

My Spirit Sang All Day

Music for love and loss

Friday 18th 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 8.00pm in the Friend's Meeting House, Ilkley and are currently recruiting for tenors and basses.

The Singers

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass
Jen Bergevin	Kate Graham	Mike Cox	Chris Armitage
Monique Kershaw	Jenny Robinson	Ian Smyth	Duncan Faulkner
Deborah Penfold	Amy Stidworthy	Mike Swinden	Malcolm Jones
Nicky Rodley	Kirsty Styles	Alan Wingfield	Jeremy Thackray
Lucy Scriven	Susan Trinder		
Nicky Verity	Eleanor Wilman		
Sophie Wallace			
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 teaching posts in Horsforth School and Roundhay School in Leeds and is a trumpet and singing teacher at The Grammar School at Leeds.

Contact: info@pinsuti.org.uk

Programme

Webb: *Ode for Music on St. Cecilia's Day*

Philips: *Cecilia Virgo*

Tomkins: *When David Heard*

Whitacre: *When David Heard*

Whitacre: *Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine*

Interval

Britten: *Hymn to St. Cecilia*

Paulus: *The Old Church*

Paulus: *The Day Is Done*

Finzi: *7 Poems of Robert Bridges*

Forthcoming concert

Our next concert, with a selection of traditional and not-so-traditional carols, will be shortly before Christmas. Details will be on our website, <http://www.pinsuti.org.uk>

Contact: info@pinsuti.org.uk

Ode for Music on St. Cecilia's Day (Webb)

Our musical director composed this setting of the first and last verse from a poem that Alexander Pope wrote in 1708. It tells the story of music as a moderating influence as he notes "Music the fiercest grief can charm". St Cecilia, a 2nd century martyr from Rome and the patron saint of musicians, was portrayed in poetry at that time as the greatest legendary figure as she attracted an angel who mistook heaven for earth upon hearing her music. In art she is most commonly represented carrying a musical instrument but in the earliest known representations she is carrying a sword instead, perhaps a rather less calming influence. Each year her feast is celebrated on 22nd November.

Cecilia Virgo (Philips)

Peter Philips, a Devonian born in the mid 16th century was a brilliant organist and Catholic priest who lived in exile in Flanders. This piece was first published in 1613 and is asking St Cecilia to 'change the mourning of the world into the glory of Paradise' for the musicians who pray to her.

When David Heard (Tomkins)

The Welshman, Thomas Tomkins, another late Tudor composer (b. 1572), wrote this piece before 1622. It concerns the lament of King David for his son, Absalom. The text is a single verse from the second book of Samuel, 18:33.

"When David heard that Absalom was slain he went up into his chamber over the gate and wept, my son, my son, O Absalom my son, would God I had died for thee!"

However, all is not as straightforward as it may at first appear and the story behind Absalom, his brother, Amnon, his half sister Tamar, and their father, King David is distinctly 'Old Testament' and would grace any Netflix drama production of today. Suffice to say that King David would have had mixed emotions around the demise of his son Absalom.

When David Heard (Whitacre)

52 year old American, Eric Whitacre, tells the same story using exactly the same biblical quotation, but in a very different way. He dedicated the song to his friend Ronald Staheli, who had lost his own son in a car accident. The piece is thus very personal to Whitacre. His instruction to the singers of one of his longest duration (17 minutes) choral pieces is "Above all, trust the silences".

Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine (Whitacre)

Written just two years later in 2001, and in marked contrast to the anguish Whitacre expresses through the previous piece, this work is a tale of hope and excitement. In his dream, Leonardo is tormented by the calling of the air, leaving him one solution - design and build a flying machine. The words, by Charles Silvestri, contain bursts of Italian as the singers recite fragments of Leonardo's own writings "A man with wings large enough and duly connected might learn to overcome the resistance of the air". The latter half of the piece is "The Flight" where the singers vocalise the sounds of Leonardo's machine as it makes its first flight and recedes far into the distance.

Hymn to St. Cecilia (Britten)

Benjamin Britten (born on St Cecilia's day in 1913) composed this piece between 1940 and 1942. It is a setting of a poem that W.H. Auden wrote specifically for him, but the sections of poetry that Auden sent to Britten were accompanied by advice on how Britten could become a better artist. It became one of the last works they collaborated on. The original manuscripts were confiscated in 1942 as Britten travelled from the US to the UK as customs officials were concerned that they might be encoded secrets being smuggled across the Atlantic. Britten had to rewrite them from memory. The piece is in three distinct sections, with a variation of the refrain after each section.

The Old Church (Paulus)

The Day Is Done (Paulus)

Stephen Paulus was an American Grammy award winning composer best known for his operas and choral music in a melodic romantic style. These pieces are reflective of this and both allude to the beauty, peace and comfort that music can bring.

Seven Poems of Robert Bridges (Finzi)

I praise the tender flower
I have loved flowers that fade
My spirit sang all day
Clear and gentle stream
Nightingales
Haste on, my joys!
Wherefore tonight so full of care

A wide-ranging quintessentially English setting of lyrical poetry by Robert Bridges

Robert Bridges was a poet who had originally trained as a physician but was forced to retire due to illness at the age of 42. He moved his efforts to writing and achieved fame in poetry only later in life, becoming Poet Laureate at the age of 68 until his death at the age of 85. He held the role throughout the first world war and was part of the government's War Propaganda Bureau.

Gerald Finzi lost three of his brothers and his mentor, Ernest Farrar, in the first world war. His tragic early life taught him stern lessons about fragility and the transience of life. He set these 7 poems from Robert Bridges to music sometime in the early 1930's, not long after Bridges' death. The poetry appealed to the composer's thoughtful personality as well as his love of the English countryside. However, the music and poetry is not based on tragedy, but on hope and happiness, as this time in Finzi's life was successful both professionally and personally (he met and married his wife, Joyce, during this period). It is easy to imagine that the excitement found in 'My Spirit Sang All Day', liberally peppered with references to 'my joy', meant 'my joy(ce)' as far as Finzi was concerned.