



Byrd and Bard

the 400th anniversary year of Byrd's death

Friday 17th November 7.30pm
Christ Church, Skipton, BD23 2AH



Pinsuti is a group of about 24 performers. We take our name from the little-known Victorian composer *Ciro Pinsuti*. Sacred and secular unaccompanied music forms the core of our performances, which are individually tailored to each venue, audience and time of year. We perform 4 or 5 concerts each year in the Wharfedale-Airedale area. We rehearse each Wednesday at 7.30pm in the Friend's Meeting House, Ilkley.

The Singers

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass
Deborah Penfold	Kate Graham	Mike Cox	Chris Armitage
Nicky Rodley	Jenny Robinson	Chris Pilgrim	Mark Cadwallader
Lucy Scriven	Amy Stidworthy	Ian Smyth	Duncan Faulkner
Fiona Smyth	Kirsty Styles	Mark Stidworthy	Malcolm Jones
Jane Trehwella	Susan Trinder	Mike Swinden	
Nicky Verity	Eleanor Wilman	Alan Wingfield	
Jennifer Webb			

Robert Webb is a conductor and teacher from Leeds. After reading music at Merton College, Oxford, where he was a choral scholar under Peter Phillips (Tallis Scholars) and Ben Nicholas (Reed Rubin Director of Music), Robert moved back to Leeds to train as a music teacher. Robert has conducted numerous choirs across West Yorkshire and as well as being musical director of Pinsuti, is also musical director of Skipton Choral Society. He holds instrumental and singing teaching posts at Roundhay School and The Grammar School at Leeds, and is currently singing Baritone and Alto with the vocal ensemble North8.

Contact: info@pinsuti.org.uk

Programme

Byrd: *Mass for four voices*

Byrd: *Why do I use my paper, ink and pen?*

Byrd: *Ave verum*

Byrd: *Sing joyfully*

Interval

Walton/Chilcott: *Touch her soft lips and part*

Vaughan Williams: *Three Shakespeare songs*

Roderick Williams: *Ave verum corpus re-imagined*

Whitacre: *Sainte-Chapelle*

Sigurbjörnsson: *Heyr Himna Smiður*

Mäntyjärvi: *Four Shakespeare songs*

Forthcoming concert

Our next concert, with a selection of new settings of traditional carols, will be on Saturday 16th December at 4.00pm in St Andrew's Church, Skipton. A selection from the recently published "Carols for Choirs 6" will be performed. <http://www.pinsuti.org.uk>

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William Byrd is one of the foremost composers England has produced. His compositions, mainly written for the rich and powerful but also for public consumption, demonstrate a musical mind with exquisite technical ability combined with emotional sensitivity. Byrd's life, during a particularly turbulent period of English history (1540-1623) reflected the politics of his age. He was committed to the Catholic faith whilst serving under a Protestant monarch. His musical skill earned him (along with Thomas Tallis, a fellow Catholic and likely to have been an early tutor and collaborator of his) an exclusive royal licence from Elizabeth I to publish music.

Byrd was well read and espoused strong opinions on religion, politics and the arts. He became a controversial figure and was often in legal disputes. Despite this, he was universally respected and was known for his integrity and loyalty. Byrd was also a renowned collaborator and teacher.

Of his almost 600 pieces of surviving music we select just four for the first half of the concert. His choral church music with Latin text is exemplified in our first piece, the Mass for four voices. Byrd was also a prolific composer of songs. The first we perform, *Why do I use my paper, ink and pen?*, is a setting of a poem written by Henry Walpole about the martyrdom of Saint Edmund Campion. Walpole himself later died for the Catholic cause. The remaining songs in the first half are the Latin motet *Ave verum corpus* and the English anthem, *Sing joyfully*.

William Shakespeare's (1564-1616) plays are filled with songs. His first folio (an anthology of both his previously published and his previously unpublished plays) was first published 400 years ago. The plays contain between them around 100 songs. As the Royal Shakespeare Company note "the unique power of music helps to establish location, period, status, and mood; it also reinforces emotional atmosphere and tension, and drives the narrative."

Our second half begins with a Shakespeare inspired piece of music. Originally part of Walton's film score to Henry V (starring Laurence Olivier) composed in 1943, Bob Chilcott's 2015 arrangement of 'Touch her soft lips and part' tells the tale of an emotional parting kiss between the king and his lover.

We continue with Vaughan Williams' version of three Shakespeare songs: *Full Fathom Five* and *The Cloud-Capp'd Towers*, both from *The Tempest* and *Over Hill, Over Dale* from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. We conclude the second half with Mäntyjärvi's selection of four Shakespeare songs. These come from *Twelfth Night* (*Come Away Death*), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (*Lullaby*), *Macbeth* (*Double, Double Toil and Trouble*) and *The Tempest* (an alternative version of *Full Fathom Five*).

In between the two collections of Shakespeare songs we perform Roderick Williams' *Ave verum corpus* re-imagined (which should sound familiar if you were enjoying the music in the first half) and *Sainte-Chapelle* by Eric Whitacre. It tells the story of an innocent girl entering the church of Sainte-Chapelle in Paris. She is transfixed by the glorious stained glass in the church as the angelic figures in the glass start singing to her. The final part of the filling of our second half sandwich challenges the singers with their first foray into Icelandic. *Heyr Himna Smiður*, literally "Hear, smith of the heavens", is a mediaeval Icelandic hymn written by the chieftain and poet Kolbeinn Tumason in the 13th-century. Sigurbjörnsson set it to music in 1973 and if you were a fan of the TV series "The Handmaid's Tale" it may sound familiar as an adapted version was used in two episodes in 2017. The poem is an entreaty for help and healing.