

A SERVICE OF CHORAL EVENSONG

for THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The Canticles tonight, as well as the Preces and Responses, are the work of Richard Shephard (b. 1949). If you pay attention to the composers of the anthems sung at Holy Spirit, this will not be a new name to you, as the choir sings many of his anthems, and for good reason. His music is invariably accessible, challenging, and rewarding to sing. He is especially skilled at writing for a smaller choir such as ours.

Richard Shephard was educated at The King's School, Gloucester and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He is Chamberlain of Yorkminster, head of their development department, and Honorary Visiting Fellow in the Music Department of the University of York. His compositions include operas, oratorios and orchestral works but it is perhaps for his church music that he is best known. His anthems and service settings are sung widely in the cathedrals and churches of the UK and they have a considerable following in the USA. He holds the Lambeth Doctorate of Music from Oxford University and two Honorary Doctorates from the University of the South (Sewanee, TN) and the University of York (York, UK).

The Psalm, as is traditional in Evensong, will be sung in Anglican Chant. Anglican Chant is one of several methods to sing unmetrical texts by matching natural speech rhythms to a harmonized melody. It is one of the most significant features of Anglican church music and is one of the few elements of worship that are truly Anglican. Anglican chant follows a very regular pattern of seven-bar phrases divided into two parts, one of three bars and one of four. The majority of each half-verse is chanted to the first note of the chant, with the remainder spread over the remaining ones. Chants can be either single or double — the double merely a second set of seven bars to complete the fourteen-bar whole. These seven or fourteen bar blocks are then repeated as many times as necessary for the completion of the Psalm or Canticle. Anglican chant was well established by the 18th century, and most cathedral musicians in England have composed them for their choirs. There are hundreds — likely thousands — of these chants and one of

the responsibilities of a Choirmaster is to select chants that “go with” the words being sung.

The Psalm tonight will be sung to a double chant by Frederick A. Gore Ouseley (1825-1889). He was born into aristocracy and was himself knighted and ascended to the baronetcy (his full name, with titles, is Sir Frederick Arthur Gore Ouseley, Second Baronet), and showed extraordinary precocity in music, composing his first opera at the age of eight. He earned his degrees (BA and MA) at Oxford and was ordained a priest in 1849. The following year, he re-entered Oxford as a music student and earned his Mus.B. (1850) and Mus.D. (1854) there. The following year he was appointed Professor of Music at Oxford, a post he retained until his death. Exactly concurrent with his faculty appointment at Oxford was an appointment as precentor of Hereford Cathedral. He established and personally funded St. Michael's College, Tenbury, which he intended to be a model for Anglican music training.

Throughout his life he experienced a social conflict between his aristocratic heritage and his passion for the music of the church, a calling which was considered beneath his status. His many compositions are largely intended for the church — anthems, services, and Psalm chants, as well as some organ music. He is little known outside the world of Anglican choral music. A large portion of his library is held by Baylor University in Waco.

The anthem this evening is by an active living composer, Grayston Ives (b. 1948), often known by his nickname “Bill Ives”. He is well known in England as a composer, singer, and choral conductor. He was a chorister at Ely Cathedral and educated at Selwyn College, Oxford. After Oxford, he sang with the choir at Guildford Cathedral and then spent seven years with the renowned King's Singers (1978-1985). Following that he was appointed to Magdalen College, Oxford, where he held the impressive title “Organist, *Informator Choristarum* and Fellow and Tutor in Music”. During his time there, the choir won numerous awards ranging from a Grammy nomination for a recording of works of the Renaissance composer Orlando Gibbons to a Record of the Year award for a collaboration with Paul McCartney. He has also done a fair amount of film work. His compositions are both secular and sacred, but nearly always for choirs.

In the anthem “There Is a Land of Pure Delight” he sets a text by Isaac Watts (1674-1748), likely the second greatest hymnwriter in history — following only Charles Wesley. Watts wrote more than 750 hymns and is often called the “Godfather of English Hymnody”. His hymns are commonly sung by churches of all denominations around the world. He is represented in the Hymnal 1982 by 17 hymns, more than any other author except for Wesley (John Mason Neale has more hymns, but they are largely translations rather than original work.). Among his best loved hymns are, “Joy to the World”, “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”, “Jesus Shall Reign Where’re the Sun”, and “O God, our Help in Ages Past”.

The organ prelude this evening was actually originally choral music. It is arranged from the last movement of the *Requiem* of Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924). Fauré is best known today as a composer of art songs. The *Requiem* is about the only large work that is performed much at all. His style can be said to be the link between Romanticism and Modernism and his influence on composers in France and elsewhere was immeasurable. In addition to composing, he was the choirmaster at two of the most prestigious churches in Paris, St. Sulpice and the Church of the Madeleine — eventually also becoming organist of the latter — and taught at the Paris Conservatory, finally being appointed Director in 1905. He transformed the Conservatory, which had been notoriously conservative and unwilling to accept any new ideas, into a place where all periods of music finally were performed and new composers thrived.

His *Requiem* was written between 1887 and 1890 (with further revisions until 1900) and is different from most 19th century works of its kind in that it is gentle and eschews the storm and terror of the last judgment. Indeed it was criticised when first written as being a “lullaby of death”. The emotional tone of the work is not its only departure from the norm. Fauré omitted great sections of the text, and rearranged others. Two movements are not from the funeral service at all but from the burial service. It was sung with full orchestra at Fauré’s funeral in 1924 but was not heard in the United States at all until 1931 in a student concert at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

The movement heard here, arranged for organ solo, is one of the pieces from the burial service. A translation of the text can be found in the bulletin. In the

original, the melody line is sung by the choir sopranos — clearly heard here actually played by the feet — with the choir making a few quiet interpolations.

The postlude is the best-known work of John Cook (1918-1984). Cook was born and educated in England. After the Second World War (he was a conscientious objector and spent the war years driving an ambulance in London during the Blitz) he served five years as organist and choirmaster at Holy Trinity, Stratford-upon-Avon, at which point he emigrated to Canada to take a similar position at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Ontario. He also taught at the University of Western Ontario and for nine years was the resident conductor and composer for the Stratford Festival

In 1962 he accepted the position at the Church of the Advent in Boston, one of the most musically important posts in the Episcopal Church, where he remained until his death. He also taught at the Longy School in Cambridge and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His compositions are almost entirely for choir or for organ. Fanfare was written in 1952 and displays the sort of writing you would expect for the trumpet stops, but with a bit of a jazz-inspired middle section.

