

The Esterházy Chamber Choir



Directed by David Thomas

Faire is the heaven

English church music from the 16th to 20th centuries

The Chapel of Brighton College
Saturday 19 May 2007, 6.00 pm

The Choir

Sopranos: Sarah Bridgland, Fran du Corbier, Cesca Eaton, Dilys Goggins, Jancis Ham, Leanne Holmes, Alison Jeffery, Lucy Morgan-Jones, Joanna Stephens, Andrea Thomas

Altos: Maria Birch, Claire Champness, Denise Jones, Janet Ormerod, Joyce Phillips, Grainne Sinclair, Liz Webb, Karen Zeff

Tenors: Michael Bulman, Robert Carpenter, John Carroll, Thomas Whalley

Basses: John Astbury, Chris Dixon, Derek Froud, Matthew Spencer, Andrew Simpson

About The Esterházy Chamber Choir

The Esterházy Chamber Choir was founded in 1993 and is based in Lewes, East Sussex. Comprising up to 30 singers from a wide variety of backgrounds, the choir aims to perform to a professional standard whilst remaining firmly rooted in the fine English tradition of amateur music making. The choir's repertoire spans four centuries of sacred and secular music with an emphasis on *a cappella* singing.

New singers (all voices) are welcomed. Entry is by audition, usually held following one of our regular rehearsals on a Wednesday evening.

The Conductor

David Thomas began his musical training as a chorister at Magdalen College, Oxford, under Dr Bernard Rose. At the age of 13 he began organ lessons with Malcolm Archer and in 1983 became Organ Scholar of The Queen's College, Oxford, studying organ with James Dalton and Kimberly Marshall and singing with Margaret Philpot as well as reading for a degree in Music. After appointments at The Leys School, Cambridge, and The King's School, Canterbury, he moved to Edinburgh to become Director of Music at Fettes College. Since 2001 he has been Headmaster of Reigate Grammar School, an independent day school in Surrey.

To contact the Choir

To support the choir, to audition or to enquire about hiring the choir for weddings and other special events, please email choir@esterhazy.org.uk. To prevent your email from being identified as spam, please include the word **choir** in the subject box.

Programme

- Cecilia Virgo* Peter Philips (c.1561-1628)
- O Lord, make thy servant Elizabeth* William Byrd (1540-1623)
- Three anthems Thomas Tomkins (1572-1656)
O God, the proud are risen
When David heard
O sing unto the Lord a new song
- Hear my prayer* Henry Purcell (1659-1695)
- Hail, gladdening light* Charles Wood (1886-1926)
- Vox dicentis* Edward Naylor (1867-1934)
Soloists: Leanne Holmes, Robert Carpenter
- Faire is the heaven* William Harris (1883-1973)
- Hymn to St Cecilia* Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
Soloists: Sarah Bridgland, Leanne Holmes, Maria Birch,
Robert Carpenter, Chris Dixon

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Texts and translations

*Cecilia Virgo, tuas laudes universa concinit
musicorum turba, et tuis meritis supplices a Deo
exaudiri possint.*

Virgin Cecilia, all musicians celebrate thy
praises, and through thy merits, supplicants
can be heard by God.

*Juncta voce et uno corde tuum nomen invocant, ut
luctum mundi in paradisi gloriam mutare
digneris;*

With one voice and one heart they call on thy
name, that thou mayest deign to change the
world's mourning into the glory of paradise;

*Tuosque pupilos, tutelaribus Virgo aspicere velis,
piam Dominam inclamantis et semper dicentes:
Sancta Cecilia, ora pro nobis.*

And be willing, O protecting Virgin, to look
upon thy wards, calling upon the pious lady,
and always saying: Saint Cecilia, pray for us.

O Lord, make thy servant Elizabeth our Queen to rejoice in thy strength.
Give her her heart's desire and deny not the request of her lips;
But prevent¹ her with thine everlasting blessing
And give her a long life, even for ever and ever. Amen.

O God, the proud are risen against me: and the assembly of violent men,
Which have not thee before their eyes, seek after my soul.
But thou, O Lord, art a pitiful God, and a merciful God:
Slow to anger, and great in goodness and truth. (Psalm 86: 14-15)

When David heard that Absalom was slain,
he went up to his chamber over the gate, and wept;
and thus he said: O my son Absalom!
Would God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son! (II Samuel 18: 33)

O sing unto the Lord a new song:
Let the congregation of saints sing praise unto him.
Let Israel rejoice in him that made him:
And let the children of Sion forever sing Alleluia. (Psalm 149: 1-2)

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my crying come unto thee.
(Psalm 102, v.1)

¹ prevent = 'go before'

Hail, gladdening light, of his pure glory poured, who is the immortal Father, heavenly blest, Holiest of Holies, Jesu Christ Our Lord.

Now we are come to the sun's hour of rest, the lights of evening round us shine; we hymn the Father, Son and Holy Spirit divine.

