



The
Cecilia
Consort

A New Heaven

Douai Abbey
Upper Woolhampton
Saturday 16th November, 2024
7.30pm

In memoriam:

Alan Hodgson 16.08.1928 – 23.10.2024



My father, Alan was born in Lancashire. He was a studious child and his love of music started at an early age. At 9 years old he joined St John's Prize boys' choir and from there moved to become a chorister and head boy of Blackburn Cathedral choir. This gave him an early grounding in a wide range of music from 13th century to contemporary music. Alongside this he became a keen fell walker, particularly in the Lake District, which did at times present a conflict of interests.

He spent his 2 years national service in Singapore. He was not a natural soldier and so was delighted to be offered the role of producing a weekly classical radio show for the garrison radio. He was offered access to a local private record collection which turned out to be extensive, so for him was also highly educational. He was the first in his family to go to university and attended Cambridge after his national service, to study modern languages. Inevitably, he joined various choirs and choruses, but he also became a keen rower and quickly became part of the Christ's College 1st boat.

After Cambridge he joined Martin's Bank, which later became Barclays and was London based. In 1954 he met my mother, Jo when he joined Marylebone Church choir where she was also singing. Working with the bank meant they moved several times early on but eventually they settled first in Berkhamsted and then outside Oxford. They raised five children. Growing up we all sang, so music was a constant in our household. As a keen walker and conservationist, my father was actively involved in the local wildlife trust in Oxfordshire after he retired. He stayed very active and continued with his passion for the Lake District. Between his 70th and 80th birthdays he climbed the 56 highest peaks there. He continued to sing and has been a staunch supporter of my concerts over many years.

He was hugely proud of his 5 children, 9 grandchildren and one great grandchild. He was a greatly loved father and grandfather, and a wonderful man. He is greatly missed.

Kate Munro

Introduction



Welcome to the first concert of this new season. We are so happy to be back at Douai Abbey with a programme of Remembrance music. We are also very pleased to be pairing up with Newbury Cancer Care in their 40th anniversary year and hope you will give generously as we collect for them at the end of the concert. When we decided to support Newbury Cancer Care tonight, little did I know how cancer would affect me and my family this year. We lost my father, Sid Coxwell at the end of April. Not only have he and my mum been hugely supportive throughout my career but, if it wasn't for Dad, Cecilia Consort wouldn't be here to sing tonight. In the early days we did a disastrous joint project with another choir in Chichester which left us penniless. Dad swooped in and rescued us and then became our Treasurer for a while to get us back on track. 30 years on and we are still very much on the scene, and I will be forever grateful for everything Dad did. What a hero!

Last month Deborah Roberts, my singing partner in The Tallis Scholars, lost her battle with cancer too. I must have sung the Victoria Requiem more than 100 times with her, so it's very fitting we sing this glorious work tonight. The quiet pieces we shall sing at the end of the concert - Sheppard's Libera Nos 1&2 - were firm favourites of ours too. Both of these amazing people will be greatly missed. I found out last week that one of our altos lost her father and I wanted to include him in the programme too. Kate writes about her father on the opposite page.

Enjoy this beautiful and varied programme, chosen to suit the acoustics of this magical place, which I'd like to dedicate to Dad, Deborah and Alan, with love and thanks.



Janet Coxwell

Janet Coxwell – Musical Director



Since graduating from London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Janet has worked professionally as a solo artist and consort singer. Whilst specialising in Early Music and performing with many of the UK's leading ensembles, her musical versatility boasts many other genres and musical styles, and she has worked closely with Norfolk-based composer Patrick Hawes on many of his original works. Their first album *Blue in Blue* drew critical acclaim with Janet's voice being described as 'melting honey on freshly buttered toast' (BBC Radio 3). Her 'bell-like tones' (Financial Times) are often heard on TV, film and radio as well as on numerous classical and pop CDs. Janet enjoyed 23 wonderful years with the Tallis Scholars and performed in more than 900 concerts world-wide with this world-renowned ensemble. She continues to perform and record, but her love of teaching means she spends more time in the UK these days. Janet is Head of Choral Studies at Cheam School and enjoys working with her ever increasing 'family' of students and choristers.

