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Hans Gál – portraits from between 1925 and 1985¹

The Vocal Chamber Music of Hans Gál

THOMAS LLOYD

The last decade has seen a resurgence of interest in the music of Hans Gál (1890-1987), the eminent composer and musicologist who fled Nazi Germany to Scotland in 1938. Gál was long known primarily for his early work as a Brahms scholar, but his own compositions have now become more widely known through a growing catalog of thirty commercially available recordings, the majority of which document his extensive repertoire of instrumental chamber music.² However, close to one-third of his total output consists of vocal works, including forty-four choral works and madrigal collections, twenty-five of which are *a cappella*. Yet despite the flourish of instrumental recordings, there are currently no professionally produced recordings of his choral music.³

Gál's choral works are evenly divided among mixed, men's, and women's choirs, and are of an exceptionally high quality. They display an original

musical imagination with a rich harmonic and melodic palette, and a sophisticated affinity for poetic texts, including many settings of English poems. This rich collection deserves a place in the repertoire of advanced mixed chamber choirs and intermediate to advanced treble and men's choirs. This article will present an overview of Gál's life with special attention to the context of his extensive choral catalog, followed by a discussion of distinctive aspects of representative part songs and a complete listing of his choral works.

The legacy of Hans Gál has benefitted immensely from the efforts of his daughter Eva Fox-Gál, her husband Anthony Fox, and his grandson Simon Fox, who have established a very well-designed website devoted to the composer's life and works, with a complete catalog of his compositions and available recordings.⁴ The biographical summary

¹ <http://www.hansgal.com/photos-eng.html>

² See <http://www.hansgal.com/recordings-eng.html> for a complete listing with audio samples.

³ *Voices in Exile - The Choral Music of Jean Berger and Hans Gál*, The Chamber Choir of the Bucks County Choral Society, Thomas Lloyd, director; BCCS Classics #80506.

⁴ <http://www.hansgal.com>

provided here is based primarily on their online account and on an interview with the composer by the critic Martin Anderson in 1986, less than a year before Gál's death at the age of 97.⁵

The Long and Fruitful Career of Hans Gál *composer, musicologist, pianist, conductor, educator*

Hans Gál's long and productive life as a composer, musicologist, pianist, and conductor spanned just short of a century, and included both World Wars. Born in 1890 in a suburb of Vienna to parents of Hungarian ethnicity, he was the first in a long line on his father's side of the family to pursue a career outside of medicine. However, his musical gifts were recognized and encouraged early on, especially by his mother's sister, his Aunt Jenny Alt, an opera singer at Weimar under Richard Strauss. His best friend in school (with whom he even shared a birthday!) was Erich Kleiber, later to become one of the most admired musicians of the era and conductor of the premiere of Berg's *Wozzeck*. In his interview with Martin Anderson, Gál stated

I started composing at eleven or twelve... I must have written towards a hundred songs around then. I always wrote music, until at the age of 86 or 88 I closed my workshop and decided: 'Now it's enough'. One mustn't go on beyond a certain age. When one is too old, there are limits.⁶

During these early years his interest in music was particularly sparked by performances at the Vienna State Opera, some with Gustav Mahler conducting, and in particular by a children's concert at which he heard Wagner's *Meistersinger* overture and Beethoven's *Choral Symphony*. Soon he was studying piano with Richard Robert, director of the New Vienna Conservatory, alongside fellow pupils George Szell, Rudolph Serkin, and Clara Haskil. In 1909, Robert appointed Gál to teach piano and harmony at the conservatory. Around the same time he received a Rothschild scholarship which enabled him to afford private lessons in counterpoint and composition with Eusebius Mandyczewski and to enroll in the musicology program at Vienna University where his teachers included Guido Adler.⁷ Mandyczewski, who had a long and close association with Brahms, became an especially important teacher and "spiritual father" for Gál until

his death in 1929, engaging his protégé to join with him in the 1920's in producing the first edition of the complete works of Brahms.

In 1913, Gál completed his doctoral studies under Adler with a dissertation on Beethoven. He began to achieve initial success with performances of his choral and chamber music, winning the State Prize for Composition in 1915. However, this progress was cut short when he was drafted into the Austrian army at the beginning of the First World War. Because of his poor eyesight, he was stationed away from the main action, where he found time to compose a cantata for women's chorus and chamber orchestra, a set of "Serbian Dances" for piano duet, and a full-length opera, *Der Arzt der Sobeide* ("Sobeide's Doctor"). The opera's performance in Breslau shortly after the end of the war returned Gál's work to prominence.

The 1920's were to bring Gál increasing recognition beyond Vienna, especially in the important German market. It was there that he received special acclaim for his operas *Die Heilige Ente* ("The Sacred Duck") and *Das Lied der Nacht* ("Song of the Night"), the completion of his Brahms edition with Mandyczewski, an exclusive contract with the German publisher Simrock, and the Columbia Schubert Prize in 1928, leading to his prestigious appointment as director of the Mainz Conservatory. It was during this time that he also founded the Madrigal Society, the only *a cappella* ensemble of its kind in Vienna.