Worthiest art Thou at all times to be sung with undefiled tongue; Son of our God, giver of life alone; therefore in all the world Thy glories, Lord, they own.

(Trans. John Keble)

*Vox dicentis: Clama:
et dixi: Quid clamabo?
Omnis caro foenum, et omnis gloria eius
quasi flos agri.
Vere foenum est populus.
Exsiccatum est foenum, et cecidit flos:
verbum autem Domini nostri manet in aeternum.*

*Super montem excelsum ascende tu, qui
evangelizas Sion:
exalta in fortitudine vocem tuam,
qui evangelizas Jerusalem:
exalta, noli timere.
Dic civitatibus Judae: Ecce Deus vester.*

*Ecce Dominus Deus in fortitudine veniet, et
brachium eius dominabitur:
ecce merces eius cum eo, et opus illius coram illo.*

*Sicut pastor gregem suum pascet,
in brachio suo congregabit agnos,
et in sinu suo levabit,
foetas ipse portabit.*

The voice said, Cry.
And he said, What shall I cry?
All flesh is grass, and all the goodness
thereof is as the flower of the field:
Surely the people is grass.
The grass withers and the flower fades: but
the word of our God shall stand for ever.

Go up into the high mountain, O thou that
bringest good tidings to Zion;
lift up thy voice with strength, thou that
bringest good tidings to Jerusalem;
lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of
Judah, Behold your God!

Behold, the Lord God will come with strong
hand, and his arm shall rule for him: see, his
reward is with him, and his work before him

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he
shall gather the lambs with his arm,
and carry them in his bosom, and shall
gently lead those that are with young.

(Isaiah 40, vv.6-11)

Faire is the heaven where happy soules have place
In full enjoyment of felicitie;
Whence they do still behold the glorious face
Of the Divine, Eternall Majestie;

Yet farre more faire be those bright Cherubins
Which all with golden wings are overdight.
And those eternall burning Seraphins
Which from their faces dart out fiery light;

Yet fairer than they both and much more bright
 Be the Angels and Archangels
 Which attend on God's owne person without rest or end.
 These then in faire each other farre excelling
 As to the Highest they approach more neare,
 Yet is that Highest farre beyond all telling
 Fairer than all the rest which there appeare
 Though all their beauties joynd together were;
 How then can mortal tongue hope to expresse
 The image of such endlesse perfectnesse?

Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)

Hymn to St Cecilia

I.
 In a garden shady this holy lady
 With reverent cadence and subtle psalm,
 Like a black swan as death came on
 Poured forth her song in perfect calm:
 And by ocean's margin this innocent virgin
 Constructed an organ to enlarge her prayer,
 And notes tremendous from her great engine
 Thundered out on the Roman air.
 Blonde Aphrodite rose up excited,
 Moved to delight by the melody,
 White as an orchid she rode quite naked
 In an oyster shell on top of the sea;
 At sounds so entrancing the angels dancing
 Came out of their trance into time again,
 And around the wicked in Hell's abysses
 The huge flame flickered and eased their pain.

II.
 I cannot grow;
 I have no shadow
 To run away from,
 I only play.
 I cannot err;
 There is no creature
 Whom I belong to,
 Whom I could wrong.
 I am defeat
 When it knows it
 Can now do nothing
 By suffering.
 All you lived through,
 Dancing because you
 No longer need it
 For any deed.
 I shall never be Different. Love me.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
 To all musicians, appear and inspire:
 Translated Daughter, come down and startle
 Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

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III.
 O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall,
 O calm of spaces unafraid of weight,
 Where Sorrow is herself, forgetting all
 The gaucheness of her adolescent state,
 Where Hope within the altogether strange
 From every outworn image is released,

And Dread born whole and normal like a beast
Into a world of truths that never change:
Restore our fallen day; O re-arrange.

O dear white children casual as birds,
Playing among the ruined languages,
So small beside their large confusing words,
So gay against the greater silences
Of dreadful things you did: O hang the head,
Impetuous child with the tremendous brain,
O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain,
Lost innocence who wished your lover dead,
Weep for the lives your wishes never led.

O cry created as the bow of sin
Is drawn across our trembling violin.
O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain.
O law drummed out by hearts against the still
Long winter of our intellectual will.
That what has been may never be again.
O flute that throbs with the thanksgiving breath
Of convalescents on the shores of death.

O bless the freedom that you never chose.
O trumpets that unguarded children blow
About the fortress of their inner foe.
O wear your tribulation like a rose.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

(W H Auden)

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Forthcoming Events

'DRAW ON, SWEET NIGHT'

Music for a Summer Evening

including works by Vaughan Williams, Wilbye, Sullivan and Delius

Saturday 16th June 2007, 7:30 pm, Ringmer Parish Church

To join our mailing list and to receive our brochure for next season, please complete the form on your seat and hand it in to any member of the choir.

Why not help us to make more music by becoming a Friend, or by sponsoring the Choir or a musical event? If you feel you might be able to help in this way, please contact John Astbury on 01273 403935.

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