Janet and David Woodcock (Head of music at Harrow School) have directed the Early Music Academy, a hugely successful, week-long summer school, since 2015. After the inevitable interruptions of the pandemic, EMA resumed in 2022, only to find, like many musical courses, that it was no longer financially viable, so this summer they closed their doors. Janet hopes to run some weekend courses in the not-too-distant future, so watch this space! As well as a busy performing schedule, Janet enjoys adjudicating choral competitions, leading singing master classes and running choral workshops; she especially loves working with and training amateur singers. She lives in Highclere and has enjoyed a long and fruitful association with several Newbury based choirs, including Newbury Choral Society.

Steve Bowey B.Eng FRCO – Accompanist



Steve studied organ and piano from an early age, playing the organ regularly at St Francis and St Andrew's churches in Coulsdon. After gaining an engineering degree from Salford University he moved to Newbury to work for Vodafone. In 1991 Steve was appointed as accompanist of the Cromwell Singers and later became their Musical Director. From 1992, he was Director of Music at St Mary's Church, Shaw-cum-Donnington, and regularly worked with local choirs, including the Douai Choral Society, the Downland Chorale, the RSCM Southern Cathedral Singers, Berkshire Maestros youth choirs and Worcester College Oxford.

In 2006 Steve joined the Royal College of Organists and in July the following year took the examination for Associate (ARCO) in which he was awarded the Limpus prize for performance, as well as the Sowerbutts and Samuel Baker prizes. After further study, he was awarded the Fellowship Diploma (FRCO) in January 2011. His current musical commitments include teaching organ, piano, and music theory. He is Director of Music at St Mary's Shaw-cum-Donnington, organist at Cheam School, and regularly gives organ recitals. Steve is currently the accompanist to Newbury Choral Society and the Cecilia Consort, and enjoys working with the many choirs in Newbury and the surrounding area.

Programme Notes

The Call of Wisdom

Will Todd (born 1970)

Will Todd was born in Country Durham, attended Durham School and joined the choir of St Oswald's Church, Durham under its choirmaster David Higgins. He went on to study music at the University of Bristol. He is a pianist and regularly performs with his trio. This piece was commissioned as part of the Diamond Jubilee of Elizabeth II, with text by Michael Hampel (based on Proverbs 8).

Greater Love Hath No Man

John Ireland (1879-1962)

Soloists: Amy Lennon & Ashley Morris

John Ireland was an English composer and teacher of music. He studied piano and organ at the Royal College of Music from 1893 and, from 1897, studied composition under Charles Villiers Stanford. From Stanford, Ireland inherited a thorough knowledge of the music of Beethoven, Brahms and other German classical composers, but as a young man he was also strongly influenced by Debussy and Ravel as well as by the earlier works of Stravinsky and Bartók. From these influences, he developed his own brand of "English Impressionism", related more closely to French and Russian models than to the folk-song style then prevailing in English music. In 1896 Ireland was appointed sub-organist at Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, London SW1 and, later, from 1904 until 1926 was organist and choirmaster at St Luke's Church, Chelsea. It was in the early 1900s that he began to make his name as a composer of songs and chamber music.

Commissioned in 1912 for Charles Macpherson, the sub-organist of St Paul's Cathedral and intended as a meditation for Passiontide, *Greater Love Hath No Man* drew its text from a compilation of scriptural passages in *Daily Light on the Daily Path*, a series of booklets containing Bible readings. The anthem rapidly gained currency in cathedrals and church choirs and, with the outbreak of war in 1914, its text gained a special resonance as the casualties from the front mounted. Although *Greater Love* might outwardly seem to be influenced by the English verse anthem, in reality it has the scope and narrative redolent of a small cantata in its manner of continuity and 'dialogue' between soloists and chorus.

Ubi Caritas

Paul Mealor (born 1975)

Born in St Asaph, Wales, Paul Mealor studied composition privately with William Mathias and John Pickard and then read music at the University of York (1994–2002). A large proportion of his output is for chorus, both a cappella and accompanied. He came to wider notice when this motet *Ubi Caritas et Amor* was commissioned for the wedding of Prince William and Catherine

Middleton in 2011. It is a hymn of the Western Church, long used as one of the antiphons for the washing of feet on Maundy Thursday. Its text is attributed to Paulinus of Aquileia in 796.

