

JOHAN FRANCO AS THE PROPHETS FORETOLD (1955)

Choir of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Washington, D. C.

Shirley Meyer, soprano; William McDonald, tenor; William Harvey Graham, bass; Charles T. Chapman, carillon; Stephen H. Prussing, conductor

PARKS GRANT EXCURSIONS (1951)

Gerard R. Schwarz, John W. Eckert, trumpets; Edward R. Birdwell, horn; Arnold Fromme, trombone

JOHAN FRANCO was born in Holland in 1908 and studied there with Willem Pijper from 1928 to 1933. He moved to New York City soon after his First Symphony was played by the Rotterdam Symphony. After serving in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II, he moved to Virginia Beach, where he now lives.

Franco is one of the few contemporary composers who has been drawn to the carillon as an instrument for the expression of his musical ideas. It is suitable, certainly, to his preoccupation with liturgical texts and to his musical style which has been compared in its purity and mystical quality with that of the Palestrina school of the 17th century.

AS THE PROPHETS FORETOLD is scored for chorus, soloists, brasses and carillon; the bells are those of the Singing Tower Carillon of Luray, Va.; a recording of this performance is used when the cantata is performed, as it frequently is.

Text for AS THE PROPHETS FORETOLD was written by the composer's wife and set to music during the year 1955. Mr. Franco says that the music "wrote itself," and flowed directly from the text, rhapsodically. The recording was made in the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, in Washington, D. C. by the same choir that first performed the cantata in 1956.

As the Prophets Foretold

Text by

ELOISE FRANCO

I. THE ASCENT

Dark clouds lie low along the east where rose the bleeding sun;
Warning winds now bend the grass before the feet of those who pass with Him.
Worn, pain-filled, still patient ever, Jesus climbs the steep ascent.
Torn in heart, though more than brave, to those make lament He says:
"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

II. GOLGOTHA

For lo! as the prophets foretold now is come to pass,
Even to thirty pieces of silver weighed for His price.
Fruit of the body of David, conceived of a Virgin,
As it was written, Jesus now carries our sorrows.
He who was to be our Shepherd is brought as a lamb to the slaughter;
To the Place of the Skull they bring our Lord — Golgotha.
This righteous branch raised unto David, of which the prophets spoke,
Is crowned with thorns and raised Himself upon the Tree
From whence He prays, still with compassion:
"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

III. THE CASTING OF LOTS

Below the cross the soldiers take up His garments.
In four parts they divide the raiment of our Lord —
Except the seamless robe they will not rend.
Instead, for this they now cast lots
That it might be fulfilled as sung by the Psalmist:
"They part my garments among them, and cast lots on my vesture."

IV. WITH THE TRANSGRESSORS

Truly as the prophets foretold is now brought to pass.
He who was sent to comfort the people has been despised and rejected of men —
Though Pilate, who had washed his hands of judgment,
Writes to place above His head:
"JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS."
Acquainted with grief, He has been wounded for our transgressions.
Taken from prison and from judgment
Jesus has been numbered with the transgressors—
For behold a thief on His right and a thief on His left,
As the prophets foretold:
"He was numbered with the transgressors."
Jesus was numbered with the transgressors
And brought to the Cross of Calvary.
First thief:
If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us.
Chorus:
He saved others: Himself He cannot save.
Second thief:
Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation
Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.
Jesus:
Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

V. IT IS FINISHED

The sun has since the sixth hour hidden its face
And now in the darkness the voice of the Saviour is heard
Crying in anguish:

Jesus:

Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?

Chorus:

And again, that the scripture might be fulfilled
Where 'twas written: "In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink,"

Jesus says:

Jesus:

I thirst.

Chorus:

Now, the ninth hour being come,
Jesus cries with a loud voice:

Jesus:

Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.
It is finished.

VI. WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

What have we done, O Earth, that you should tremble so
And rocks be riven? Is it for us a sign
That graves should open and saints appear,
And the veil of the Temple be rent in twain?
Truly, this was the Son of God —
And we have crucified Him,
Truly, He was the Son of God.

VII. THE BURIAL

Joseph of Arimathea:

I am Joseph of Arimathea, my Governor.
I pray, let me take the body of my Lord,
Who has died as the prophets foretold
With no bone broken, pierced in hands and feet,
My friend Nicodemus and I
Shall wrap the body of Jesus in the finest of linen
Together with aloes and myrrh,
And place it in a sepulchre, my own new tomb,
Wherein never yet has man been laid.

