

The
Cecilia
Consort



*Requiem
for a
Queen*

Douai Abbey
Saturday 12th November, 2022
7.30pm

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Introduction

A very warm welcome to our autumn concert.

When I originally put this programme together, it was long before Queen Elizabeth II passed away, and it's only since then that we have changed the title of the concert – the music, in the end, could not have been more appropriate! The Duruflé *Requiem* is now well-known to audiences and needs no introduction from me, except that I know it will sound glorious in the wonderful space of Douai Abbey. How lovely to be back singing here again. The Goodall, which is also a modern Requiem, focuses more on the people who are left behind when someone dies. It has some very touching and moving moments, which I hope you will enjoy. Howard Goodall is best known for his setting of Psalm 23, *The Lord is My Shepherd*, which went on to be the theme to The Vicar of Dibley. Tonight's piece is hugely different, but incredibly beautiful.

I have changed the quiet piece at the end of the concert to *Bring Us, O Lord God* by William Harris, which was sung at the Service of Committal of the Queen in St George's Chapel, Windsor.

In early October we were incredibly sad to learn of the death of Peter Denny – an old friend to me and many more musical friends in Newbury. Peter was Head Chorister at St George's Chapel, Windsor, most notably singing at the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. At that time the choristers were under the direction of composer William Harris, who the choristers all called "Doc H".

Peter was a wonderful sounding board to me when I started The Cecilia Consort. He was so knowledgeable about all music, but we loved to 'talk choral'! He and his wife, Judith, sang with the choir for many years, until our condensed way of rehearsing became too much for him. He will be sorely missed by so many people – the true definition of an English 'gentle man'.



We would like to dedicate this concert to Peter and we hope that he, along with Paul Kelly, Ian Walker and John Avery are sorting out the basses in the heavenly choir... it has quite a line-up of former Cecilians now!

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) are Directors of the Early Music Academy, which had a hugely successful inaugural summer in 2015. After the inevitable interruptions of the pandemic, EMA are again running courses on both sides of the Atlantic.

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 (Downton Abbey land) 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.

Tim Bennett – Baritone



Tim was a Choral Scholar at Christ Church, Oxford. After graduating he spent two years teaching in Perth, Western Australia before returning to take up a position at Summer Fields, Oxford. He helped David Langdon run the Music Department and in later years became Director of Music. He continued further study completing his Masters in Music Education at Reading University and a Diploma in Class Music through the Royal Schools of Music. In 2001, he moved with his family to Cheam School and became Director of Music and Head of Performing Arts. Tim is passionate about music education. He enjoys leading a very dynamic Department and working in close

partnership with local schools and the community. In his spare time, he loves walking and escaping for wild camping adventures in the mountains!

Lucy Crompton-Reid – Soprano

Lucy Crompton-Reid grew up singing everything from madrigals to musical theatre, with a lot of country music in between. In her early 20s she was fortunate enough to study under Marjorie Thomas for several years, before joining the BBC Symphony Chorus with whom she sang for nearly two decades. Lucy has sung with a number of chamber choirs - including the Cecilia Consort - and has performed at venues including the Barbican, Birmingham Symphony Hall, the House of Commons, National Theatre, Royal Albert Hall, Southbank Centre, Southwark Cathedral and Westminster Cathedral.



Charlotte Oates – Cello



Charlotte started playing the cello whilst at school, studying with Judith Barnby and Lorraine Deacon at Berkshire Maestros. She was a member of the youth orchestra for three years and continued her playing whilst at Durham University, where she was taught by Rosie Bliss.

Having worked in arts management for five years with the Young Concert Artists Trust (YCAT), Charlotte changed direction and is presently part of the finance team at St. Hugh's College, Oxford. She still enjoys performing on her cello and is very pleased to be playing for the Cecilia Consort again tonight.

Programme Notes

Eternal Light: A Requiem

Howard Goodall (1958 -)

Soloists: Tim Bennett (Baritone) and Lucy Crompton-Reid (Soprano)

Born in Bromley, Kent, Howard Goodall was educated at New College School, where he was a chorister in the Choir of New College, Oxford. He then went on to Stowe School and Lord Williams's School, Thame, before returning to Oxford to read music at Christ Church. While at university, he met actor Rowan Atkinson and writer Richard Curtis, his collaborators on several of his early projects, including theme tunes and incidental music for *Mr Bean*, *Blackadder* and his first break into TV, *Not the Nine O'Clock News*. A popular and prolific composer, TV and radio presenter, and composer-in-residence at Classic FM, he is married to Val Fancourt, a classical music agent, with whom he has two daughters.

Howard Goodall wrote of this piece, "The great Requiems of the past interpret the sacred Requiem text literally, offering prayers of salvation for the departed, whose souls are assumed to be in purgatory facing a terrible judgement. *Eternal Light: A Requiem* is, by contrast, intended to provide solace to the grieving, reflecting on the words of the Latin Mass by juxtaposing them with poems in English. For me, a modern Requiem is one that acknowledges the unbearable loss and emptiness that accompanies the death of loved ones, a loss that is not easily ameliorated with platitudes about the joy awaiting us in the afterlife. This, like Brahms', is a Requiem for the living, addressing their suffering and endurance, a Requiem focusing on the consequences of interrupted lives."

