

St Leonard's Church, Hythe

Shepway Singers

Sop's: Jenny Bayford, Becky Berridge, Hilarie Hill, Anne Johnson*, Belinda Lewis, Isolde Swinfin, Monica Titterton

Mezzos: Ruth Golding, Elizabeth Hopkin, Janet Hughes, Margaret Ritchie, Jane Spencer, Bridget Wight

Tenors: Robert Aylward-Lopez, Patrick Bayford, Peter Bettley, Timothy Hill, Brin Hughes, Rodney Ricketts

Basses: Robert Dennis, Duncan Lord, Roger Parker, Tim Parsons, Kenneth Tee, John Wright, Simon Wright

Conductor Berkeley Hill

Organ Tim Parsons

* Not singing today.

The Shepway Singers, based in Hythe, is a choral group formed (under another name) in the mid-1970s to perform choral music requiring about twenty singers. Some five concerts are given each year, usually in response to invitations from various parts of Kent. The Singers' range of pieces extends from 15th Century church music to the contemporary and includes both sacred and secular, obscure and familiar. Though specialising in *a cappella* pieces, the repertory includes works written for organ or piano accompaniment. In 2010 three performances of the *St Mark Passion* by Charles Wood were given in the weeks before Easter, and a concert performed in November containing music by composers with names beginning with B (Britten, Bach, Bruckner etc.). In April 2011 the Shepway Singers sang an Evensong in Canterbury Cathedral.

The Shepway Singers have also performed with professional orchestras where the composers had this size of choir in mind. J S Bach's *Mass in B minor*, Handel's *Messiah* and choral works by Scarlatti and Pergolesi have been presented in recent years.

In Praise of Music

***Music in honour of
St Cecilia, and other works***

Shepway Singers

**7.30 Saturday 12 November
2011**

St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music, is thought to have been martyred in Sicily in about 176 on orders from the Roman Emperor. Evidence for any lifetime connection between her and music is fragile. Not until the fifteenth century was the tradition of associating St Cecilia with this art form established. However, subsequently she has been the focus of many compositions and her feast-day (22 November) has been the excuse for numerous festivals. Two works from the 20th Century by British composers in honour of St Cecilia feature in tonight's programme.

Music in honour of Music

- **Herbert Howells (1892-1983) - A Hymn for St Cecilia** (words by Ursula Vaughan Williams), written for the Livery Club of the Worshipful Company of Musicians and published in 1961,
- **Dudley Buck (1839-1909) - Hymn to Music** (words by C J Spague). This American composer and organist studied in Germany and France and is remembered mainly for his church music.
- **Benjamin Britten - Hymn to St Cecilia** (1942) Benjamin Britten happened to be born on St Cecilia's Day, surely a happy omen. Britten started writing this setting of words by W H Auden in the USA but the half-completed score was confiscated by customs officials just before he embarked for return by ship to the UK in 1942. The first part had to be reconstructed from memory on board, and the setting was completed during the voyage.

Three motets to ancient Catholic Latin texts

Rodney Ricketts (2005) - Three Aves

- **Ave verum corpus** . *Hail, true body, born of the Virgin Mary. Truly suffered, died on the cross for mankind. From whose pierced side flowed water and blood. Be for us a foretaste of death in the last hour. O gentle Jesus. O holy Jesus. O Jesus, Son of Mary. Have mercy on me. Amen.*
- **Ave Maria** *Hail Mary, full of grace, The Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

- **Ave Regina Coelorum**. *Hail, O Queen of Heaven. Hail, O Lady of Angels. Hail! thou root, hail! thou gate. From whom unto the world, a light has arisen: Rejoice, O glorious Virgin, Lovely beyond all others, Farewell, most beautiful maiden, And pray for us to Christ. Amen*

CHH Parry (1848-1914)- Blest Pair of Sirens, voice and verse (words by Milton).

This eight-part setting of the Ode 'At a solemn music' was described by Elgar as outstanding choral writing.

INTERVAL

Antonin Dvorak - Mass in D (Kyrie - Gloria - Sanctus - Benedictus - Agnus Dei)

The Czech composer Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904) wrote this setting specially for the dedication in 1887 of a private chapel of Josef Hlavka, the architect and founder of the Czech Academy of Arts and Sciences. The forces for which the setting was intended comprised a modestly sized choir and organ. Later Dvorak expanded the accompaniment for full symphony orchestra for publication by the UK firm of Novello in 1893. At the same time the composer made some small adjustments to the score (for example, adding the opening four bars). He also changed many of the details of dynamics in the voice parts, to such an extent that his real intentions are not always clear. As would be expected, the music has many of the characteristics of Dvorak's symphonic writing. There is an abundance of melody, some unexpected modulations, episodes of great excitement and endings of calm repose. This music communicates immediately with the listener and is highly enjoyable for the singer – a rare combination. We omit the Credo tonight.

Ballads and songs

- **Autumn leaves - Joseph Cosma (P 11)**
- **Blue Moon - Richard Rogers (P 33)**
- **Over the rainbow - Harold Arlen (P 96)**