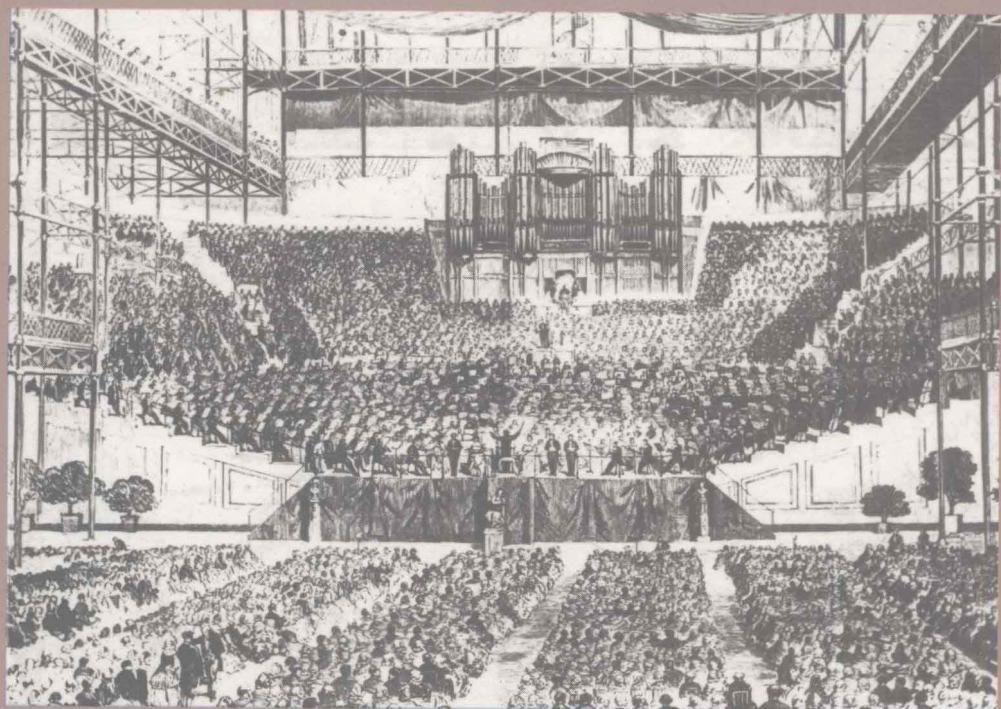


THE *Choral Singer's* COMPANION



Ronald Corp

FOREWORD BY SIMON PRESTON



THE
Choral Singer's
Companion



RONALD
CORP

B. T. BATSFORD LTD · LONDON

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Foreword

My first reaction to this book was to wonder why nobody had thought of writing it before; after all singing in choirs has been a social pastime for so long and is at a height of popularity just at the moment. For the singer, belonging to a choir is the perfect amalgam of individual expression and corporate responsibility, wearying rehearsals and thrillingly invigorating performances. However, every singer knows the moment when he or she would like to be just that bit better, and this is the book to guide and help. For the choral director this book will be the answer to many prayers: from helping to compile programmes for the next season through to exacting the last ounce of effort in the concert itself.

SIMON PRESTON

Organist and Master of the Choristers
Westminster Abbey

Acknowledgements

A number of people have offered valuable help in the writing of this book. In particular William Mann has made available his excellent translation of the *Dies irae* from the requiem mass, and Barbara Alden has written the section on singing (pages 13–18)—she has years of teaching experience behind her and I am pleased to be able to include her practical guide. I am grateful also to Sue Harris for the lists of addresses and the book list.

Jane Burwell gave immense help and support with typing—but more than that, she scrutinized and questioned, and forced me to make order out of untidy scribbles. I hope the book will prove a source of inspiration to all involved in choral music-making.

Introduction

In this one volume I have tried to collect together all the information sought by the many thousands of people who sing in choirs. The material has been collected with choristers in mind, and particularly those who are members of larger choirs. It is inevitable that the accent is on the larger choral works (Handel's oratorios, Haydn's masses, and many nineteenth and twentieth-century choral classics) but works for small choir and chamber choir are also included. It is also inevitable that very small works such as madrigals and anthems should be generally overlooked except in passing.

The book should provide a useful companion to singers, conductors, and to committee members who would like to have a say in programme building.

It is a book you could spend hours dipping into. But to make things easier I have divided it into sections, as listed below. Information is scattered over the various sections of the book, and it is worth looking from section to section. For example, a certain amount of information is given about Berlioz's *Requiem* under Berlioz in the composer section, but more information can be found under *Grande Messe des morts* under the works section, and you can also look up requiem under terms to find out exactly what a requiem is. Further to this, the text of the requiem mass, and its English translation, can be found on page 155.