Chorus:

Pilate, learning from the centurion
That Jesus indeed is dead,
Grants to Joseph his request,
Commanding, however, that a stone be rolled before the door,
Lest the disciples come by night to steal Him away.
By order of the Governor the sepulchre is closed with a seal
And a watch set until the third day.

VIII. THE THIRD DAY

Come, let us go quickly, before the passing of the dawn.
For we have prepared sweet spices to anoint the body of Jesus.
Still, when we arrive, who shall roll away the stone for us
And open the tomb?

IX. HE IS RISEN

But, when the women approach the tomb
They find the stone already rolled away.
within the empty sepulchre an angel greets them, saying:

Angel:

Why seek ye the living among the dead?
He is not here, but is risen.
Remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee,
Saying: "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men,
And be crucified, and the third day rise again."

X. THE SIGNIFICANCE

As Jesus Himself had prophesied,
The Temple which they destroyed
He raised again in three days.
Verily, those things which God before had showed
By the mouth of all His prophets,
That Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled.
For only in this way could come the glory
That was to follow.
Through His own life Jesus tried to show us
How the Christhood lying buried
Deep within the heart of every man
Must reach its own resurrection
To raise us into Glory
And the joy of everlasting Life.

PARKS GRANT was born in Lakewood, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland, in 1910, and grew up in Columbus. He holds the degrees B.M., Capital University, 1932; M.A., Ohio State, 1933 (thesis: The Music of Mahler); and Ph.D., Eastman School of Music, 1938.

Except for a year as music librarian at the Free Library of Philadelphia, he has devoted his life to teaching music in the public schools of Ohio, at Tarleton State College in Texas, at a branch of Louisiana State University, at Temple University in Philadelphia, and since 1953 at the University of Mississippi, where he is professor of music.

During a year's sabbatical leave in 1965-6 he and his wife lived in Vienna, where he prepared new and corrected editions of the Second, Third, Eighth, and Ninth Symphonies of Mahler, soon to be issued in the International Gustav Mahler Society's "Critical Collected Edition."

EXCURSIONS, Op. 38, is one of Grant's seven compositions for brass instruments. In addition he has written 3 symphonies, 6 overtures, 4 works for solo instrument and orchestra, 2 string quartets, 3 suites for string orchestra, 2 piano sonatas, a ballet, songs, chamber music for woodwinds and for strings, and works for band; two of his compositions are for the rare combination of horn and organ.

Mr. Grant is the author of *Handbook of Music Terms*, a music terminology dictionary for the student and amateur, and of *Music for Elementary Teachers*, a widely-used textbook for students majoring in elementary education without previous instruction in music. In addition he has published about 30 magazine articles, all but one on music. He serves as music adviser and authenticator for the New Standard Encyclopedia. His hobbies are mysterious phenomena (including ESP and UFOs) and railroads.

When asked about EXCURSIONS he supplied the following words:

“EXCURSIONS is the second of three suites for two trumpets, horn, and trombone. It was written between November 1950 and June 1951, while I was living in Philadelphia.

“**I. Prelude.** The instruments enter its imitation, the principal theme having the character of a vigorous ‘call’. At one point a three-measure passage carries each instrument from practically its lowest to its highest possible tone.

“**II. Color-Melodies.** In this quiet movement the melodies constantly pass from one instrument to another within the course of the phrase, thus causing the tone-color to change from trumpet, to muted trumpet, to horn, and trombone, with no break in the music.

“**III. Study With Twelve Tones.** An 'excursion' into the strict 12-tone system – but my kind of 12-tone, purposely slanted toward D minor, for I am anything but a dogmatist on this technique. There are elements from the second movement but the spirit is closer to that of the first.

“**IV. Nocturne.** Another quiet movement, in much of which two instruments keep up a steady quarter-note motion in unequal parallel intervals. 3-2 and 4-2 lime predominate.

“**V. Homage to J.S.B. (Prelude and Fugue).** Since the finale is really two movements joined, one might argue that EXCURSIONS has six rather than five movements. The Prelude is in leisurely 6-4 time, often using the figure B-flat A C B (B A C H its German notation). The Fugue is a more rollicking 9-8, and brings the suite to a brilliant conclusion.”

— CARTER HARMAN

(Original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)