

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg, Kansas

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

A RECITAL OF VOCAL WORKS
BY
BENJAMIN BRITTEN
(November 22, 1913 - December 4, 1976)

WILLIAM VANCE, Lyric Tenor

Assisted by

Ann Kosch, Mezzo-Soprano
Mark Warren, French Horn
Carol Sue Maxwell, Piano

Thursday, November 17, 1977
McCray Auditorium
8:00 p.m.

PROGRAM

I

SEVEN SONNETS OF MICHELANGELO (Op. 22)

Sonetto XVI
Sonetto XXXI
Sonetto XXX
Sonetto LV
Sonetto XXXVIII
Sonetto XXXII
Sonetto XXIV

Mr. Vance, Miss Maxwell

II

CANTICLE II ABRAHAM AND ISAAC (Op. 51)

Miss Kosch, Mr. Vance, Miss Maxwell

III

CANTICLE III "Still falls the rain" (Op. 55)

Mr. Vance, Mr. Warren, Miss Maxwell

PROGRAM NOTES

Bill Vance

SONNET XVI

Just as there is a high, a low, and a middle style in pen and ink, and as within the marble are images rich and poor, according as our fancy knows how to draw them forth: so within your heart, dear love, there are perhaps, as well as pride, some humble feelings: but I draw thence only what is my desert and like to what I show outside on my face. Whoever sows sighs, tears and lamentations (Heaven's moisture on earth, simple and pure, adapts itself differently to different seeds) reaps and gathers grief and sadness: whoever looks on high beauty with so great a grief reaps doubtful hopes and sure and bitter pain.

SONNET XXXI

Why must I go on venting my ardent desire in tears and melancholy words, if Heaven that dresses the soul in grief, never, soon or late, allows relief? Why should my weary heart long for death since all must die? So to these eyes my last hours will be less painful, all my grief being greater than any joy. If, therefore, I cannot avoid these blows, nay, even seek them, since it is my fate, who is the one that stands always between joy and grief? If to be happy I must be conquered and held captive, no wonder then that I, unarmed and alone, remain the prisoner of a Cavalier in arms.

SONNET XXX

With your lovely eyes I see a sweet light that yet with my blind ones I cannot see; with your feet I carry a weight on my back which with my lame ones I cannot; with your wings I, wingless, fly; with your spirit I move forever heavenward; at your wish I blush or turn pale, cold in the sunshine, or hot in the coldest midwinter. My will is in your will alone, my thoughts are born in your heart, my words are on your breath. Alone, I am like the moon in the sky which our eyes cannot see save that part which the sun illumines.

SONNET LV

Thou know'st, beloved, that I know thou know'st that I am come nearer to enjoy thee more; and thou know'st that I know thou know'st that I am still the same. Why, then, do I hesitate to greet thee? If the hope thou givest me is true, if true the strong desire that is granted me, the wall between us crumbles, for secret griefs have double force. If I love in thee, beloved, only what thou lovest most, do not be angry; for so one spirit is enamoured of another. That which in thy lovely face I yearn for and seek to grasp, is but ill understood by human kind, and he that would see it, first must die.

SONNET XXXVIII

Give back to my eyes, you fountains and rivers, the waves of those strong currents that are not yours, which make you swell and grow with greater power than is your natural way. And thou, heavy air, that dims the heavenly light to my sad eyes, so full of my sighs art thou, give them back to my weary heart and lighten thy dark face to my eye's keen sight. Earth, give me back my footsteps that the grass may sprout again where it was trod; and Echo, yet deaf to my laments, give back thy sound; and you blest pupils give back to my eyes their glances; that I another time may love another beauty, since with me you are not satisfied.

SONNET XXXII

If love be chaste, if pity heavenly, if fortune equal between two lovers; if a bitter fate is shared by both, and if one spirit, one will rules two hearts; if in two bodies one soul is made eternal, raising both to heaven on the same wings; if at one stroke and with a gilded arrow love burns and pierces two hearts to the core; if in loving one another, forgetting one's self, with one pleasure and one delight there is such reward that both wills strive for the same end; if thousands and thousands do not make one hundredth part to such a bond of love, to such constancy, can, then, mere anger break and dissolve it?

SONNET XXIV

Noble soul, in whose chaste and dear limbs are reflected all that nature and heaven can achieve with us, the paragon of their works: graceful soul, within whom one hopes and believes Love, Pity and Mercy are dwelling, as they appear in your face; things so rare and never found in beauty so truly: Love takes me captive, and Beauty binds me; Pity and Mercy with sweet glances fill my heart with a strong hope. What law or earthly government, what cruelty now or to come, could forbid Death to spare such a lovely face?

