

Another veteran of Leeds Parish Church was Samuel Wesley, Charles Wesley's grandson. He was famous as an organist in his day, and held posts at Hereford, Exeter, Winchester and Gloucester Cathedrals. His compositions are almost exclusively for the Anglican Church and Blessed be the God and Father is a favourite at Choral Evensongs throughout the country, as well as being in high demand at weddings, thanks to the beautiful central section Love one another.

Robert Shafto became Tory MP for County Durham in 1760. He is the likeliest subject of the folk song Bobby Shaftoe, said to have broken Bridget Belasyse's heart when he married someone else! This version of the song also announces his impending fatherhood. The oak and the ash is the voice of a girl in London who misses her northerly home. She is determined that any gentleman who wishes to court her must be of good northern stock and whisk her back to her roots! Bushes and briars is a soulful minor-key ballad of self-doubt - the singer overhears his love worrying that if she were to tell him how she really feels, he would never love her again. The Keel Row is a jaunty tale of the Tyne and Wear keelmen, who rowed the boats from where the coal reached the riverside out to the waiting collier ships, which couldn't come to the banks and load up themselves because the rivers were too shallow. They were, by all accounts, a colourful bunch, given to drunkenness and swearing! When they went out, they wore a costume to distinguish themselves from other workers, consisting of a blue jacket, yellow waistcoat, and the blue bonnet mentioned in the song. Stanford's The Bluebird takes words by Mary Coleridge and sets them in an impressionistic style to create a beautiful, calm piece that really captures the stillness of the lake below the hills.

Rutter's Birthday Madrigals were written in 1995, except for It was a lover and his lass, written in 1975. The madrigals were composed to celebrate the 75th birthday of the great jazz pianist George Shearing. The texts of all the pieces are taken from the original madrigal era: It was a lover and his lass has words by Shakespeare; Draw on sweet night is thought to be by madrigalist John Wilbye; Come live with me has words by Marlowe and (attributed to) Raleigh; My true love hath my heart has text by Sir Philip Sidney; and When daisies pied is again by Shakespeare, with the third verse by Peele.

We finish our concert this evening with Joshua fit the battle of Jericho, a setting of the traditional American Negro Spiritual. This arrangement by Steve Barnett is taken from the anthology Spirituals for Choirs, edited by Bob Chilcott. Tamesis made a very successful recording of the collection earlier in the year, and CDs will be on sale at the back of the church during the interval and after the concert. In Bob Chilcott's own words: "The Tamesis Chamber Choir sing this repertoire with real style and spirit, and show what a clearly accomplished group of singers they are."

LER/CAH, Mar 2010

tamesis

chamber choir

musical director - louise rapple

presents the second concert in the
2009-10 "Three Bs" season

B is for British

Saturday March 6th 2010

7:30 pm

The Church of St James the
Less, Pangbourne

www.tamesischamberchoir.co.uk

The final concert in our "Three Bs" season, "B is for Bohemian", will take place at St Laurence's Church in Reading Town Centre on Saturday 19th June, 2010. Please see our website, www.tamesischamberchoir.co.uk for details and to buy tickets.

Programme

Beati quorum via - Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

Give us the wings of faith - Ernest Bullock (1890-1979)

Evening Hymn - Henry Balfour Gardiner (1877-1950)

And I saw a new heaven - Edgar Bainton (1880-1956)

Interlude:

Rosemary - Frank Bridge (1879-1941)

Pianist: Ed Charlesworth

Ave verum corpus - William Byrd (c.1540-1623)

Let all mortal flesh keep silence - Edward Bairstow (1874-1946)

Blessed be the God and Father - Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810-1876)

INTERVAL

Four folk songs:

Bobby Shaftoe - trad. Scottish arr. David Willcocks

The oak and the ash - Old English trad. arr Bairstow

Bushes and briars - trad. arr Donald James

The keel row - trad. Tyneside arr. John Byrt

The Bluebird - Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

Interlude:

Tell me the truth about love - Benjamin Britten (1913-76)

Soprano: Tamsyn Wilson, pianist: Ed Charlesworth

Birthday Madrigals - John Rutter (1945-)

It was a lover and his lass

Draw on, sweet night

Come live with me

My true love hath my heart

When daisies pied

Joshua fit the battle of Jericho - trad. arr. Steve Barnett

Many thanks to our instrumentalists: John Cobb (organ),

Judith Creighton (piano) and Karen Aplin (double bass).

