

# The Cantilena Singers

Daniel Spreadbury – Director

## *Illi autem sunt in pace*



**Saturday 20 April 2024**

St Nicholas's Church, Great Wilbraham

# Programme

Robert White (1538–1574)

The Lord bless us and keep us

Antonio Lotti (1667–1740)

Missa brevis (*Missa del primo tuono*)

J.S. Bach (1685–1750)

“Der aber die Herzen forschet” from *Der geist hilft*, BWV 226

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

Kyrie eleison (from *Die Deutsche Liturgie* MWV B 57)

Heilig (from *Die Deutsche Liturgie* MWV B 57)

Jauchzet dem Herrn alle Welt (MWV B 45)

Frohlocket, ihr Völker auf Erden (Op. 79, no. 1)

Anton Bruckner (1824–1896)

Ave Maria (WAB6)

Locus iste (WAB23)

Os justi (WAB30)

Vexilla Regis (WAB51)

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924)

*Three motets, Op. 38*

Justorum animae

Caelos ascendit hodie

Beati quorum via

Edward Bairstow (1874–1946)

Let all mortal flesh keep silence

Jesu, the very thought of thee

I sat down under his shadow



# About tonight's programme

We are marking significant anniversaries of births and deaths for several of the composers whose music is featured in tonight's programme. The composers are British or Austro-German, with a lone Italian – albeit one who spent several years working in Saxony in the middle of his life – and the works span some 400 years.

We begin with the only surviving English-language motet from composer Robert White, born 450 years ago in 1574. His setting of the famous Benediction asking for God's grace leads us into a short mass from Antonio Lotti, whose long association with the famous St. Mark's Basilica in Venice produced an enormous body of work. Composed in D minor, this *Missa brevis* omits the Gloria and Credo movements, so it is over almost before it has begun, but it is no less expressive for its diminutive length.

Although Bach was celebrated in his day, like Lotti his primary concern was providing music for his church musicians to perform, and hard as it is for us to believe today, most of his music was forgotten within years of his death. Mendelssohn and Bruckner alike revered Bach's music and both played a significant role in reviving it in the 19th century. Tonight we are performing just one small section of one of Bach's great motets, an exciting fugue that marks the culmination of *Der geist hilft*.

Four unaccompanied pieces for double or divided choir written in the final years of Mendelssohn's too short life, when he was the conductor of the choir of the Protestant Berlin Cathedral, provide a strong contrast to the Catholic motets of Bruckner. There is a sunny directness to Mendelssohn's melodious writing, and despite his deep admiration for Bach, these pieces are an expression of modernity and straightforward faith. Bruckner, by contrast, reaches for – and perhaps grasps – deeper mysteries in his motets that not only evoke Bach, but the great composers of the Renaissance in his use of intricate counterpoint and plainsong themes.

Finally, we cross the North Sea once more to return to our British Isles, and to Charles Villiers Stanford, who died a century ago, and to Edward Bairstow, who was born a century and a half ago. By the time Stanford and Bairstow met, at the Leeds Festival in 1907, Stanford was at the height of his fame and Bairstow was making his name in Yorkshire, where he was born and raised, and where he made his entire career. The two sets of three motets by each of these two fine composers lead us to a place of peace and repose.

Our programme tonight takes its title from the closing words of Stanford's *Justorum animae*: we hope that our performance will leave you in a state of peaceful reflection.

*Daniel Spreadbury, Director*

# The Cantilena Singers

## *Soprano*

Hilary Burton  
Alison McRobb  
Cath Stubbs  
Ana Sugarman-Banaszak  
Caille Sugarman-Banaszak

## *Alto*

Kate Clark  
Evelyn Payne  
Judy Rowland  
Amelia Spreadbury  
Janet Stevens

## *Tenor*

Steven Aronson  
Tony Jolley  
Sam Spreadbury  
Robert Stevens

## *Bass*

Chris Fell  
Mike Gait  
Tim Rowland

The Cantilena Singers is a well-established chamber choir that performs regularly in Cambridge and the surrounding villages. The choir was founded in 1983 and has been performing locally and promoting the joy of choral singing for more than 40 years.

We are always looking for new members. If you would like to join us, please get in touch.



**Daniel Spreadbury** read for a degree in music at University College, Oxford, where he studied singing with Alastair Thompson, founder member of the King's Singers, and sang with and directed a variety of college and chapel choirs around the city. Daniel has been the director of Cantilena since 2001.



## **Next concert**

Our next concert will be on Saturday 13 July 2024 at St. Mary's Church, Newmarket, CB8 0HP. We hope to see you there!