

CANTORUM CHOIR
PRESENTS

A Farewell to Arms

Music for choir, cello and organ by J.S.Bach,
Herbert Howells and Richard Rodney Bennett

Robert Jones - Musical Director

William Clark-Maxwell - Cello • Polina Sosnina - Organ

SATURDAY 1st APRIL, 7.30pm

Holy Trinity Church, Cookham



www.cantorumchoir.org.uk

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1136210



Patron: Ralph Allwood MBE
 Music Director: Oliver Gooch
 Associate Music Director: Robert Jones



Cantorum Choir is a dedicated and talented choir of approximately forty voices, based in Cookham, Berkshire. The ensemble boasts a wide-ranging repertoire and performs professional-quality concerts throughout the year. Under the directorship of Oliver Gooch, it has continued to earn itself a reputation as one of the leading chamber choirs in the area.

SOPRANOS

Nicky Cox
 Kate Cromar
 Louise Evans
 Kirsty Janusz*
 Hilary Monaghan
 Marilyn Rogers
 Daphne Rowbottom
 Joy Strzelecki
 Deborah Templing
 Pippa Wallace

ALTOS

Celia Armstrong
 Sally Brooks
 Jill Burton
 Sarah Evans
 Catherine Formstone
 Anne Glover
 Sandy Johnstone
 Angela Plant
 Chiu Sung
 Lorna Sykes
 Gill Tucker

TENORS

Anthony Dowlatshahi
 Richard Palfrey
 Malcolm Stork
 John Timewell

BASSES

John Buck
 Arthur Creswell
 Mike Creswell
 David Hazeldine
 Paul Reid
 James Simpson
 Ben Styles

* Soloist in Like as the hart

PROGRAMME

J S Bach 1685-1750

Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied BWV 225

Movements from Suite no.1 in G major for solo 'cello BWV 1007

Fantasia in G major for organ BWV 572

Komm, Jesu, komm BWV 229

INTERVAL

Herbert Howells 1892-1983

Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks
 Nunc Dimittis from St Paul's Service

Paeon (No 3 from Six Pieces) for organ

Richard Rodney Bennett 1936-2012

A Farewell to Arms for mixed chorus and 'cello

Herbert Howells 1892-1983

Take him, earth, for cherishing



J S BACH
1685-1750



HERBERT
HOWELLS
1892-1983



RICHARD RODNEY
BENNETT
1936-2012

Bach became Kantor (Director of Music) at St Thomas's church, Leipzig in 1723 and concentrated his compositional efforts during his first few years in the post on providing a cantata for every Sunday of the church's year. These cantatas were for voices (principally soloists) and instrumentalists and formed the centrepiece of the main morning service – their texts were usually also specially written. Other music in the service consisted of motets, often in Latin and usually with a Biblical text, nearly always taken from a repertoire already existing before Bach's time. However, Bach did compose six German motets for special occasions (it seems likely that he only produced them when he could be sure that his best singers were available), and two of these pieces frame the first half of tonight's concert.

We begin with "Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied," BWV 225, which was probably written for the birthday celebrations of the Elector of Saxony in 1727. It is the most majestic of Bach's motets and consists of four sections, of which the first three are for double choir. The work opens with urgent cries of "Singet" from the second choir, answered by flowing lines from the first choir leading into a fugue at the words, "Die Kinder Zion se'n fröhlich" (Let the children of Zion be joyful in their king.) The second part begins with the second choir singing the chorale, "Wie sich ein Vater erbarmet" (Like as a father pitieth his own children), answered by the first choir praying for God's guidance. The third section, "Lobet den Herrn in seinen Taten" (Praise the Lord in his works) begins with some energetic antiphonal writing and ends with the two choirs converging for a four-part fugue in triple time, at the words, "Alles was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn" (Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord). This culminates in an exuberant "Halleluja" with a top Bb for the sopranos, bringing the motet to a triumphant conclusion.

"Komm, Jesu, komm," BWV 229 was probably written for a funeral service and is a setting of two verses of a long devotional poem by Paul Thymich expressing a longing for death and confidence in the peace it will bring. As in "Singet dem Herrn," the writing is for eight vocal parts, sometimes arranged as two antiphonal choirs, most notably in the middle section, where the words 'du bist

der rechte Weg, die Wahrheit und das Leben' (Thou art the way, the Truth and the Life) are set to a melody which passes down the top six parts. After this extended and most beautiful passage, the motet closes with a simple chorale, 'Drauf schliess ich mich in deine Hände' (Into Thy hands I commend my spirit). Texts of both the motets, with translations, are printed below.

Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied,
Sing to the Lord a new song,
Die Gemeinde der Heiligen sollen ihn loben.
The congregation of the saints should praise him.
Israel freue sich des, der ihn gemacht hat.
Let Israel rejoice in the one who made him.
Die Kinder Zion se'n fröhlich über ihrem Könige,
Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King,
Sie sollen loben seinen Namen im Reihen;
They should praise his name in their dances;
mit Pauken und mit Harfen sollen sie ihm spielen.
With drums and harps they should play for him.