The work is structured in ten movements:

1. Requiem: Kyrie: close now thine eyes
2. Revelation: Factum est silentium
3. Litany: Belief
4. Hymn: Lead kindly light
5. Lacrymosa: Do not stand at my grave and weep
6. Dies Irae: In Flanders fields
7. Recordare: Drop, drop slow tears
8. Revelation: Tum angelus tertius clanxit
9. Agnus Dei
10. In Paradisum: Lux aeterna

• Interval – 20 minutes •

Requiem

Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986)

Soloists: Tim Bennett (Baritone), Lucy Crompton-Reid (Soprano), and Charlotte Oates (Cello)

Duruflé was born in Louviers, France in 1902. He became a chorister at the Rouen Cathedral Choir School from 1912 to 1918, where he studied piano and organ. The choral plainsong tradition at Rouen became a strong and lasting influence. At age 17, upon moving to Paris, he took private organ lessons with Charles Tournemire, whom he assisted at Basilique Ste-Clotilde, Paris until 1927. In 1920 Duruflé entered the Conservatoire de Paris, eventually graduating with first prizes in organ (1922), harmony (1924), fugue (1924), piano accompaniment (1926) and composition (1928).

In 1927, Louis Vierne nominated him as his assistant at Notre-Dame. Duruflé and Vierne remained lifelong friends, and Duruflé was at Vierne's side acting as assistant when Vierne died at the console of the Notre-Dame organ on 2 June 1937, even though Duruflé had become titular organist of St-Étienne-du-Mont in Paris in 1929, a position he held for the rest of his life. In 1930 he won a prize for his *Prélude, adagio et choral varié sur le "Veni Creator"*, and in 1936 he won the Prix Blumenthal. In 1939, he premiered Francis Poulenc's *Organ Concerto* (the *Concerto for Organ, Strings and Timpani in G minor*); he had advised Poulenc on the registrations of the organ part. In 1943 he became Professor of Harmony at the Conservatoire de Paris, where he worked until 1970.

In 1947 he completed the *Requiem* op. 9, for soloists, choir, organ, and orchestra. This is probably the most famous of his few pieces, which he had begun composing in 1941, following a commission from the Vichy regime. He set the Latin text of the Requiem Mass, omitting certain parts in the tradition of Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem* and structuring it in nine movements. At the time of the commission, he was working on an organ suite using themes from Gregorian chants. He incorporated his sketches for that work into the *Requiem*, which uses numerous themes from the Gregorian "Mass for the Dead". Nearly all the thematic material in the work comes from chant. Duruflé scored the work for a solo voice in the central movement, *Pie Jesu*, and a mixed choir, accompanied by organ or orchestra. The composer dedicated the *Requiem* to the memory of his father.

The work is structured in nine movements:

1. Introit (*Requiem aeternam*)
2. *Kyrie eleison*
3. Offertory (*Domine Jesu Christe*), Choir & Baritone solo
4. *Sanctus* and *Benedictus*

5. Pie Jesu, Mezzo-soprano solo, solo cello
6. Agnus Dei
7. Communion (Lux aeterna)
8. Libera me, Choir & Baritone solo
9. In paradisum

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

Bring Us, O Lord God

William Harris (1883-1973)

This piece by Harris and its sister work *Faire is the Heaven* (that features on the Cecilia Consort's 30th anniversary album) are two of the most rewarding anthems for double choir in the Anglican canon. This piece was composed in 1959, not long before Harris's retirement from a distinguished career as a teacher and director of music. A renowned choir trainer, the idiomatic part writing and textural mastery that Harris achieves in the work are testament to his tireless efforts at the musical helm of institutions such as New College and Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, and St George's Chapel, Windsor.

Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heav'n: to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light no noise nor silence, but one equal music no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity in the habitation of thy glory and dominion, world without end. Amen.

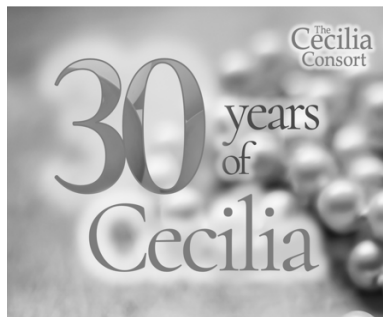
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The Cecilia Consort

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, its activities, or if you are interested in auditioning, please see our website: www.ceciliaconsort.org.uk

We're also on Facebook: @TheCeciliaConsort



30th Anniversary Album – out now!

Featuring many of the choir's best-loved pieces, CDs are available to buy here on the door (£12.99) or can be ordered via our website: www.ceciliaconsort.org.uk where it is also available as a digital download.

• Reviews •

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."

Fiona Bennett, Newbury Weekly News – December 2017

Remembrance – The Cecilia Consort at Douai Abbey

"Another engaging evening from this fine local choir."

Charles Medlam, Newbury Weekly News – November 2016

"Any choir can sing loudly. Singing that softly is a real skill"

Father Oliver Holt after a concert at Douai Abbey.

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



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The
Cecilia
Consort

Join us on

Saturday 4th March 2023

SPRING CONCERT

*Featuring Parry's Songs of Farewell, Rutter's The Gift of Life
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St. John's Church, Newbury, RG14 7PY

at 7:30 pm

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Newbury Chamber Choir

Niccolò Jommelli: Requiem

and

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Musical Director: Ben de Souza

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Consort

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A Celebration of Christmas

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Audience participation too!

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www.beenhamwindorchestra.co.uk

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Benjamin Britten: *A Ceremony of Carols*

Karl Jenkins: *A Celebration of Christmas*

Goff Richards: *A Merry Little Christmas*

James Whitbourn: *Missa Carolae*

Conductor: Janet Coxwell

Organ: Steve Bowey

Harp: Jenny Broome

Woodwind: Samantha Moore

Saturday 3rd December 2022, 7:30pm St Nicolas Church, Newbury



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

