

The Gift of Music

Cecilia, patron saint of music, is thought to have lived in Rome in the 2nd century AD. Martyred for her faith, her feast day falls on 22 November. St Cecilia is the subject of many art works, often depicted playing the organ, and has been celebrated by poets from Dryden and Pope to Auden. Musical festivities in her honour date back to 1570 in Normandy. In the UK, the Musical Society of London inaugurated annual celebrations of St Cecilia in 1683. These celebrations were the catalyst for a glorious stream of compositions by Henry Purcell and many successors, notably Handel, Parry, Britten and, of course, Herbert Howells.

Psalm 150

Charles Villiers Stanford 1852-1924

We begin our celebration of St Cecilia with the psalm that most famously celebrates music: Psalm 150, in Stanford's colourful setting, published in 1909, the same year as his much-loved Canticles in C.

A Hymn for St Cecilia

Herbert Howells 1892-1983

In 1960 Howells was commissioned by the Worshipful Company of Musicians to compose a piece in honour of the saint; he chose a beautifully imaginative poem by Ursula Vaughan Williams, *A Hymn for St Cecilia*, which received its premiere at evensong on 22 November 1961 at St Paul's Cathedral. The descant heard in the third verse was added at the request of the cathedral organist!

Pater Noster

Giuseppe Verdi 1813-1901

We turn to Cecilia's native Italy for our next work, Verdi's setting for a *cappella* choir of the Lord's Prayer. The text is a poetic version of the prayer and is based on an elaborated Pater Noster by a mid-14th century poet from Ferrara, Antonio Beccari.

Psalm 148

Gustav Holst 1874-1934

We return to the psalms with a setting by Gustav Holst, one-time pupil of Stanford, of Psalm 148. The setting is based on the German hymn tune, *Lasst uns erfreuen*, which will be familiar to many by sound if not name!

Saturday
18 November
2023
4pm
All Saints
Church
Writtle
CM1 3EN



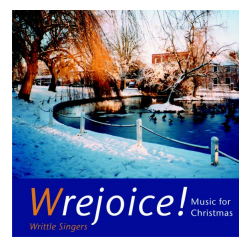
Conductor
Christine Gwynn
Organ
Laurence Lyndon-Jones

WrittleSingers
registered charity no: 1056334

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Forthcoming events from WrittleSingers

Candlelit Christmas Concert
Sunday 10 December 2023 5pm

Spring Concert
Saturday 23 March 2024 6:30pm

Summer Concert
Saturday 6 July 2024

All events at All Saints Church, Writtle

Look at our website for more details
writtlesingers.org.uk
where concert tickets can also be purchased

The Gift of Music

Roxanna Panufnik b.1968

Roxanna Panufnik composed *The Gift of Music* for the centenary celebrations of the choir of the Cathedral Church of Christ, Lagos, Nigeria, launching a new choral foundation to "encourage and train new choristers who might not normally get the chance to join a church choir." Fittingly, two former boy choristers from the cathedral were key to the project: librettist Bishop Akinpelu Johnson and commissioner Damola Aboaba.

Laudes Organi

Zoltán Kodály 1882-1967

Zoltán Kodály was a champion of choral music as composer, conductor and educator, developing the world-renowned Kodály system, still widely used to teach music and musical notation to students of all ages. *Laudes Organi* was composed in response to a commission for the National Convention of The American Guild of Organists in 1966; it proved to be Kodály's last completed composition before his death aged 84 the following year.

Laudes Organi is a hymn of praise for chorus and organ - in praise of organs, music and musicians. A fantasia on a Sequence from a 12th century manuscript in Engelberg Monastery, Switzerland, it is striking and bold, full of modern colour and invention. The Latin text of the sequence pays homage to the medieval Italian musical theorist Guido d'Arrezzo, father of modern musical notation and the sol-fa system upon which, some 900 years later, Kodály developed his own remarkable contribution to music education.

Te Deum

Joseph Haydn 1732-1809

We conclude with Haydn's sparkling 1799 setting of the *Te Deum* - one of a remarkable series of choral works from the latter part of his long life. The *Te Deum* is a great hymn of praise; one of several canticles sung at the service of Matins, it also features on festive occasions. This exuberant setting is dedicated to the Empress Marie Therese, who had finally persuaded Haydn to write it! He divides the text into three sections: an opening "movement" of declarations of praise; a central slow, minor section setting just one line of text, the prayerful "Te ergo quaesumus..." (We beseech thee, therefore, help thy servants, whom thou hast redeemed by thy precious blood); and finally an irrepressible finale envisaging all that is promised and concluding with a vigorous fugal section where "In te domine speravi" (In thee have I trusted) is countered with "Non confundar" (Let me never be counfounded).

Musical Director **Christine Gwynn**

Soprano

Eleanor Drinkwater, Rebecca Gell,
Rachel Hepburn, Michèle Marshall,
Sarah Moore, Catherine Reeve,
Laura Robertson, Jean Rose,
Helen Sismey, Ruth Travers,
Louise Whitehead

Alto

Audrey Cassidy, Julia Cooper,
Lucy Elwell, Sue Hirst, Julia Marsh,
Emma Norton, Ellie Oldershaw,
Sophie Richards, Jen Rutter

Tenor

Martin Burchett, Andrew Cripps,
Martin Mason, David Miles

Bass

Peter Brisley, Steven Clews,
Gerald Malton, Andrew Taylor

WrittleSingers is a chamber choir of some two dozen members. We are fortunate to rehearse and give most of our concerts in the ancient church of All Saints, Writtle. We also enjoy spreading our wings and recently sang evensong in the beautiful church of St Catherine's in the village of East Tilbury.