During his four years at the conservatory at Mainz, Gál conducted the orchestra and several choirs while also teaching conducting, composition, and piano. Most notably for our purposes, he also found time to start a new women's choir and a madrigal ensemble, becoming affectionately known by many of his students as "Hans Madri-Gál." However, his success and position in Mainz were not to be long lasting.

In 1933, the National Socialists forcefully took over the governance of Mainz. The visibility of Gál's position led to virulent personal attacks. One headline in the newly commandeered local press read: "Away with the Jew Gál. Mainz Conservatory for German Art!"⁸ Gál was dismissed from his position,

⁵ Martin Anderson "Hans Gál in Conversation." *Journal of the British Music Society* (Vol. 9, 1987, pp. 33-44); available at <http://www.jmi.org.uk/suppressedmusic/newsletter/articles/002.html>

⁶ *Ibid.* Despite his protestations to the contrary, Gál actually continued to compose into his 90's, writing a number of smaller works for cello and for recorder, but also completing his impressive *24 Fugues for Piano*, Op. 108, modeled on Bach's *Well-Tempered Klavier*. For a discussion of the *Fugues*, see Anderson, Martin "Leon McCawley – on the Gentle Mastery of Hans Gál," in *Fanfare - The Magazine for Serious Record Collectors* 29:4 (March-April 2006), p. 48-52.

⁷ The importance of the Rothschild scholarship in Gál's development was shared with me by Eva Fox-Gál in a phone conversation on December 30, 2009.

⁸ <http://www.hansgal.com/biography/15-nazitakeover.html>

and soon thereafter all performance and publication of his music in Germany was forbidden. He and his family immediately fled from Mainz to the Black Forest in order not to compromise their friends, remaining in seclusion for about four months. Gál made a futile attempt to legally challenge his banishment on the basis of his service in World War I.

In August of 1933 the family fled back home to Vienna, where they stayed until shortly before the Nazi *Anschluss* of Austria in 1938. During this time Gál supported himself through private piano teaching and freelance conducting of ensembles such as the Vienna Concert Orchestra and the Madrigal Society that he had founded before leaving for Mainz. Austrian composers were largely dependent on German publication and performance opportunities, so what music he wrote in this period was primarily written for himself. Choral music again held an important place in Gál's creative imagination, with the most significant work in these tense years being his 75-minute cantata *De Profundis* for large chorus, soloists and orchestra. For this work he chose five German Baroque poems from the period of the Thirty Years' War. *De Profundis* would wait until 1948 for its first performance. Years later, the historian Wilhelm Waldstein would write of this important work,

*The movements of this cantata are not like the acts of a play, which follow on from one another and produce a whole as a sequence. They are like variations on the same theme, each one arrives at the same conclusion, affirming this world and this life with all its bitterness, bringing creator and created together through humble submission; the differences lie only in the path, in light, colour, landscape, in the threatening dangers and their conquest.*⁹

The Gál family initially planned to escape to America, but upon encountering the prominent music historian Sir Donald Tovey in London, Gál was persuaded to come with him to the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. While there was no faculty position for Gál at that time, Tovey obtained for him a job cataloging an extensive music library owned by a military general who was a music lover and avid collector. This exposure to primary source documents, letters, and scores later provided the basis for his well-received biographies of Brahms,

Wagner, Schubert, and Verdi, though Gál always thought of this work as being secondary to his output as a composer.

However, once again, the transition was not to be smooth. The ailing Tovey died before a faculty position could be arranged, and so the family returned to London when the cataloging was done. When war broke out in 1939, the family fled back to Edinburgh, where they moved in with a retired English professor, Sir Herbert Grierson, who hired Gál's wife Hannah as housekeeper. Gál's life was relatively pleasant for a time, as he renewed friendships from the year before and started up yet another madrigal choir and a refugee orchestra.¹⁰ It was also here in the Grierson's library that Gál first encountered many of the English poems he would later set to music.

However, following the Nazi annexation of France in June of 1940, Churchill ordered a revised enemy-alien internment policy where even German Jews who had been recently declared refugees in special tribunals were rounded up into the same internment camps as actual Nazi sympathizers. While Gál and his eldest son Franz were sent to separate camps, he found some recompense in the company of a number of other Jewish intellectuals from the university and elsewhere in Britain. For the only time in his life Gál kept a diary, and eventually resumed composing – some chamber music for fellow internees and then a camp musical revue to lift their spirits.¹¹ He was released early because of a skin condition he developed while interned, shortly before the camp was closed down.¹²

The Gáls returned to Edinburgh again, but this time the only employment available was as a caretaker and fire warden for an abandoned school. Tragedy also struck the family several times in the next few years. The natural death of his mother in Germany was soon followed by the suicides of his sister Edith and beloved Aunt Jenny when faced with being transported to the camps. In the same year, his younger son Peter, struggling to face the insecurities of life in exile, took his own life as well. The lone bright spot of the period was the birth of their daughter Eva in 1944, who later became the one most responsible for sustaining her father's legacy.¹³

⁹ Wilhelm Waldstein: *Hans Gál: eine Studie*, 1965. p.62; cited at <http://www.hansgal.com/works/op50.html>

¹⁰ <http://www.hansgal.com/biography/18-emigration.html>

¹¹ For an extended account of the development and performance of the revue "What a Life!" with music by Gál, book and direction by G. M. Hollering, see "Wer sie nicht erlebt hat, der begreift sie nie" - The Internment Camp Revue 'What a Life,'" by Richard Dove, in *Totally Un-English?: v. 7: Britain's Internment of Enemy Aliens in Two World Wars* (Yearbook of the Research Centre for German & Austrian Exile Studies), Editions Rodopi B.V. (1 Nov 2005), pp. 121-136.