The division of the book into sections is clear-cut, but the contents of each section needs some explanation. There is of course a slight personal bias in the selection of works and composers selected and the amount of space devoted to them. I make no apology for devoting as much space to Stanford as to Mozart. I do not suggest that they are of equal merit, but I do insist that Stanford, as a neglected British composer, demands full coverage and exposure in these pages, while Mozart does not.

I have chosen the titles of works which I feel are most acceptable and generally known. I assume the reader will look under *Les Noces* for Stravinsky's ballet *The Wedding* although it may be difficult to justify the persistent use of its French title outside France. I have not provided cross-references to these.

Cross-referencing has been kept to a bare minimum. I hope that the reader will automatically look from section to section. Works mentioned

under *Composers* marked thus* are dealt with more fully in the *Works* section. Composers marked thus* in the *Works* section have their own entry under *Composers*. If you hear that you are going to perform Vaughan William's *Hodie* next Christmas, you will find it under the works section, and then can look up Vaughan Williams to put the work in a wider context. You will see then that two extracts from it appear in *Carols for Choirs* Book 1 – and you may have sung these already.

There is no attempt to describe the music itself, and I have not graded pieces according to their difficulty. What seems difficult to one choir will appear easy to another. I have, however, indicated if a work is suitable only for the larger and more proficient choirs.

Publishers of works have not been given, partly because this information goes out of date, and also because there are often different publications of the same work. Some vocal music is on sale from a publisher, but the orchestral parts may be on hire only – you must check. Unfortunately some works are available in vocal form from one publisher, while the orchestral parts may come from another. There was no way of dealing with all of these problems.

The book is divided broadly thus:

Practical

In this section there are guides to singing, sight reading, conducting, running a choir, planning programmes and obtaining music. Practical guides to singing and conducting are difficult to communicate through the written word and require demonstration and personal tuition. Guides to running a choir can only be non-specific – circumstances from one choral society to another will be so different as to make certain remarks irrelevant.

Composers

A basic selection of over one hundred and forty composers has been made. Of course some composers have been omitted, but I hope I have not left out any major composer of choral music. Some composers who wrote relatively little for choir are, however, included, because what they did write seemed to me to be significant. I have discussed only their choral output, making reference to their other music only where it is relevant.

Works

Works with titles such as *The Dream of Gerontius* suggested themselves for inclusion immediately, and there are over a hundred and forty titles listed, but there are countless other works known only as x's requiem or y's mass. I have created individual entries for the best known in this category – for example *Requiem* (Mozart) and *Mass in B minor* (Bach). Most dictionaries of music fail to include works of this type unless they have a nickname. Haydn's masses are included in musical dictionaries (they all

have titles of some sort) while Mozart's are not (only the '*Coronation*' mass or perhaps the '*Credo*' mass have nicknames). I have also indicated orchestration (see below).

Terms

I have tried to explain technical or musical terms which may pertain to choral music. I have not attempted to include everything that a general music dictionary would, but it seemed vital to elucidate on common terms such as oratorio, mass, requiem, cantata as well as explaining Tonic Sol-fa, and things connected with the liturgy – particularly as choirs spend so much time singing sacred texts.

Texts

It is not always easy to track down the text and a translation of the religious works most often performed by choirs, unless you know exactly where to look. I have provided the most obvious texts in this section. These should be consulted with care – there are many variations in composers' settings of these standard words.

Lists

The various lists of works will provide useful information as a starting point for programme building. These lists are in no way complete, and some works in one section have not been duplicated in another although they have a claim to be there (Christmas music with string accompaniment, for example, may be found under one category only). I have provided lists of works according to their orchestration and also a list of twentieth-century choral works by British composers in the hope of bringing to attention the vast amount of excellent music which is being composed for voices at the moment. There is also a short bibliography and a list of useful addresses.

Orchestration

The orchestral and choral requirements for each work discussed in the works section is indicated by a series of letters and numbers. The soloists are listed first; S (soprano) Ms (mezzo-soprano), A (alto) T (tenor), Bar (baritone) and B (bass), followed by the choral forces required. The orchestration follows a basic pattern – the woodwind are listed first – flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoon, most often in pairs and represented by the figures 2.2.2.2. If an extra member of the woodwind family is required – usually piccolo, cor anglais, bass clarinet or double bassoon – the number of woodwind becomes 2.picc.2.corA.2.bcl.2.dbn. If the extra instrument merely doubles with one of its relatives the = sign shows the doubling. 3(111 = picc).3(111 = corA).3(111 = bcl).3(111 = dbn) means three flute players, the third doubling on piccolo, three oboes with the third doubling cor anglais, three clarinets with the third player doubling