Tamesis is:

Sopranos

Jane Anstead

Miranda Bradshaw

Katie Breakspear

Rachel Burgess

Bethan Davies

Penny Firshman

Clare Garner

Jenny Haggart

Kat Penn

Tamsyn Wilson

Altos

Anna Ashcroft

Alison Evans

Sarah Finch

Helen Gilfillan

Charlie Hodgkinson

Paula Nichols

Liz Rapple

Chloë Robson

Basses

Andy Button

Ed Charlesworth

Reuben Casey

John Cobb

Austin Jacobs

Patrick Moore

Stephen Nichols

Tenors

Tim Beavan

Nick Brown

Simon Eastwood

Jason Murray

Graham Watt

Grateful thanks to the authorities at St James the Less for the use of the Church and for making us so welcome.

Tamesis Chamber Choir aims to offer something different from other choirs in the area. We are a high-standard, fun chamber choir performing several concerts per year. We re-audition formally each September but do sometimes have vacancies during the year, so if you are interested in singing with us, contact Louise on 0118 931 4279 or email lourap@gmail.com.

Louise Rapple graduated in Music and French from Reading University in 1998, specialising in performance. She studied conducting at the Conservatoire de Pau in southern France and returned to the UK to direct the Reading University Singers for two years, following that with seven years in Church music, as Organist and Choir Director at two local Churches. Louise works at Shiplake College, teaching piano, conducting choirs and administrating all sorts of things. She also directs Tamesis Cathedral Singers, a larger choir whose members visit Cathedrals twice a year to sing Evensong, and the Shiplake Community Choir, which had its inaugural meeting this week!

Notes on the programme

The first half of our programme this evening consists of some of the loveliest English sacred anthems. It seems that English Church music is well-supplied with gems associated with the letter B! We start with Stanford's Beati quorum via (Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord), one of his Three Latin Motets of 1905, written for Trinity College, Cambridge, where he had previously been organist.

Bullock's Give us the wings of faith is a Saints' Day anthem, and is by far the best known of his compositions, written in 1925. He enjoyed an illustrious career as an organist, at Manchester Cathedral, Exeter Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, and was Director of the Royal College of Music for nearly ten years, but as a composer his output was very small, with only a handful of pieces still performed nowadays.

Similarly, Evening Hymn is Balfour Gardiner's best known work. He was a prolific composer, producing music in a variety of genres, including two symphonies, but he was extremely self-critical, and destroyed much of his music himself.

And I saw a new heaven is, once again, Bainton's best known work, composed in 1928. The beautiful words are from Revelations. Others of his less known works are now enjoying something of a revival, after years of neglect. Bainton wrote symphonies, opera, chamber music and songs, and spent the last twenty years of his life in Australia, introducing much European music that hadn't previously been heard there.

One of the great masters of Renaissance music, Byrd's Ave verum corpus (Hail, true body) is just one of many of his 470 compositions which are regularly heard today. He takes the traditional Ave verum text and adds the hauntingly lyrical 'O dulcis, o pie, o Jesu, fili Mariae, miserere mei' section, meaning 'o sweet, o merciful, o Jesus, son of Mary, have mercy on me'.

Bairstow's 29 Church anthems, many of which are regularly performed today, include the introit Let all mortal flesh keep silence, with words from the Liturgy of St James. Born in Huddersfield, Bairstow was not only a true Brit, but also a true northerner, and was organist during his lifetime at Wigan and Leeds Parish Churches, and finally at York Minster, refusing the prestigious position at Westminster Abbey in order to stay 'up north'. Famously blunt, he once said he would rather 'go to the devil' than take his career to the USA!