¹² <http://www.hansgal.com/biography/19-internment.html>

¹³ <http://www.hansgal.com/biography/20-edinburgh.html>



Hans Gál with the Vienna Madrigal Society, 1929¹⁷.

After the war, Gál's prospects lifted considerably with the offer of a regular faculty position at the University of Edinburgh, where he maintained a rich life as a teacher, conductor, pianist, and composer for the rest of his life. Among his more important accomplishments as a community leader was his co-founding with Rudolf Bing in 1947 of the Edinburgh International Festival. In addition to these activities and his teaching, he maintained a steady stream of compositions to the end of his life, including numerous part song and madrigal collections written for the choirs he directed in Edinburgh. He died of cancer in 1987 at age 97, missing by only a year the first performance in Vienna of his wartime cantata *De Profundis*, featured as a centerpiece of the 50th anniversary of the Nazi annexation of his homeland.¹⁴

Gál's Special Connection to Vocal Chamber Music

Writing in two separate articles published the year after he founded the Madrigal Society in Vienna in 1927, Gál argued passionately for the promotion of vocal chamber music in the home to replenish the public appetite and engagement with new music. He was concerned that the advancement of instrumental techniques in the ground-breaking orchestral music of the era risked the weakening of amateur participation in new music and would inevitably lead to a diminution of its audience.¹⁵ This concern may have grown out of his own youthful experience of studying new scores in their widely published piano 4-hand versions before attending concerts of new works. It also may represent Gál's participation in a wider conversation among

¹⁴ <http://www.hansgal.com/biography/26-postscript.html>; for a more extended discussion of Gál's musical place in post-war Europe, see Michael Haas and Marcus G. Patka, editors. *Hans Gál and Egon Wellesz: Continental Britons--Music in a period of turmoil*; (in German) (Wien: Mandelbaum, 2004) 152 pp.

¹⁵ 'Vokale Kammermusik'. In *Musikblätter des Anbruch* X, 9-10, pp.355-356, 1928. English translation by Anthony Fox ('Vocal chamber music'); and 'Chortechnik und Chorstudium'. In *Pult und Taktstock*, pp. 88-92, Oct.-Nov. 1928; both available at <http://www.hansgal.com/books-eng.html> It is worth noting here that Gál uses the term "vocal chamber music" in order to put unaccompanied singing on a level with instrumental chamber music in the home. By this he means both solo ensemble singing and choral singing. His *a cappella* vocal music works well for both kinds of ensembles. The important criteria for him are that the setting is domestic and intimate, and that the singing is unaccompanied. He states in his essay cited at the beginning of this note: "The chamber choir and madrigal group are starting their activities, a new a-cappella literature is beginning. This more than any other form of music is dependent on a chamber-music effect. Its most precious effective means, the mutual support and intermingling of words and music, demands, in order to succeed, an intimate space and a small, almost solistic, number of singers to each part."

German composers in the 1920's, most famously including Paul Hindemith, related to the concept of *Gebrauchsmusik* ("functional music" meant primarily for domestic use), which later took on a qualitatively negative association never intended by its originators.¹⁶

Gál's love of choral singing went back at least as far as his first published composition, *Von ewiger Freude* of 1912, written for the female chorus of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, accompanied by organ and harp and conducted by his mentor Mandyczewski. In his article "Vokale Kammermusik" ("Vocal Chamber-music") Gál sees this new mission as one where artistic and pedagogical aims were closely intertwined:

*It is obvious that an artist without an audience is unthinkable. But I am just as much of the opinion that an audience which does not itself make music is nonsensical. A really close relationship to music can never be achieved merely by listening, without one's own musical activity. No gramophone or broadcast can alter the fact that the most beautiful and noblest things that music provides remain inaccessible to a person who is unable to become a musical organ himself; and that one cannot really take possession especially of new music until one grapples personally with it on one's instrument.*¹⁸

Gál's solution was not to attempt simplified 4-hand reductions of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* or Schoenberg's *Kammersymphonie*, but to revive the vocal chamber music tradition of the Renaissance madrigal:

*What our musical life needs is... a revival of the joy in music-making, a fresh impetus for domestic music. But most advantageously placed for this is what has long slumbered: a-cappella singing. I don't mean the singing club – there's no lack of this, but it misses the main point with its mass-drill – but vocal music-making as chamber or domestic music.*¹⁹

His prescription for the kind of vocal music this revival would require reads like a careful description of his own vocal style:

*The correct collaboration of words and music produces, with polyphonic organization, a plasticity, an effect of light and shade, which is incomparably superior in its directness to that of instrumental polyphony...a new vocal music can be created, music which, born of the spirit of our time and making use of the newly-acquired expressive possibilities leads back to the long-buried sources of genuine vocalism, a chamber music in the true sense of the word, which offers the joy and stimulus not only of listening but also of singing... The simplest test is to demonstrate by singing it oneself: anyone who writes vocal music should sing each part through individually.*²⁰

Even a cursory review of Gál's vocal compositions reveals that he fully succeeded in creating part-writing that is quite idiomatically singable. Nevertheless, the subtleties of his melodic chromaticism and distinctive harmonic language, especially in the music for mixed voice ensembles, are often more challenging to achieve than they at first appear. The brief *Grove Online* article on Gál includes a succinct description of his overall compositional style that would be difficult to improve upon:

*...he had by the time of his twenties found his own distinctive musical language to which, regardless of changing musical fashions, he remained true. It unites many elements: the clarity, playful humour and formal mastery of early Classicism; the chromatic harmony and extended tonality of early 20th-century, pre-serial music; a Schubertian love of melody; the lyricism and emotional restraint of Brahms and the contrapuntal textures that remained fundamental to his style.*²¹

¹⁶ Stephen Hinton. "Gebrauchsmusik." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. 22 Nov. 2009 <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/10804>>.

¹⁷ <http://www.hansgal.com/photos/madrigalvereinigung.html>

¹⁸ *Op. cit.* "Vocal Chamber Music" available at <http://www.hansgal.com/books-eng.html>

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.* It is interesting to note here that elsewhere in this article Gál looks to the Renaissance madrigal as the model for this revival of vocal chamber music rather than to the *a cappella* vocal chamber music of Brahms, whose complete works first edition he had just finished editing. Of course, Brahms himself looked back primarily to Renaissance and Baroque composers as models. Gál also shows a strong preference for pre-19th-Century texts in both his English and German vocal works.

²¹ Conrad Wilson and Alexander R.C. Scott. "Gál, Hans." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. 21 Oct. 2009 <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/10508>>

²² These were later joined with two part songs from 1939/1940 to texts by Thomas Lodge, to form "Six Part Songs" intended for publication, but never published (email from Anthony Fox to the author, December 29, 2009).

Example 1

Lento ♩ = 72

p espr.

SOPRANO
O thou with dew-y locks, who look-est down through the clear win-dows of the mor -

ALTO
pp O thou, o thou with dew - y locks, *espr.*

TENOR
pp O thou, o thou with dew - y locks,

BASS

5

S. - ning, *pp* turn thine_ an-gel eyes_ *p*

A. thou with dew-y locks, who look-est down through the clear win-dows of the mor - ning, *pp*

T. O thou, o thou with dew - y locks, *pp* turn thine_ *3*

B. O thou, o thou with dew - y locks, who look - est

10

S. u-pon our west-ern isle, which in full choir hails *f*

A. turn thine eyes u-pon our west-ern isle, which in full choir hails, in *f*

T. an-gel eyes_ u-pon our west-ern isle, which in full_ *mf*

B. down, who look - est_ down u-pon our isle, which *f*

15

S. thy ap - proach, o Spring!

A. full choir hails thy ap - proach,

T. choir hails thy ap - proach, hails thy ap -

B. in full choir hails thy ap -

18

S. thy ap - proach, o Spring!

A. thy ap - proach, o Spring!

T. proach, thy ap - proach, o Spring!

B. proach, thy ap - proach, o Spring!

Example 1 – opening phrase from “To Spring” from *Four Part Songs* (1939/1966)

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Examples from *Four Part Songs* (1939/1966)

A closer look at several examples from Gál's unpublished *Four Part Songs* for four mixed voices (1966)²² provides a brief introduction to the remarkable musical felicity and originality of his compositional voice.

The first example, the opening phrase from “To Spring” (poem by William Blake) illustrates Gál's remarkable gift for illuminating a poetic line with a masterful use of melody, harmonic inflection, and phrase extension.

*O Thou with dewy locks, who lookest down
through the clear windows of the morning,
turn Thine angel eyes upon our western isle,
which in full choir hails thy approach, o Spring!*

Gál employs an exquisite sense of formal balance to frame this stanza, supporting both its delicacy and exuberance. He sets the opening two lines with matching four-bar half phrases, first in the dominant Bb led by the sopranos and then in the tonic Eb led by the altos. The bashfulness of the personified Spring is suggested by a gently turned melody with

Example 2

36 *pp dolcissimo*

S. Come o'er the east-ern hills, and let our winds kiss thy per-fumed gar - ments; let us

A. *pp dolcissimo*

A. Come o'er the east-ern hills, and let our winds kiss thy per-fumed gar - ments; let us

T. *pp dolcissimo*

T. 8 Come o'er the east-ern hills, and let our winds kiss thy per-fumed gar - ments; let us

B. *pp dolcissimo*

B. Come o'er the east-ern hills, and let our winds kiss thy per-fumed gar - ments; let us

40

S. taste thy morn— and e - vening breath; scat-ter thy pearls up - on our love - sick

A. *p pp*

A. taste thy morn— and e - vening breath; scat-ter thy pearls up - on our love - sick

T. *p pp*

T. 8 taste thy morn— and e - vening breath; scat-ter thy pearls up - on our love - sick

B. *p pp*

B. taste thy morn— and e - vening breath; scat-ter thy pearls up - on our love - sick

a lowered leading tone and a contextually strange and wonderful D major 7 chord right away in the opening measure.

