
Zorica Ball
Eddie Hill
Meryl Courtice

First Alto

Sue Breton
Maureen Snelgrove
Rebecca O'Sullivan
Melody Jennings
Michele Lennen

Second Alto

Nancy Moon
Kelly Sleadd

EDWARD

A Chamber Opera for three actors, soprano, tenor and ensemble based on
DER BLONDE ECKBERT, Ludwig Tieck (1796)

Composed, Translated and Adapted

By

HOLIDAY EAMES*

...forests, whose dark and gloomy aspect makes it easily conceivable that the isolated beings that live among them think themselves -- if not positively the prey of some demonic power of nature, at least hopelessly under its control.(...) through horror and regret for the lost paradise of a purely natural life and the dread of the deserted Mother Nature's vengeance.

-- Wagner ART LIFE & THEORIES

When the soul is once led to suspect, it finds confirmation of its suspicion in even the smallest things.

-- L. Tieck

Edward:	Philip Price
Beatrice:	Jill Beckwith
Walter:	Michael Downs
Soprano:	Kathryn Gill
Tenor:	Jody Kruskal
flute, piccolo:	Su Lian Tan
clarinet:	Murray Barsky
bassoon:	Edward Hines
percussion:	Louis Calabro
violins:	Clyde R. McNeill Susan Lester
viola:	Jacob Glick
violoncello:	Maxine Neuman
lighting:	Margot Hooley
make up:	Julie Fallon

Special thanks to Willie Finckel for rehearsing the singers.

* This concert is being presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts Degree. (Double Major: Music & Languages)

Introduction I

Narrator:

In an area of the Hartz mountains there lived a knight known as fair Eckbert. He was about 40 years old, of medium height, and light blond hair lay smooth and full around his delicate face. He lived quietly unto himself, and was never involved in the feuds of his neighbours, who rarely saw him outside of the encircling walls of his small estate. His wife loved the solitude as much as he, and the two seemed to love each other deeply, only lamenting that heaven was unwilling to sanction their marriage with children.

Only seldom was Eckbert visited by guests, and even when he was, little in his usual manner changed. Measure dwelt there, and frugality itself seemed to order all. Eckbert was cheerful and gracious; only when he was alone one could notice a definite closedness, a quiet, restrained melancholy.

No one came as often to the castle as Phillip Walter, a man to whom Eckbert had become greatly attached, recognizing in him a similar way of thinking. Walter's real home was Franconia, but he often spent more than a half year in the vicinity of Eckbert's estate, gathering herbs and stones, and busying himself arranging and ordering them; he lived from a small inheritance and was dependent on no one. Eckbert accompanied him often on his lonely rambles, and with each succeeding year their friendship drew them closer.

There are times in which one worries whether he should keep a secret from his friend, something which he has hitherto often and carefully concealed. The soul feels an undeniable urge to disclose itself completely, to unlock the innermost thoughts to the friend, so that he become that much more a confidant. In these moments, fragile souls reveal themselves -- and sometimes also, it must certainly happen that one of them shrinks back in fear from the other.

Introduction II

E: Tonight Walter is coming. Tonight I should tell him. I have concealed this long enough. It is foolish! A little thing should not bother me so. An innocent tale. I will tell him! Confide in him! And he will give good counsel. A noble man of comforting mirth, my friend Walter. Beatrice and I have such a rich life, all we need, only so alone, and heaven has never seen fit to bless us with children. All alone here, all alone. My thoughts wander, lose proportion. I must tell him. Such a small thing! nothing to hide! I will tell him tonight.

B: Edward, Walter is coming tonight. Won't it be good to have company. We'll dine, sit by the fire and talk - He'll tell us about his trips in the forest. So long since we've seen him. But you look startled. Won't you be pleased?

E: Beatrice--

B: Yes?

E: Tonight you must tell Walter the story of your childhood, the singing bird, the little dog, the pearls!

B: Why?

A small story from long ago, can we not forget?
such a small story

E: such a small story
it must be told

Why should I tell:

what do you fear?

A child's story, to me so real

We must tell to ever be free of
such a small story

such a small story
why must I tell Walter?

I see his questioning glance. He
has chanced to ask: in which
noble house did you find her,
so pure?

He chanced to ask?

an amusing tale

no!

for a stormy night

no!

he would enjoy

better to forget

entertaining little tale, what
do you fear? It must be told

no!

or we'll never be free of it

I was a child

a children's tale

B: No, so real

no, a beautiful dream.
it must be Walter.

I was only a child
I want to forget

I can't

E:

a nightmare

open the door

Open the door

Open the door. Such a
small thing.

Act I/Scene II

Narrator: It was now exactly midnight.

B:

Tell us more about the forest!

The fire is warm.

My husband believes that it is wrong
to conceal anything from someone so gentle and generous.
It is a story I have told only Edward before.

My father was a poor shepherd, and for that my mother reproached him often, bitterly. I was told that I was a stupid child, but I understood their misery. I dreamed of bringing them a treasure -- gold and precious stones, delighting in their astonishment. My head was always full of dreams, making me clumsy and awkward. Then one night my father beat me. He swore he would beat me every night for my laziness. In desperation, I ran -- through the forest and countryside until my winding path disappeared beneath my feet in the mountains. The solitude seemed unending. I stood between cliffs, which looked as if a gust of wind would hurl them against one another. I called out. My voice echoed. I heard the wind moan. I prayed. There came a thick mist: a darkness. There was neither tree nor bush to guide me. I longed for a sign of humanity. Barely conscious, exhausted, I feared death. A terrible fear trembled throughout me. I could not control my mind or quiet myself.