The choir’s programmes are varied: concerts feature standard repertoire such as Stanford *Three Motets* and Duruflé *Requiem* alongside the new and unusual – Gabriel Jackson *To the Field of Stars*, Janet Wheeler *Time Becomes a Song* and an array of pieces by Kerry Andrew, Kerensa Briggs, Francesca Caccini, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Cecilia McDowall, James MacMillan, Arvo Pärt, Vicento Lusitano and Eric Whitacre.

We are always interested to hear from singers with relevant choral experience and confident sight-reading – and we enjoy cake!

Find out more about us at
writtlesingers.org.uk
or call 07903 904011.

Laudes organi

Audi chorum organicum instrumentum musicum
modernorum artificum documentum melicum
canentem ludere amabiliter
ludentem canere laudabiliter.
Docens brevite, leniter, utiliter, dulciter, humiliter.
Ideo persuadeo hic attendere
jubeo commoneo haec apprendere
mentifigere humiliter.

Musice! Milites te habilites
usum exercites artem usites.
Habilem corpore te prebeas
facilem pectore te exhibeas.
Follibus provideas bene flautes habeas
istare praetereas diligenter caveas.
His prae habitis sonum elice doctis digitis
modum perfice neumis placitis.

Gravis chorus succinat qui sonorus buccinat
vox acute concinat
choro chorus succinat diafonico modo et organico.
Nunc acutas moveas
nunc ad graves redeas modo lyrico
nunc per voces medias transvolando salias,
saltu melico manu mobili, delectabili, cantabili.

Tali modulo, mellis aemulo
placens populo;
qui miratur et laetatur et cantatur et laudatur
Deo sedula qui regnat in saecula.

Huius artis praeceptorum
secum Deus det Guidoni vitam aeternalem.

Fiat Amen.

*Listen to the chorus of the pipes, the musical instrument
The melodious proof of modern skills,
Singing admirably through playing,
playing admirably through singing.
Leading concisely, gently, profitably, sweetly, humbly.
So I advise you to stand still here
and ask you urgently to listen to it
with humble attention.*
*Music! May you even use soldiers
and armies in the cause of art.
By your appearance, show yourself easy to master;
By your character, reveal yourself easy to accomplish.
May you give us the lungs to control our breath well;
May your influence spread abroad, diligently fostered.
Using these qualities, coax a tune from nimble fingers
perfect a melody with pleasing sounds.*
*The chorus sings with deep tone, sonorous like a trumpet call;
the high sounds ring forth;
one chorus resounding with another in discord and harmony.
Now ring out the high notes,
now return to the low ones in a lyrical melody;
Now, through the middle registers, soar like lightning
in a melodious leap of your agile hand, pleasing and tuneful.*
*With such a melody, sweet as honey,
you please your audience
who marvel and rejoice and sing and praise
and serve God who rules in eternity.*
*To the master of this art
may God, to Guido, grant eternal life.*
So be it, Amen.

Te Deum

Te Deum laudamus: te Dominum confitemur.
Te aeternum Patrem omnis terra veneratur.
Tibi omnes Angeli; tibi caeli et universae potestates.
Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim incessabili voce proclamant:
Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra majestatis gloriae tuae.
Te gloriosus Apostolorum chorus;
Te Prophetarum laudabilis numerus;
Te Martyrum candidatus laudat exercitus.
Te per orbem terrarum sancta confitetur Ecclesia:
Patrem immensae majestatis;
Venerandum tuum verum et unicum Filium;
Sanctum quoque Paraclitum Spiritum.
Tu Rex gloriae, Christe.
Tu Patris sempiternus es Filius.
Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem,
non horruisti Virginis uterum.
Tu, devicto mortis aculeo,
aperuisti credentibus regna caelorum.
Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes, in gloria Patris.
Judex crederis esse venturus.
Te ergo quaesumus, tuis famulis subveni,
quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.
Aeterna fac cum sanctis tuis in gloria numerari.
Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine, et benedic haereditati tuae.
Et rege eos, et extolle illos usque in aeternum.
Per singulos dies benedicimus te.
Et laudamus nomen tuum in saeculum, et in saeculum saeculi.
Dignare, Domine, die isto sine peccato nos custodire.
Miserere nostri, Domine, miserere nostri.
Fiat misericordia tua, Domine, super nos,
quemadmodum speravimus in te.
In te, Domine, speravi: non confundar in aeternum.

*We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.
All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting.
To thee all Angels cry aloud, the Heavens, and all the Powers therein.
To thee Cherubin and Seraphin continually do cry,
Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;
Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of thy glory.
The glorious company of the Apostles praise thee.
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise thee.
The noble army of Martyrs praise thee.
The holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee;
The Father of an infinite Majesty;
Thine honourable, true and only Son;
Also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.
Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ.
Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.
When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man,
thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.
When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death
thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.
Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father.
We believe that thou shalt come to be our Judge.
We therefore pray thee, help thy servants
whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.
Make them to be numbered with thy Saints in glory everlasting.
O Lord, save thy people and bless thine heritage.
Govern them and lift them up for ever.
Day by day we magnify thee;
And we worship thy Name ever world without end.
Vouchsafe, O Lord to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us have mercy upon us.
O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us
as our trust is in thee.
O Lord, in thee have I trusted: let me never be confounded.*

*"For the gift of music, and for
those who through the years
have sung your praises here,
we thank thee O Lord."*

Bishop Akinpelu Johnson

Friends of *WrittleSingers*

We are most grateful for the continuing support
of our Friends:

Pamela Butt, Keith Byatt, Martin Clarke,
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*Have you considered becoming a
Friend of WrittleSingers?*

Benefits of our Friends scheme include:

- >> a free ticket to each of our concerts
- >> a discount on further tickets
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- >> optional acknowledgement in our programmes

For more details of our Friends scheme,
please ring Audrey Cassidy on 07815 966978.