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A R E N A      T H E A T R E

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WOLVERHAMPTON      SYMPHONY      ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTOR:      MARK FINCH

WOMBOURNE AND DISTRICT CHORAL SOCIETY

CONDUCTOR:      DENNIS J. POWELL

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THE POLYTECHNIC      -      WOLVERHAMPTON

MAIN      HALL

WOLVERHAMPTON      SITE

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S A T U R D A Y      -      21st. March 1987

at

7.30 p.m.

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PROGRAMME:      20 PENCE.



P R O G R A M M E

RIO GRANDE .....CONSTANT LAMBERT  
CATHERINE HALL-SMITH - Piano  
SUSAN PEARCE - Contralto  
SCOTTISH DANCES.....MALCOLM ARNOLD

INTERVAL

A SEA SYMPHONY .....VAUGHAN WILLIAMS  
RONA LOWE - SOPRANO  
JOHN OXLEY - BARITONE

CONSTANT LAMBERT. (1905-1951) Was one of a group of English composers such as Walton; Warlock; Moeran. He was not affected by the enthusiasms of composers such as Vaughan Williams for English Folk Music, but he was influenced by Jazz as were Stravinsky and Debussy. His book "Music Ho" (1934) contains much witty observation on contemporary music. The Rio Grande is his most popular work, a setting of Sacheverell Sitwells poem for Chorus, Solo Piano, Five Percussion Players, and Orchestra without Woodwind. The Jazzy Rhythms reflect the character of the Brazilian people who live by the Great River on It's way to the Sea. The ebullient Brazilians contrast with staid Europeans in that they "Dance no Sarabande" - a typical stately dance of the 16/17th Centuries - curiously enough of Spanish origins. Great Power is evinced at climaxes - yet there is room for Pathos when "The noisy streets are empty". Not all is excitement and the work ends reflecting on the soft Brazilian air tempering the fierce character of the country's people.

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958) Born at Down Ampney, Gloucestershire, collected and was deeply influenced by English Folk Music. His Sea Symphony for Chorus and Full Orchestra is a setting of words by Walt Whitman. Started in 1903 it was not finished until 1909; It's first performance was given in 1910.

Haydn in "The Creation" uses the Chord of 'C' Major to illustrate "Light". Vaughan Williams uses a 'D' Major Chord after a 'B' Flat Minor opening which, as it were, acts as the drawing of the curtain to introduce an enormous vista of the "Sea It Self". Although we see the ocean in all it's moods - (jollity with snatches of sea shanties; sadness with a lovely tune reflecting on the perils of the sea - "token of all brave captains and of all intrepid sailors and mates") - There is an analogy of Man's soul sailing through life, with a sailor sailing over the ocean.

The slow Second Movement for Baritone and Chorus is a nocturne during which the Composer and Poet reflect on the mysteries of the Universe.

The Third Movement, a scherzo, is descriptive of the turbulence of the waves. The Orchestra and chorus combine so that the salt spray is easily imagined.

The most extended Movement, The Fourth, uses the Soprano and Baritone, so twists more extensively than in any of the previous Three Movements. The Poets vision leaps from the ocean to the universe. An Exuberant passage "Singing his Songs" celebrates the Coming of Christ. Man's Soul is launched on it's journey in the same way that man travels on the sea - "O Farther Sail". The music fades away to nothing as the soul slips away towards it's destination.

D.J.P.



RONA LOWE was born and educated in Manchester before moving to Leeds to study science, music and mathematics. After teaching in Manchester and Wolverhampton, she moved to the Shropshire village of High Ercall where she now lives with her husband and three teenage children.

She began her musical career at the age of 7 by studying the piano, and has for many years been undertaking solo engagements with many music clubs and choral societies throughout the Midlands and North. She has sung for the Wombourne and District Choral Society on several occasions. In June 1985 she was a prizewinner in the soprano solo competition at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod.

JOHN OXLEY studied singing in Wolverhampton with Constance Kershaw and continued his studies at the Birmingham School of Music under Roger Stalman. He has appeared as soloist with several local choirs, and sung extensively in the West Midlands. His range has included Oratorio, Opera and Lieder as well as lighter music. Since 1972 he has been Head of Lower School at Cannock Chase High School, and is also a Methodist Lay Preacher and Magistrate.

CATHERINE HALL-SMITH was born in Cheshire in 1965 and began studying piano at the age of seven. She gained her Degree in July 1986 from The Birmingham School of Music, where she studies piano with Frank Wibaut, and where she has also received coaching from Paul Hamburger. She is currently a member of the Martinu Trio who recently gave their debut recital at the Midlands Arts Centre.

SUSAN PEARCE was born in Wolverhampton in 1963. After two years of singing study at the Royal Northern College of Music, Susan transferred to the Birmingham School of Music to continue her studies with Pamela Cook. Susan has sung in many concerts in the Midlands and has won several competitions at the College, including recently the Canoldir Singing Competition, one of the prizes of which was an appearance as soloist in two concerts with the Canoldir Male Voice Choir in Birmingham Town Hall. Last year she was awarded the Silver Medal of The Worshipful Company of Musicians. In the same year she sang the role of "Dido" in Purcells Dido & Anaeas at the Dartington International Summer School of Music, and forthcoming engagements include a leading role in a production of Mozarts opera "La Clemenza di Tito" in the Adrian Boult Hall in Birmingham in March.