Wie sich ein Vater erbarmet
As a father feels compassion
Über seine junge Kinderlein,
For his young little child,
So tut der Herr uns allen,
So does the Lord for all of us,
So wir ihn kindlich fürchten rein.
If we feel pure childlike awe.

Er kennt das arm Gemächte,
He knows how weak is our strength,
Gott weiß, wir sind nur Staub.
God knows that we are merely dust.
Gleichwie das Gras vom Rechen,
Like grass before the rake
Ein Blum und fallend Laub.
A flower or falling leaf.

Der Wind nur drüber wehet,
The wind has only to blow over it,
So ist es nicht mehr da,
And it is there no more,
Also der Mensch vergehet,
Thus man passes away,
Sein End, das ist ihm nah.
His end is near him.

Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an,

God, in future take us to yourself,
Denn ohne dich ist nichts getan
For without you nothing is accomplished
Mit allen unsern Sachen.
In all our affairs.

Drum sei du unser Schirm und Licht,
Therefore be yourself our protection and light,
Und trügt uns unsre Hoffnung nicht,
And, if our hope does not deceive us,
So wirst du's ferner machen.
Then in future you will do this.

Wohl dem, der sich nur steif und fest
Happy are those who firmly and fastly
Auf dich und deine Huld verlässt.
Depend on you and your grace.

Lobet den Herrn in seinen Taten,
Praise God in his works,
lobet ihn in seiner großen Herrlichkeit!
praise him in his great glory!

Alles, was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn Halleluja!
Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord,
Halleluja!

Komm, Jesu, komm, mein Leib ist müde,
Come, Jesus, come, my body is weary,
die Kraft verschwindt je mehr und mehr,
my strength fails more and more.
Ich sehne mich nach deinem Friede;
I long for your peace.
der saure Weg wird mir zu schwer!
The bitter way becomes too hard for me.

Komm, ich will mich dir ergeben;
Come! I will surrender to you:
du bist der rechte Weg,
you are the right way,
die Wahrheit und das Leben.
the truth, and life.

Drum schließ ich mich in deine Hände
So I give myself into your hands
und sage, Welt, zu gute Nacht!
and say "World, have a good night."
Eilt gleich mein Lebenslauf zu ende,
As my life hastens to its end,
ist doch der Geist wohl angebracht.

my spirit is settled,
Er soll bei seinem Schöpfer schweben,
poised as it should be beside its Creator,
weil Jesus ist und bleibet
as Jesus is and remains
der wahre Weg zum Leben.
the true way to life.

The motets are accompanied by a chamber organ and a string bass and the first half is completed by a solo Bach item from each performer. The six suites for solo cello, which generally consist of a prelude in free, improvisatory style followed by a sequence of courtly dances in contrasting styles, are thought to date from Bach's period of employment as a court musician for Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen (1717-1723), where his principal duties involved composing for instruments rather than voices, whereas most of his organ music was written during the previous decade, 1708-1717, while he was organist in Weimar. The organ Fantasia in G which we hear this evening has the alternative title "Pièce d'orgue," reflecting the French influence in some of Bach's music - this piece uses a brilliant toccata-like figuration in the outer sections, but has a grand central passage in 5-part harmony for full organ which pays tribute to the style of the "Plein Jeu" sections in the music of French Baroque organ composers.

Herbert Howells (1892-1983) was one of Britain's most distinguished 20th century composers, teaching at the Royal College of Music for over 50 years. He made a significant contribution to the solo piano, solo song and chamber music repertoire, but he will probably be best remembered for his sacred music - his settings of the evening canticles, tailored specifically for particular buildings, remain a cornerstone of the Anglican repertoire. His first, and arguably still the finest contribution to this genre was the "Collegium Regale" setting for King's College, Cambridge, but other notable examples were those for Gloucester Cathedral (a building which Howells had loved since his childhood) and St. Paul's, from which we hear the Nunc Dimittis this evening. This is preceded by "Like as the hart," a setting of verses from Psalm 42 which was composed in 1941, when Howells had just become acting Director of Music at St. John's College, Cambridge for the duration

of the Second World War. This short anthem has been extolled by Howells's biographer, Paul Spicer, who states that "in this piece the whole panoply of Howells's refined, passionate and wholly individual style is unleashed upon an unsuspecting world." It was sung at Howells's memorial service in Westminster Abbey in 1983.

Howells was also a notable composer of organ music, beginning with the Rhapsodies composed in his early twenties. The Six Pieces date from his years in Cambridge and include the Paeon, which has a vigorous, energetic spirit, providing a contrast with the sombre nature of the final item in the programme. This is "Take him, earth, for cherishing," also titled "Motet on the death of President Kennedy," written after Kennedy's assassination in November 1963, an event which shocked the world. Howells had always been particularly affected by news of sudden death ever since the death of his 9-year-old son Michael from polio in 1937 and this piece, which was sung at Kennedy's memorial service in Washington National Cathedral, was a powerful response to this tragedy. The text, which had been in the composer's mind for many years, and which he had contemplated using in his great choral work, the "Hymnus Paradisi," is taken from Helen Waddell's "Medieval Latin lyrics" and is a translation of a text by the 4th century scholar/poet Prudentius. The opening verse is used as a refrain throughout the piece.