Psalm Prelude (Set 1, No 1)

Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

Organist: Steve Bowey

Psalms 34:6 - This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

And I Saw a New Heaven

Edgar Bainton (1880-1956)

Edgar Bainton was a pupil of Charles Villiers Stanford's at the Royal College of Music. This anthem was completed in June 1928 during Bainton's second period on the staff at the Newcastle upon Tyne Conservatory of Music. The composer, who is perhaps most celebrated in the city of Sydney, Australia, where he was to later settle, had already seen much of life. An ill-fated musical pilgrimage to Bayreuth saw him interned at Ruhleben internment camp for the duration of the First World War. He was put in charge of the music and, amid the hardship, it was a creative period for him. The anthem *And I Saw a New Heaven* is typical of Bainton's work in that he was attracted to late-romantic harmony without indulging in the folksong-influenced modal harmonies which characterize much of the music of his English contemporaries such as Vaughan Williams.

Canticles of Light

Bob Chilcott (born 1955)

"A contemporary hero of British choral music" (Observer), Bob Chilcott was born in Plymouth in 1955. While still young he relocated with his family to a new home near Watford. Although his family was not musical, he joined the local church choir where the assistant organist was renowned conductor, Andrew Davies. Chilcott sang in the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, both as a boy and as a university student, when he conducted the voluntary Choral Society, which included many singers from other colleges. He was a member of the King's Singers from 1985 to 1997, singing tenor. He has been a composer since 1997, composing this work in 2004. In his own words, "*Canticles of Light* is a setting of three Latin Hymns from the *Liturgia Horarum*. The first two, which are dark in character, are evening hymns that entreat God for protection and comfort through the night. The music lightens for the final hymn, a song for the morning, which expresses the belief that, with God's help, the light of day will encourage new strength and hope."

• **Interval** •

20 minutes

Officium Defunctorum Requiem 1605 Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)

Victoria was the most famous Spanish composer of the Renaissance. He stands with Palestrina and Lassus as among the principal composers of the late Renaissance and was "admired above all for the intensity of some of his motets and of his Offices for the Dead and for Holy Week". His surviving oeuvre, unlike that of his colleagues, is almost exclusively sacred and polyphonic choral music, set to Latin texts. After his father's death in 1557, his uncle, Juan Luis, became Tomás' guardian, and he sang as a choirboy in Ávila Cathedral. After receiving a grant from Philip II in 1565, Victoria went to Rome and became cantor at the German College founded by St. Ignatius Loyola. He may have studied with Palestrina around this time, though the evidence is circumstantial; he was certainly influenced by the Italian's style, although his melodic writing and use of dissonance is more free than that of Palestrina. As a Catholic priest, as well as an accomplished organist and singer, his career spanned both Spain and Italy. Tonight we will perform his most famous work, and his masterpiece, *Officium Defunctorum* – a Requiem Mass composed for the Empress Maria, wife of the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian II.

After your applause, the final piece will be sung to return the Abbey to its place of worship:

Libera Nos, Salva Nos John Sheppard (1515-1558)

Sheppard was probably born around 1515, judging from his statement in 1554 that he had been composing music for twenty years. Nothing certain is known about his early life; the first sighting of him occurs at Thaxted in June 1541 when he married the recently widowed Jane Ewen or Evan. He then served as *informator choristarum* at Magdalen College, Oxford continuously from Michaelmas 1543 to sometime between March and Michaelmas 1548. Sheppard next appears in a list of the Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal who sang at the funeral of King Edward VI in August 1553. He appears to have remained active at the chapel up to the year of his death, as he was awarded liveries for both the funeral of Queen Mary and the coronation of Elizabeth I.

Sheppard's first setting of *Libera nos, salva nos* takes as its text the sixth antiphon at Matins on Trinity Sunday. Its liturgical position was thus about halfway through the chief morning Office, as celebrated in its festal form with three nocturns. The text, a petition to the Holy Trinity for freedom, redemption and absolution, is sufficiently general to allow the possibility that Sheppard's setting was used at other Offices. It is likely that the piece was composed during Sheppard's time at Magdalen College, Oxford, among whose statutes is the ordinance that this very text be recited twice a day. Unusually, and unlike Sheppard's Office hymns and responds, the chant *cantus firmus* is placed in the lowest voice. The

rate of harmonic change is consequently very slow; this, and the mode's tonal stability, accounts for the serenity with which the music unfolds.

Thank you for your support!