Suddenly, I thought I heard the sound of water and ran toward it. A waterfall. It was as if I had stepped from hell into paradise. I could no longer understand my madness and isolation. I cupped my hands and drank. I heard a low cough, and was delighted to see an old woman on the bank.

E: Describe her!

B: An old woman, all dressed in black, coughing and singing, her clothes rustling; she carried a walking stick, but moved quickly. With each step, she distorted her face. It made me laugh! I could never see how she really looked.

B: She led me to her hut in the valley, from which came a lively barking and the most beautiful tones of song. I cannot forget my joy; as we stood, looking down into the valley, the sun began to set, fusing all in the softest red and gold. The tree tops stood out against the evening sky, motionless. A thick yellow light was spreading over the fields.

Sop. & Tenor: Forest solitude is peace
so tomorrow as today
in endless time
forest solitude

B: It was a small bird that sang. Its feathers displayed every possible color, from bright blue to a burning red.

W: Was the old woman good to you?

B: Oh yes. She called me child and daughter. She taught me to spin and to care for the bird and her little dog. I soon came to love them -- children's minds accustom themselves quickly to even the strangest things. And she taught me to read! I would sit, with one of her thick hand copied books and from each magical story, try to picture the world beyond the valley. My favorite character was a knight, whom I adorned with all possible excellences, but for all my imagining, I could never really decide how he looked.

Every day I would spin and sing with the bird and talk with the little dog, and I was happy -- perhaps one could learn of true happiness if they could live such a life to its end without disruption...

One day, the woman revealed to me a secret: each day, the bird lay an egg, enclosing a pearl or gem. I was to collect the eggs. "You are good", she told me. "It never pays to swerve from the right path. The penalty is sure to follow, although it may be a long time in coming." I could not understand her words, but suddenly it occurred to me, that the gems and pearls were of great value, and that I might take them and go into the world -- I tried to push the thought from my mind, but whenever I sat to spin, it returned to me with growing clarity, as if against my will.

One day, the old woman left. I knew I would never see her again. My intention stood before me, beckoning. But I loved the bird and the dog! I wanted to remain; and the thought disgusted me. A strange conflict took hold of me; two spirits were struggling: one, the beauty of my solitary life, the other, my charmed vision of the world. Urgency, impatience gripped me. I took the bird's cage under my arm. It tried to sing. The little dog yipped playfully; I shut it in the closet. He whimpered and cried. The bird began to scream. I ran, terrified the old woman would hear! I ran.

I found myself in front of a small hut. It seemed so familiar -- and yet... I knocked. The door opened -- to a room full of strangers' faces! I continued on and on...

E: That was how I found her --

B: He came riding up --

E: You should have seen her then
her beauty, her fright
the strange attraction
a lonely childhood had carved
in her delicate sad features
Oh, you should have seen her then.

W: The bird, what happened to the bird?

B: For a long time, it refused to sing. One night it resumed: the words of its song altered, its tone shrill, shrieking, over and over --

Sop. forest solitude
you lie so far away
regret into eternity
the loss of forest solitude

B: Over and over until I opened the cage, put my fingers around its slender throat, and squeezed! I saw my face reflected in its bulging eyes. I buried it in the garden.

W: And the little dog?

B: I don't know** shut in the house to starve -- it's very strange -- I cannot remember his name. I used it so often! But after I left, I could never remember the dog's name.

E: Walter, what do you think of our tale?

W: So magically told; it seems real
I can well imagine you Beatrice
with what dedication and devotion
you cared
for the singing bird
and the little dog Stromian.

B: Stromian! the little dog Stromian!

ACT II/ Scene I

Narrator: When the soul is once led to suspect, it finds confirmation of its suspicion in even the smallest things.

E: Stromian. Stromian. The little dog's name sprang from his lips.
How did he know?
And she, who could never remember before, now fevered and bright,
begs to hear more.
She raves hysterically; does not recognize me.
Perhaps right now he plans to steal, and dreams of how the pearls
would feel in his own palm! Such apparent calm!
Trust deceives too sweetly.
He is trying to kill me!
Why did she pale so?
I can stand no long, your calling for Walter! The little dog whines;
the bird's feathers glisten. You have lost your mind; I can no longer
listen!
Walter --
I must get away. I'll walk...into the forest.

ACT II/ Scene II

MURDER SCENE

ACT II/ Scene III

E: Walter is falling again and again. He follows me. He is my shadow.
I see: his face is darkness. Beatrice!

Walter is falling again and again
before my eyes his face is darkness

Beatrice!

W: Edward

B: Walter, Walter

E: Who are you?

W: I am an old woman who cared for you Beatrice
I am your Walter.

E: Ah, I cannot wake, cannot escape. Beatrice!

W: In my house, she sings as a bird.

B: Sings as a bird.

B:, sop., tenor: forest solitude
brings joy renewed
no longing, no mourning
live here
quiet new
solitude

E: Beatrice and I

W:, sop., tenor: Beatrice has left you
She was never yours!
She was your sister!

E: Walter? Is it you?

W: Have you come to bring me my pearls?
My little Stromian?
My beautiful singing bird?

E: In what utter isolation
I have lived.
I have lost myself.