The programme is completed by a composition in elegiac style by the distinguished 20th century British composer Richard Rodney Bennett, who died in 2012 and wrote this piece in 2001 in response to a commission from the Plymouth Music Series in Minneapolis, USA, and its founder/director Philip Brunelle. It is written for the unusual combination of choir and solo cello and is in two contrasting movements, linked by an extended cello solo - the first section has vigorous, angular vocal lines, whereas the second is calmer in mood, with sumptuous harmonies which sometimes reflect Bennett's distinguished career as a jazz musician.

The helmet now an hive for bees becomes,
And hilts of swords may serve for spiders' looms,
Sharp pikes may make

Teeth for a rake,
And the keen blade, th'arch enemy of life,
Shall be degraded to a pruning knife
The rustic spade
Which first was made
For honest agriculture, shall retake
Its primitive employment, and forsake
The rampires steep
And trenches deep
Tame conies in our brazen guns shall breed,
Or gentle doves their young ones there shall feed
In musket barrels
Mice shall raise quarrels
For their quarters
The ventriloquious drum
Like lawyers in vacations, shall be dumb
Now all recruits
But those of fruits
Shall be forgot, and th'unarmed soldier
Shall only boast of what he did whilere,
In chimneys' ends
Among his friends

Ralph Knevet (1600-1671)

His golden locks time hath to silver turned
O time too swift, o swiftness never ceasing!
His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurned,
But spurned in vain, youth waneth by increasing

Beauty, strength, youth are flow'rs but fading seen,
Duty, faith, love are roots and ever green

His helmet now shall make a hive for bees,
And lovers' sonnets turn to holy psalms
A man-at-arms must now serve on his knees,
And feed on prayers which are age's alms

But though from Court to cottage he depart,
His Saint is sure of his unspotted heart

And when he saddest sits in homely cell,
He'll teach his swains this carol for a song,
Blest be the hearts that wish my Sovereign well,
Curst be the soul that thinks her any wrong

Goddess, allow this ages man his right,
To be your beadsman now that was your knight

George Peele (1558?-1597?)



ROBERT JONES, ASSOCIATE MUSIC DIRECTOR

Robert was educated at Trinity School, Croydon. In 1975 he became a Music Scholar at Christ Church, Oxford, where he sang in the Cathedral choir. Following graduation, he held posts as Lay Clerk at St. George's Chapel, Windsor and Westminster Cathedral before embarking on a career as one of Britain's leading consort singers, featuring on award-winning recordings with the Tallis Scholars, the Orlando Consort and the Gabrieli Consort. He maintains a lifelong interest in piano and organ playing and choral directing, and has been Director of Music at the Wren church of St. Bride's, Fleet Street in the City of London since 1988. He has been associated with many leading British choral societies and is conductor of Renaissance Voices, a chamber choir based in Maidenhead.



POLINA SOSNINA, ORGANIST

Polina Sosnina is Associate Organist and Director of the Junior Choir at St Martin-in-the-Fields. She recently graduated with a distinction from the Royal College of Music, where she studied organ performance with David Graham and improvisation with Sophie-Véronique Cauchefer-Choplin. Her studies were supported by the RCM Kenneth and Violet Scott Scholarship, the Organists Charitable Trust, Eric Thompson Trust and the Leonard Freestone Scholarship from the Royal College of Organists. Polina is also a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists. After graduating from Magdalene College, Cambridge, Polina held organ scholarships at Temple Church and the London Oratory, and the Director of Music post at St Thomas of Canterbury Church, Brentwood. As a soloist, recent performances include recitals at Temple Church, Westminster Abbey and St John's Smith Square. During the pandemic, Polina was fortunate to give three virtual recitals: one on the theme 'Bach, Family and Friends' as an Emerging Artist for the London Bach Society; a Bach Bites recital at the Royal College of Music; and a performance of Percy Whitlock's music at St Michael's Cornhill.



WILLIAM CLARK-MAXWELL, CELLIST

William Clark-Maxwell was born in 1996 and began his musical education as a chorister in the choir of St George's chapel, Windsor Castle. He studied cello from the age of 10 with Sue Lowe, and was a principal player in the National Children's Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra. He then studied cello with Erico Bronzi at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg before gaining his undergraduate degree in music from Jesus College, Cambridge, and his master's degree in cello from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he studied with Tim Lowe. He has recently performed with the English Chamber Orchestra as principal cellist, Sinfonia of London, and John Wilson Orchestra; as a guest cellist with the Wihan Quartet; and as a concerto soloist with the Newbury Symphony and Cambridge University Orchestras. In July 2022 he performed Haydn's D major cello concerto as soloist director with the Britten Sinfonia. He was a prize winner at the Tunbridge Wells International Music Competition, and won the D'Addario String competition, and completed a Junior Fellowship at the Guildhall in August 2022.



SUMMER JAZZ CONCERT

Sunday 25th June, 3pm

St Michael's Church,

Bray SL6 2AB



This season Cantorum Choir is supporting Cruse Bereavement Care and Sepsis UK.



Cantorum Choir



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