

Programme 10p

NEWBURY CHORAL SOCIETY

(Founded 1884)

President: The Rt. Hon. Lord Justice Roskill

CORN EXCHANGE NEWBURY

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1978

7.30 p.m.

Belshazzar's Feast

by

William Walton

plus

Songs by Parry and Stanford

and

Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance No.4

Conductor: JOHN RUSSELL

Baritone: JOHN GIBBS

Orchestral Leader: JACK STEADMAN

A PERSONAL NOTE

During the past thirty seasons the Society and I have joined in many a musical adventure. One such has been postponed until my last concert but one with the Society, out of naked cowardice on my part, and that is "Belshazzar's Feast." Here it is, however, in its thirty-six minutes of brutal, lyrical, dramatic and ecstatic music.

It is preceded by traditional English music of this century, into whose ranks, oddly enough, the towering masterpiece of William Walton has gradually been gathered since its appearance in 1931.

John Russell.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The National Federation of Music Societies, to which this Society is affiliated, supports this concert with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain.

The Newbury Choral Society acknowledges financial assistance from Southern Arts, the Newbury District Council, and the Berkshire County Council.

Belshazzar's Feast

Thus spake Isaiah:

Thy sons that thou shalt beget
They shall be taken away,
And be eunuchs
In the palace of the King of Babylon
Howl ye, howl ye, therefore:
For the day of the Lord is at hand!

* * *

By the waters of Babylon,
By the water of Babylon
There we sat down: yea, we wept
And hanged our harps upon the willows.

For they that wasted us
Required of us mirth;
They that carried us away captive
Required of us a song.
Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

How shall we sing the Lord's song
In a strange land?

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her cunning.
If I do not remember thee,
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.
Yea, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

By the waters of Babylon
There we sat down: yea, we wept.

O daughters of Babylon, who art to be destroyed,
Happy shall he be that taketh they children
And dasheth them against a stone,
For with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down
And shall be found no more at all.

Babylon was a great city,
Her merchandise was of gold and silver,
Of precious stones, of pearls of fine linen,
Of purple, silk and scarlet,
All manner vessels of ivory,
All manner vessels of most precious wood,
Of brass, iron and marble,
Cinnamon, odours and ointments,
Of frankincense, wine and oil,
Fine flour, wheat and beasts,
Sheep, horses, chariots, slaves
And the souls of men.

* * *

In Babylon
Belshazzar the King
Made a great feast,
Made a feast to a thousand of his lords,
And drank wine before the thousand.

Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine,
Commanded us to bring the golden vessels
Of the temple of the house of God,
That the King, his Princes, his wives
And his concubines might drink therein.

Then the King commanded us:
Bring ye the cornet, flute, sackbut, psaltery
And all kinds of music: they drank wine again,
Yea, drank from the sacred vessels,
And then spake the King:

Praise ye The God of Gold
Praise ye The God of Silver
Praise ye The God of Iron
Praise ye The God of Wood
Praise ye the God of Stone
Praise ye The God of Brass
Praise ye the Gods!

Thus in Babylon, the mighty city,
Belshazzar the King made a great feast,
Made a feast to a thousand of his lords
And drank wine before the thousand.

Belshazzar while he tasted the wine
Commanded us to bring the gold and silver vessels
That his Princes, his wives and his concubines
Might rejoice and drink therein.

After they had praise their stange gods,
The idols and the devils,
False gods who can neither see nor hear,
Called they for the timbrel and the pleasant harp
To extol the glory of the King.
Then they pledged the King before the people,
Crying, Thou, O King, art King of Kings:
O King, live for ever

And in that same hour, as they feasted
Came forth fingers of a man's hand
And the King saw
The part of the hand that wrote.

And this was the writing that was written:
'MENE, MENE, TEKEL UPHARSIN'
'THOU ART WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE
AND FOUND WANTING.'
In that night was Belshazzar the King slain
And his Kingdom divided.

Then sing aloud to God our strength:
Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob,
Take a psalm, bring hither the timbrel,
Blow up the trumpet in the new moon,
Blow up the trumpet in Zion
For Babylon the Great is fallen, fallen.
Alleluia!

Then sing aloud to God our strength:
Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob,
While the Kings of the Earth lament
And the merchants of the Earth
Weep, wail and rend their raiment.
They cry, Alas, Alas, that great city,
In one hour is her judgement come.

The trumpeters and pipers are silent,
And the harpers have ceased to harp,
And the light of a candle shall shine no more.

Then sing aloud to God our strength.
Make a joyful noise to the God of Jacob.
For Babylon the Great is fallen.
Alleluia!

PROGRAMME

1. Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Pomp and Circumstance March No. 4 in G

2. Sir Hubert Parry (1848-1918)

Song of Farewell: My soul, there is a country.

3. Sir Charles Stanford (1852-1924)

Songs of the Fleet:

Sailing at Dawn

The Song of the Sou'wester

The Middle Watch

The Little Admiral

Farewell.

I N T E R V A L

4. Sir William Walton (born 1902)

Belshazzar's Feast

Soloist: John Gibbs.

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