Gál then allows the flourish of the two closing lines of the stanza to unfurl in imitative counterpoint over eight bars, climaxing on high A's in the soprano and tenor as the "full choir hails thy approach." This bold *fortspinnung* (to borrow the term for the same melodic function in Baroque

ritornello form) is then brought gently down to earth with a four-bar extension of the final cadence on the dominant.

After a contrasting second stanza of two-part counterpoint between the paired upper and lower voices, Gál changes to a fully homophonic texture to create a musical bridge that frames the most subdued lines of the poem with a wondrous serenity (Example 2), recalling similar phrases in the part songs of Edward Elgar and John Ireland.

45 *rall.*-----

S. *pp* *mf* *pp*
 land that mourns, that mourns for thee.

A. *pp* *mf* *pp*
 land that mourns, that mourns for thee.

T. *pp* *mf*
 land that mourns, that mourns, our love-sick land that mourns_ for thee.

B. *pp* *mf* *pp*
 land that mourns, that mourns for thee.

Example 2 – bars 36-49 from “To Spring”
 Copyright Eva Fox-Gál, York 2004; used by permission.

Among the several subtleties in this luminous phrase can be noted the special harmonic color given to the words “breath” (bar 42 – a C minor 7 chord with a raised 6th) and “mourns” (bar 45 – a half-diminished 7 chord at the end of a second *hemiola*, this one delayed by a beat). Here the cadence is again extended (over the dominant pedal, preparing for the return to Eb for the last stanza), this time with a beautifully expressive melodic turn in the head-voice range of the tenors.

The third song in this group is a setting of Ben Jonson’s *Hymn to Diana*, familiar to modern listeners through Benjamin Britten’s memorable setting in

his *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings*. Here the music is appropriately a more straightforward rhythmic *allegretto*, with a call-and-response between the basses and the other parts. But the mischievousness of the goddess is also nicely captured, again through the skillful use of harmonic color. While the tonic key is a bright C major, the melody begins by outlining the diminished VII triad of the dominant G, passing through several unexpected harmonies along its way. The detailed dynamic and articulation markings for each part are reflective of the overall care that Gál has invested in a relatively slight phrase (Example 3).

²² These were later joined with two part songs from 1939/1940 to texts by Thomas Lodge, to form “Six Part Songs” intended for publication, but never published (email from Anthony Fox to the author, December 29, 2009).

Allegretto ♩ = 72

SOPRANO
Queen and hunt-ress fair, chaste and

ALTO
Queen and hunt-ress chaste and fair, and

TENOR
Queen and hunt-ress, Queen and hunt-ress, chaste and

BASS
Queen and hunt-ress, chaste and fair,

5
S. fair, now the sun is laid, is laid to sleep,
A. fair, now the sun is laid to sleep, is laid to sleep,
T. fair, now the sun is laid to sleep, laid to sleep,
B. now the sun is laid to sleep, is laid to sleep, seat-ed

Example 3 – opening phrases of “Hymn to Diana”

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The setting of the third and final stanza of “Hymn to Diana” (Example 4) provides another example of Gál’s contrapuntal finesse and expressive clarity in support of the text.

*Lay thy bow of pearl apart
and thy crystal-shining quiver;
give unto the flying hart
space to breathe, how short soever;
Thou that mak'st a day of night,
Goddess excellently bright!*

Gál opens the stanza with a serene homophonic bridge very similar to the music of Example 2 above, suggesting a thematic affinity between the songs in the opus. The contrast with the two

preceding stanzas of the sprightly ‘goddess’ music is welcome. The texture also contrasts with the call-and-response opening by having the tenor voice this time echo the others. Lines three and four end with a beautiful example of a poetic “*tmesis*” (from the Greek word for “cutting”) — the separation of the elements of a compound word by the interposition of another in between: “how short soever” standing in place of “howsoever short.” This has the effect of reinforcing the dissolution of poetic tension as the deer is given time for reflection. Gál sets the words “give unto the flying hart space to breath” with close, *marcato* imitation before melodically dissolving the contrapuntal tension as one voice trails off after another with the *tmesis*.

