

[Listen to the whole programme, read by Peter Day]

“PERSONAL CHOICE” NO. 17

by

A. LEECH-WILKINSON

TRANSMISSION: Sunday, 15th May, 1938. 10.0 – 10.30
Broadcast in the West of England
Programme.

REHEARSAL: 9.0 p.m.

STUDIO: 5, L.R. and Talk-back.

ANNOUNCER: This is the West of England programme.
“Personal Choice”. This evening’s selection is made and presented
by Mr. A. Leech-Wilkinson, organist and composer.

Mr. LEECH-WILKINSON:

Good evening. There’s so much good music available for
the gramophone nowadays that I’ve found it surprisingly difficult
to choose only a few out of the many lovely things that I would
like to put before you tonight. Still, there are one or two records
which, musically speaking, stand out in my mind above a host of
others, for one reason or another, and I shall try to tell you why I
have chosen each one.

My first on the list is the Meistersinger Overture and I’ve
chosen this because it always seems to me to be typical of Wagner
at his best; a grand tune, or rather series of tunes, woven into an
intricate and yet very satisfying pattern, so that one is conscious of
something robust and inevitably right, with nothing strained or
uncertain about it. Here it is, played by the B.B.C. Symphony
Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult.

(RECORD: H.M.V. DB 1924)

I’m sorry we haven’t time for the whole of that, but I want
now to turn to something simpler and more delicate in texture,
though none the less beautiful. It is an Eighteenth Century Dance
by Haydn, and it appeals to me rather specially both for its
delightful melody and because it is so redolent of the grace and

courtliness of the period. It suggests to my mind the scene, such as Jane Austen describes, of a Ball in the Pump Room at Bath, with gorgeously-dresses ladies and gentlemen of the 1770's moving decorously to this delicious music. It is played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Leopold Stokowski.

(RECORD: H.M.V. D 1995)

Next, a song, and although I confess I find very little pleasure in listening to the vast majority of singers, because of their apparent inability either to keep in the middle of a note or to deny themselves that detestable vice, the Tremolo, yet here is a superb artist, who, by her real musicianship and outstanding technique makes a lovely thing the lovelier for her art. It is Elisabeth Schumann singing Richard Strauss's song "Morgen", and I have chosen it because of the way the voice is (as it were) dropped like a beautiful flower into the quiet pool of the accompaniment.

(RECORD: H.M.V. DB 1010)

Now I would like to put on a record, taken from part of the Coronation Service, of an arrangement by Dr. Ernest Bullock for Choir, Organ and Orchestra of that wonderful Whitsuntide hymn "Come Holy Ghost". It is an example of a plainchant melody, which to my mind is the purest form of music that can be made to express the soul's reverence in the presence of God, and it's welded to words that surely are the very essence of prayer and praise.

(RECORD: H.M.V. RG 4)

Finally, I want to leave you with some music which personally I feel must have been inspired by really deep spiritual experience. Need I say that it is by Bach? His Mass in B Minor is becoming increasingly familiar to most of us, and I believe, in all sincerity, that the Sanctus from that Mass reaches the highest point in worship ever yet conceived in music; for it conveys, in superb fashion, the suggestion of hosts that no man can number singing in adoration, and the rolling of tumultuous harmonies through the infinite spaces of Heaven.

(RECORD: H.M.V. D 1123) 2 sides if poss.

ANNOUNCER:

You have just heard the seventeenth in the series

“Personal Choice”, selected and presented by A. Leech-Wilkinson.

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[CHARM extends our warmest thanks to Peter Day, Timothy Day and Peter Adamson]