CANTICLE II ABRAHAM AND ISAAC (Op. 51)

- God: Abraham! My servant Abraham, Take Isaac, thy son by name, That thou lovest the best of all, And in sacrifice offer him to me Upon that hill there besides thee Abraham, I will that so it be, For ought that may befall.
- Abraham: My Lord, to Thee is mine intent Ever to be obedient. That son that Thou to me hast sent Offer I will to Thee Thy bidding done shall be. Make thee ready, my dear darling, For we must do a little thing.
- Isaac: Father, I am all ready.
- Abraham: This woodē do on thy back it bring, We may no longer abide.
- Isaac: Father I am all ready.
- Abraham: A sword and fire that I will take, For sacrifice behoves me to make; God's bidding will I not forsake, But ever obedient be.
- Isaac: Father, I am all ready To do your bidding most meekly, And to bear this wood full bayn (willing) am I, As you commanded me.
- Abraham: Now, Isaac son, go we our way To yonder mount if that we may.
- Isaac: My dear father I will essay, I will essay To follow, follow you full fain.
- Abraham: O! My heart will break in three, To hear thy words I have pitye; As Thou wilt, Lord, so must it be, To Thee I will be bayn. Lay down thy faggot, my own son dear.
- Isaac: All ready father, lo, it is here. But why make you such heavy cheer? Are you anything a-dread?
- Abraham: Ah! Dear God! That me is woe!
- Isaac: Father if it be your will, Where is the beast that we shall kill?
- Abraham: There-of, son, is none upon this hill.
- Isaac: Father, I am full sore af-feared To see you bear that drawnē sword.
- Abraham: Isaac, son, peace, I pray thee, Thou breakest my heart even in three.
- Isaac: I pray you, father, layn (hide) nothing from me, But tell me what you think.
- Abraham: Ah! Isaac, Isaac, I must thee kill!
- Isaac: Alas! Father, is that your will, Your ownē child for to spill Upon this hillēs brink? If I have trespassed in any degree, With a yard you may beat me; Put up your sword, if your will be, For I am but a child, For I am but a child.
- Abraham: O Isaac, son, to thee I say God hath commanded me today Sacrifice, this is no nay, To make of thy bodye, to make of thy bodye, This is no nay, This is no nay, This is no nay.

Isaac: Would God my mother were here with me! She would kneel down upon her knee, Praying you, father, if it may be, For to save my life For to save my life, For to save my life, To save my life, To save my life. Is it God's will I shall be slain?

Abraham: Yea, son, it is not for to layn.

Isaac: Father, seeing you must needs do so, Let it pass lightly and over go; Kneeling on my knees two, Your blessing on me spread.

Abraham: My blessing, dear son, give I thee Any thy mother's with heart free; The blessing of the Trinity, My dear son, on thee light. Come hither, my child, thou art so sweet, Thou must be bound both hands and feet.

Isaac: Father, do with me as you will, I must obey, and that is skill, Godes commandment to fulfil, For needs so it must be.

Abraham: Isaac, Isaac, blessed must thou be.

Isaac: Father, greet well my brethren ying, And pray my mother of her blessing, I come no more, no more under her wing, Farewell for ever and aye.

Abraham: Farewell, my sweete son of grace!

Isaac: Farewell, farewell, for ever and aye.

Abraham: Farewell, farewell, farewell, farewell, my sweete son, farewell, farewell.

Isaac: Farewell for ever and aye, farewell. I pray you, father, turn down my face, For I am sore a-dread.

Abraham: Lord, full loth were I him to kill!

Isaac: Ah, mercy, father, why tarry you so?

Abraham: Jesu! On me have pity, That I have most in mind.

Isaac: Now, father, I see that I shall die: Almighty God in majesty! My soul I offer unto thee!

Abraham: To do this deed I am sorrye.

God: Abraham! my servant dear, Abraham! Lay not thy sword in no manner On Isaac, thy dear darling For thou drestest me, well wot I, That of thy son has no mercy, To fulfil my bidding.

Abraham: Ah, Lord of Heav'n and King of bliss, Thy bidding shall be done, i-wiss! A horned wether here I see, Among the briars tied is he, To Thee offered shall be he Anon right in this place, Anon right in this place. Sacrifice here sent me is, And all, Lord, through Thy grace.

Isaac: Such obedience grant us, O Lord!

Together: Such obedience grant us, O Lord. Ever to thy most holy word.
That in the same we may accord. As this Abraham was bayn;
And then all together shall we That worthy king in Heaven see,
And dwell with him in great glorye For ever and ever, Amen,
For ever and ever, Amen. For ever and ever, Amen.