

# contact

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The programme was a most successful and enjoyable one. It was held in St. Paul's Church, Hockley, Birmingham, on 20th March, and was given by students of Birmingham University under the direction of Nicholas Sandon and John Casken. The programme consisted of works by John Casken, Vaughan Williams and 15th Century English Composers.

The first of this series of concerts, given by members of the University in St. Paul's Church on 15th March, comprised an interesting juxtaposition of English music from the Fifteenth Century, directed by Nicholas Sandon, and the Twentieth Century, directed by John Casken. The latter directed Vaughan Williams' 'Serenade to Music', and the first performance (or rather two performances) of his own 'Music for Organ and Percussion'.

20th March: St. Paul's Church, Hockley. Concert of works by John Casken, Vaughan Williams and 15th Century English Composers given by students of Birmingham University under the direction of Nicholas Sandon and John Casken.

The second of this series of concerts, given by members of the University in St. Paul's Church on 20th March, comprised an interesting juxtaposition of English music from the Fifteenth Century, directed by Nicholas Sandon, and the Twentieth Century, directed by John Casken. The latter directed Vaughan Williams' 'Serenade to Music', and the first performance (or rather two performances) of his own 'Music for Organ and Percussion'.

The 'Music' is scored for organ, with a large assortment of non-pitched and pitched percussion, including piano. It clearly belongs to that class of music which delights in the sheer beauty of sounds. There was in fact much to admire in the instrumental writing, the various timbres sometimes blending, more often setting one another into relief, in a performance which carried

great conviction. Particularly evocative were the home-made metal chimes, and effective if somewhat cautious use was made of the inside of the piano. The role of the organ seemed something of an anomaly. It was the only sustaining instrument, yet rather than being the "odd man out" of the composer's programme note it seemed to provide a kind of 'background continuum', except in its relatively few percussive passages. It thus held together an otherwise rather fragmented, quasi-improvisatory texture.

It was the improvisatory texture which was the core of the piece's problem; though there were impressive climaxes, notably towards the beginning and towards the end, a large part of the central portion was taken up with rather colourless held organ chords, and the composer did not seem to have drawn a cogent formal structure with his material. Yet, since very little of the piece was not specified in the score we did not experience either the drama which can issue from free or controlled improvisation by an experienced group. This kind of problem is in my opinion responsible for much of the boredom induced by a good deal of contemporary music.

TONY CARVER

# CONTACT NEEDS CONTRIBUTORS

WE PARTICULARLY NEED ARTICLES AND REVIEWS

ON POP, JAZZ AND FOLK MUSIC.

Contributions should be sent to:-

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