Example 4

61 *(p) dolce*

S. Lay thy bow of pearl a - part and thy cry-stal-shin - ing - qui-ver;

A. Lay thy bow of pearl a - part and thy cry-stal-shin - ing - qui-ver; give the

T. Lay thy bow of pearl a - part and thy cry-stal-shi-ning qui -

B. Lay thy bow of pearl a - part and thy shin - ing qui-ver;

65 *mf marc.* *f.* *poco rit.*

S. give un - to the fly-ing hart space to breath, how short so - e-ver:

A. fly-ing hart, give un-to the fly-ing hart space to breath, how short so-e-ver:

T. ver; give un-to the fly-ing hart space to breath, how short so - e-ver:

B. give un - to the fly-ing hart space how short so - e-ver:

70 *A tempo*

S. *pp* Thou that mak'st a day of night, God-dess ex-cel-lent - ly *f*

A. *p cresc.* - - - - - *f*
 Thou that mak'st a day of night, God - dess, God - dess

T. *pp* *cresc.* - - - - - *f*
 Thou that mak - est, thou that mak'st a day of night, God - dess,

B. *pp* *cresc.* - - - - - *f*
 Thou that mak'st a day of night, God - dess

76 *p* *f* *Allargando* *ff*

S. bright, ex - cel - lent - ly bright, God - dess, God - dess ex - cel - lent - ly bright!

A. ex - cel - lent - ly bright, God - dess God - dess ex - cel - lent - ly bright!

T. *p* *f* *ff*
 God-dess ex - cel - lent - ly bright, God - dess, God - dess ex - cel - lent ly bright!

B. *p* *f* *ff*
 ex - cel - lent - ly bright, God - dess ex - cel - lent - ly bright!

Example 4 – “Hymn to Diana,” bars 61-end
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Tranquillo con moto ♩ = 80

p dolce *pp*

SOPRANO
Rare - ly, rare - ly com - est thou Spi - rit of De - light! _____

ALTO
Rare - ly, rare - ly com - est thou Spi - rit of De - light! _____

TENOR
Rare - ly, rare - ly com - est thou Spi - rit of De - light! _____

Example 5 – opening phrase of “Invocation” (Shelley)

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One cannot leave this group of vividly evocative part songs without sharing the sublime first phrase of the very next song in the set, Shelley’s “Invocation” (Example 5). Gál has the upper three voices evoke the “Spirit of Delight” (chosen no doubt to resonate with the preceding “Goddess excellently bright!”) in parallel triads, starting with an inversion of the tonic Ab triad, and then passing through a minor 7th chord on “thou” and suspending the voices on a diminished triad over the tonic, for “Delight!”

It is hoped that this very brief introduction to the brilliant inventiveness and poetic sensitivity of this highly refined artist/craftsman will inspire performers to bring this rich repertoire of unaccompanied choral music to its deserved place in the vocal repertoire.

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Catalog of Vocal Ensemble Works

The following list of Gál's vocal ensemble works is based entirely on the definitive catalog provided on the composer's official web site at <http://www.hansgal.com/catalogue-eng.html>. The web site also includes complete texts for most of the works and lists of the first and many subsequent performances. The complete catalog of published and unpublished vocal works is available by request either from the publishers or through the website www.hansgal.com.²³

Hans Gál - Works for mixed vocal ensemble

a. Unaccompanied works

- Op. 19. Motette (1924)
 - for 8-part mixed choir (SSAATTBB) *a cappella* Matthias Claudius)
 - Duration 8'
 - First published by N.Simrock, Berlin, 1925 Available from Boosey & Hawkes: in print (M221115270)
- Op. 27. Epigrams (1926)
 - five madrigals after poems by Lessing, for 4/8-part mixed choir *a cappella*
 - 'Stilleben' ('Still Life'), 'Hymnus' ('Hymn'), 'Vita brevis', 'Irrtum' ('Mistake'), 'Grabschrift' ('Epitaph')
 - Duration: 15'
 - First published by N.Simrock, Berlin, 1927 Available from Boosey & Hawkes: in print (M221120601).
 - English translation available by request through www.hansgal.com.
- Op. 37. Drei Gesänge ('Three songs') (1931)
 - for mixed voices (SATB) *a cappella* (English and German versions)
 - 'Der römische Brunnen' ('The Roman fountain') (Meyer), 'Am Abend' ('At evening') (Günther), 'Wiegenlied' ('Cradle song') (Brentano)
 - Duration: 3', 5', 4'
 - Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig, 1932
- Op 51. Four Madrigals (1939)
 - to English Elizabethan poems, for mixed choir (SATB) *a cappella*. (No.1, 2, 3 also for female choir (SSAA) *a cappella* : Op.51a)
 - 'Youth and Cupid', 'True love', 'A cradle song', 'Foolish love'
 - Duration: 5', 2', 3', 2'
 - Publisher: Novello, London, 1949 (51a: no.1 & 3 1952; no.2, 1951)
- Op. 61. Four part-songs (1953?)
 - for mixed choir (SATB) *a cappella*
 - 'Love will find out a way' (anon.), 'An epitaph' (Beattie), 'To sleep' (Keats), 'Phillida and Corydon' (Breton)
 - Publisher: Boosey & Hawkes, London, 1954 *without opus number*:
- Quodlibet: 'Loreley' or 'On the Rhein Steamer' (1928)
 - for four voices (SATB) *a cappella*
 - published in the collection of the Deutscher Arbeitersängerbund, 1929
- Folksongs from the Volksliederbuch für die Jugend. (1930)
 - 'Der Ambrosianische Lobgesang' (Franz, 1771) (SATB). Vol. II/5, No. 269.
 - 'O du fröhliche' (Falk). Sicilian folksong (SATB, strings ad lib.) Vol. II/6, No. 333.
 - 'Ach Schiffer, lieber Schiffer' (Ludwig v.Beethoven, 1800), No. 555.
 - 'Auf, gebt ins das Pflingstei' (after a folk-song by A.W.Fl.v. Zuccalmaglio, 1840, traditional before 1840) No. 560
 - 'Nächt sprach mein Lieb mir freundlich zu' (composer unknown, 16th cent. (?)), No. 630
 - Publisher: Peters, Leipzig, 1930. Out of print
- Four Part Songs (Edinburgh, 1966)
 - 'To spring' (Blake), 'Madrigal' (Shakespeare), 'Hymn to Diana' (Jonson), 'Invocation' (Shelley)
 - later joined (after first performances in 1967 of the set of four) with 'Carpe Diem' (Lodge) and 'Her Rambling' (Lodge) (Edinburgh, 1939/1940) to form "Six Part Songs"²⁴
 - unpublished; available by request through www.hansgal.com.
- Four British folk-songs (1942/1969)
 - for mixed choir (SATB) *a cappella* (English and German)
 - "Early one morning"/"Früh noch am Tage", "An Eriskay love lilt"/"Liebesruf auf Eriskay", "O can ye sew cushions"/"Wiegenlied", "Ye banks and braes"/"Du liebe Flur im Seengrund"
 - Publisher: B. Schotts Söhne, Mainz, 1969; availability: Schott: in print