**Join us again at St John's Church, Newbury
for our next concert
on Saturday 8th March, 2025
at 7.30pm**

The
Cecilia
Consort

Out now: our 30th Anniversary Album.
Featuring many of the choir's best-loved
pieces. Available on the door to buy as
a CD, or via our website:
www.ceciliaconsort.org.uk

The Cecilia Consort is a member of Making
Music –
the National Federation of Music Societies.



**SUPPORTING &
CHAMPIONING
VOLUNTARY MUSIC**

The Cecilia Consort

The Cecilia Consort was formed by Janet Coxwell from the members of an ad hoc choir put together to sing Mozart's Requiem in the Newbury and District Arts Festival in 1989. Meeting for limited rehearsals before each of our two or three concerts each year, we sing secular and sacred music from across a broad historical spectrum. As a chamber choir we perform not only chamber works – often a cappella or with organ accompaniment – but also larger works with orchestra, as at 2008's sell-out performance of Monteverdi's Vespers with Canzona at Douai Abbey.

We continually learn new works and almost every concert includes music that we have not performed before, be it a collection of anthems or an entire mass. For more information about the choir, or if you are interested in auditioning, please see our website: www.ceciliaconsort.org.uk. Or find us on Facebook: @TheCeciliaConsort

In the press:

Canticles of Creation – The Cecilia Consort at St John's Church

"...the choir was on terrific form with beautifully bright top voices and lush underpinning by the lower ones." Newbury Weekly News - March 2023

Howells & Muhly – The Cecilia Consort at St John's Church

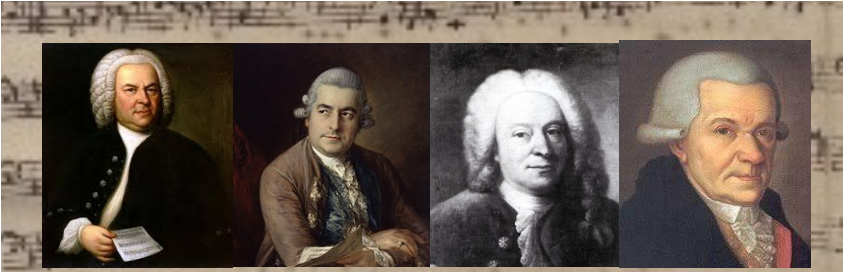
"The programme opened with A Hymn to St. Cecilia... as the lush vocal sound washed over the choir's loyal audience. Well enunciated, fabulously rich textures and a soaring soprano counter-melody, this was a lovely opening to the evening." Newbury Weekly News – December 2017

Remembrance – The Cecilia Consort at Douai Abbey

"Another engaging evening from this fine local choir." Newbury Weekly News – November 2016

Eternal Light – The Cecilia Consort at Douai Abbey

"...special thanks and praise be to Janet Coxwell (who also gave us a couple of fine solos) and her wonderful singers for an evening of unalloyed pleasure and edification." – Newbury Weekly News – October 2014



Newbury Chamber Choir The Bach Dynasty

Choral music by Johann Sebastian Bach, Johann Christian Bach,
Johann Christoph Bach and Johann Michael Bach

Musical Director: Ben de Souza

Saturday, 30 November 2024 at 7.30pm

St John's Church, Newbury RG14 7PY

Tickets £15, Under 18's free.



A celebration of Christmas

Join NCS for an evening of Christmas carols and anthems. Get yourself in the seasonal spirit with popular and most loved Christmas music. Warm up your vocal cords, raise the roof and sing along with the choir.

Conductor: Joe Tobin

Organ: Steve Bowey

Sunday 15th December 2024, 7:30pm St Nicolas Church, Newbury

Tickets £15, under 16s £5, available online at www.newburychoral.org.uk and from choir members



The
Cecilia
Consort



present

BEENHAM
WIND
ORCHESTRA

a
Merry
Mingor
Christmas



directed by

Janet Coxwell

Victoria Benjamin

compère

Jason Palmer

piano & organ

Steve Bowey

Lovrien

We Come A-Darkly Caroling

arr. Wagner

A Vaughan Williams Christmas

arr. Curnow

Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite

with audience participation too!

4:30pm Sunday 8th December 2024

St John's Church, Newbury



adults £17, under 17s £2.50, under 5s free
includes mince pie & drink
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www.ceciliaconsort.org.uk

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