²³ The composer's daughter, Eva Fox-Gál, who manages the website www.hansgal.com, has conveyed the following advice to this author: *The situation regarding availability has improved considerably over the past few years. In principle, anything now published by Boosey & Hawkes is meant to be available for purchase... Boosey now includes everything that was 'Simrock' or 'Schauer' or 'Benjamin'. Any choral works that were with Breitkopf are now back with us, and available on request [through the website www.hansgal.com]. And anything with Schott should be available directly from them, as with Boosey. The only remaining publishers from whom works have recently been difficult to obtain is Leuckhart and Tischer & Jagenberg, but further attempts may prove more fruitful. Publishers are often willing to grant permission, for a contracted fee, to copy works available through inter-library loan.*

²⁴ See note 20 above

b. Accompanied works

- Op. 26. Requiem für Mignon (1922)
 - fragment from Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, for baritone solo, two choirs (SA, SATB), organ and orchestra, Op.26 (1922)
 - 2, picc, 2, cor, 2, E flat cl(ad lib.), bcl, 2, cbn; 6(or 4), 3, 3, 1; timp; perc; 2xhrp; str
 - Duration: 30'
 - First published by Tischer & Jagenberg, Köln, 1926
 - Available from Theaterverlag Eirich: piano score available as archive copy.
- Op. 50. De profundis (1936-1937)
 - Cantata to German Barock poems, for four soloists (SATB), mixed choir (SATB) and orchestra
 - Von der Vergänglichkeit' (Gryphius), 'Auf grüner Erde' (Fleming), 'Nachtgesänge' (Gryphius), 'Totentanz' (Albert, Gryphius), 'Zum Frieden' (Logau, Ulrich von Brandenburg)
 - 2(picc), 2(cor), 2, 2(cbn); 4, 3, 3, 1; timp; perc; hrp; org(ad lib.); str
 - Duration: 75'
 - Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden, 1948; available on hire.
- Op. 70. Lebenskreise ('Life cycles') (1955)
 - Symphonic cantata to poems by Hölderlin and Goethe, for 4 soloists (SATB), mixed choir (boys, SATB) and orchestra
 - 'Der Morgen' (Hölderlin), 'Das Werk' (Goethe), 'Sinnen und Suchen' (Hölderlin, Goethe), 'Natur' (Goethe), 'Dämmerung' (Hölderling, Goethe, Fontane), 'Das ewige Licht' (Goethe)
 - 2, picc, 2(cor), 2, 2(cbn); 4, 2, 3, 0; timp; perc; str
 - Duration: 90'
 - First published by Alkor Edition, Kassel, 1956 Available from Bärenreiter: available on hire (Alkor Edition 297).

without opus number:

- Drei Gesangsquartette ('Three vocal quartets') (1934)
 - for mixed voices (SATB) and piano
 - 'Blick ins Dunkel' (Fischer-Colbrie), 'Weite Reise' (Billinger), 'Marienidyll' (Dittrich)
 - unpublished; available by request through www.hansgal.com.

- Two Anthems (1936/7)
 - Psalm 121 for four mixed voices and organ ad lib.;
 - Psalm 95 for soprano solo, four mixed voices and organ
 - unpublished; available by request through www.hansgal.com.
- Heinrich Schütz: Zwei Dialoge ('Two dialogues') (1948)
 - rearranged for mixed choir (SATB, tenor und bass soli ad lib.) and piano or organ
 - 'Woman why weepst thou', 'The Pharisee and the Publican'
 - Duration: 5', 4'30"
 - Publisher: J. Curwen & Sons, London, 1948; out of print
- In neue Räume (Hesse) ('Into new rooms') (1965)
 - For mixed choir (SATB), flute, oboe, two clarinets, bassoon, two horns and strings
 - Duration: 9'
 - unpublished; available by request through www.hansgal.com.

Hans Gál - Works for male vocal ensemble
(see <http://www.hansgal.com/catalogue-eng.html> for complete details)

- Op. 8. Two songs for 4-part male-voice choir *a cappella*.
- Op. 11. Three songs for 3- and 4-part male-voice choir with piano (small orchestra).
- Op. 32. Five Serious Songs for male-voice choir *a cappella*.
- Op. 34. Drei Porträtstudien (Three Portrait Studies) for male-voice choir with piano.
- Op. 40. Three Idylls to poems by Wilhelm Busch for 4-part male-voice choir with piano.
- Op. 44. Nachtmusik (Night Music) for soprano solo, male-voice choir, flute, cello, piano.
- Op. 63. Two songs for male-voice choir *a cappella*.
- Op. 72. Satirikon Four aphorisms for 4 male voices *a cappella*.
- Op. 91. Spätlese Six songs for male-voice choir *a cappella*.
- Six folk-songs arr. for male chorus (TTBB) *a cappella*.
- Three German folk-songs arr. for male-voice choir (TTBB).
- Three old songs arr. for male-voice choir (TTBB).
- Zelter: Bundeslied arr. for 4-part male-voice choir.

Hans Gál - Works for female vocal ensemble
(see <http://www.hansgal.com/catalogue-eng.html>
for complete details)

- Op. 1. Von ewiger Freude (Of Eternal Joy)
Cantata for four female voices and double female choir, with organ and two harps.
- Op. 2. Vom Bäumlein, das andere Blätter hat gewollt (The Tree that Wanted Different Leaves)
for alto solo, six-part female choir and small orchestra.
- Op. 5. Phantasien (Fantasias) for alto solo, female choir, clarinet, horn, harp (piano) and string quartet (string orchestra).
- Op. 12. Three songs for female choir with piano.
- Op. 14. Kinderverse (Children's verses) for female choir *a cappella*.
- Op. 25. Herbstlieder (Autumn Songs) for female choir *a cappella*.
- Op. 31. Three songs to poems by R.M.Rilke for 3 female voices/female choir with piano.
- Op. 47. Summer Idylls (Stille Lieder) Four songs for female choir *a cappella*.
- Op. 51. Four Madrigals for mixed choir (SATB) *a cappella*. (No.1, 2, 3 also for female choir *a cappella* = Op.51a).
- Op. 75. Jugendlieder (Songs of Youth)
Five songs for female voices *a cappella*.
- Op. 76. A Clarion Call for double female choir *a cappella*.
- Op. 77. Of a Summer Day Lyrical suite for 3-part female choir with (mezzo)soprano solo and string orchestra.
- Morgengruss, Lockruf der Mutter Provençale folk-songs arr. for female voices *a cappella*.
- Five Provençale folk-songs arr. for female choir (SSA) *a cappella* by Hans Gál.

Report from Austin

Arvo Pärt: *Passio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi secundum Joannem*. University of Texas at Austin, Bates Recital Hall, University of Texas Choral Arts Society, James Morrow, conductor. February 27, 2010.

Pärt's 1982 *Passio* is infrequently performed in this country. At an unbroken seventy-five minutes, it is his longest work, and is perhaps more respected than loved. The music presents a controlled and almost static background for the projection of St. John's Passion narrative in the Latin of the Vulgate, augmented only by two short choral movements at the beginning and end which set the title and a brief closing prayer. Serene or soporific? Mystical or monochromatic? Pärt's tinntinnabuli style gives us musical information that is melodically simple and harmonically uneventful. Our response to the work will depend less on the music than on our own reflection on the message of the Passion text and perhaps also on our own stage of spiritual development.

Austin listeners benefited from an English translation projected onto a screen on the stage. The darkness of the hall made it impossible to follow the Latin in the program, but it set the appropriate mood.

This performance was characterized by refinement, sensitivity, and as much drama as the work will allow. The largest musical roles fall to the evangelist

quartet and the four instruments (violin, oboe, bassoon and cello) that accompany them. Functioning as soloists as well as in groups of two, three, and four, Meredith Ruduski, soprano, Timothy Workman, alto, Donald Meineke, tenor, and Joseph Bolin, bass were nearly perfect in blend, balance, intonation, and unity of intention. Baritone Yoonsang Lee as Jesus and tenor John Len Wiles as Pilate offered singing that was fittingly somewhat more dramatized, only rarely approaching a style that seemed more operatic than necessary. All roles were sung by students of the University of Texas at Austin's Butler School of Music.

The forty-voice Choral Arts Society, an ensemble of students and community singers, came very close to the bright, forward, vibrato-less sound of the Estonian choirs who introduced Pärt's music in the 1980s. The work's few big moments are given to the chorus, whose tone was enhanced by the radiant sounds of Bates Hall's 1983 Visser-Rowland Organ, played by Glenn Hunter.

James Morrow's conducting was a masterpiece of pacing and control. The flow between quartet, instruments, soloists, and chorus was flawless. The sublime final passage for quartet (the four voices in a perfect unison) and the closing choral prayer seemed an inevitable culmination of the evening.

W.W.

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