

 **CHORAL PILGRIMAGE WITH VOX  
ON ST CECILIA'S DAY**

**FEATURING BENJAMIN BRITTEN'S LUMINOUS  
HYMN TO ST CECILIA**



**10 AM: ST ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH, DE WATERKANT**

**11:30 AM: UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
HIDDINGH CAMPUS, ORANGE STREET**

**1 ANATOMY LECTURE THEATRE TO 2 HIDDINGH HALL**

**1 PM: YOUNGBLOOD AFRICA,  
BREE STREET**

**SATURDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2025**

**LACE UP AND LOCK IN ON QUICKET**  
[www.voxcapetown.com](http://www.voxcapetown.com)

**22 November is no ordinary day for musicians! Celebrated as St Cecilia's Day, it honours the patron saint of music and also marks the birthday of one of the 20th century's most visionary composers, Benjamin Britten (1913–1976).** To celebrate this double occasion, VOX invites you to join us for a choral pilgrimage through some of Cape Town's most resonant and remarkable spaces as we sing Britten's luminous *Hymn to St Cecilia*. This is not a static concert but a musical journey on foot—part performance, part exploration.

**At every stop, we will sing Britten's *Hymn to St Cecilia*—a jewel of 20th-century choral music composed in 1942 to words by Britten's close friend W. H. Auden.** By turns devotional and playful, this three-part masterpiece explores music's power to console, transform and enchant. As the work unfolds in four different spaces, it will take on new life in each architectural and acoustic setting.

**We are deeply grateful to our hosts:** Reverend Natalie Gordon at St Andrew's, Associate Professor Fritha Langerman at Michaelis, and Ina Wichterich at Youngblood. We also extend a warm welcome to members of Urban Sketchers Cape Town who are chronicling today's musical journey. Elsabé Richter's striking poster (above) features the 17th-century painting *Saint Cecilia and an Angel*.

♦ **Soprano:** Suzanne Buchanan, \*Erin Cederlind, Lia Hall, Sally Hofmeyr, \*Carelle Klopfer, Fran Laenen, Maryanne McLachlan, Kirsten Rowe, \*Anna Telford ♦ **Alto:** Samantha Ash, Suzie Cameron, Tessa Gawith, Christina Goodall, Amy Hoffenberg, Jennifer Matlock, Sarah McArthur, Anthea van Wieringen, Jean Westwood, \*Karin-Marie Wilson ♦ **Tenor:** Matt Beck, Dane Bezuidenhout, Dirk Binneman, \*Peter Borchers, Casey Driver, Roger Hunter (ad hoc), Hayden McGregor (ad hoc), Renugan Raidoo, \*Bevan Timm ♦ **Bass:** \*Chris Arnold, Jan Buys, Wim Greyvenstein, \*Aaron Juritz, Kyle Paulssen, Evan Strauss, Louis Swart, Stefan van der Westhuizen (\* denotes soloists) ♦ **Founder and Artistic Director:** John Woodland ♦ **Imanagineer:** Kyle Paulssen ♦ **Vice-Captain:** Lia Hall

**VOX Cape Town was founded in 2015 with a vision to create fresh, captivating choral experiences to enrich the musical life of the Mother City.** Over the past decade, VOX has become one of South Africa's most exhilarating musical forces, renowned for its imaginative presentations of seldom-heard and new choral music in unconventional performance spaces. To join our musical community, follow us on social media @VOXCapeTown or write to us at [hello@voxcapetown.com](mailto:hello@voxcapetown.com)!

**BECOME A PATRON OF THE PILGRIMAGE!**  
*In the spirit of shared celebration, today's event is free and open to all. If you would like to support VOX and sustain our work, we invite you to donate what you can. Scan the QR code to give via SnapScan or use our Yoco device if you prefer to donate by card.*



## HYMN TO ST CECILIA

W. H. Auden (1907–1973)

I

In a garden shady this holy lady  
With reverent cadence and subtle psalm,  
Like a black swan as death came on  
Poured forth her song in perfect calm:  
And by ocean's margin this innocent virgin  
Constructed an organ to enlarge her prayer,  
And notes tremendous from her great engine  
Thundered out on the Roman air.

Blonde Aphrodite rose up excited,  
Moved to delight by the melody,  
White as an orchid she rode quite naked  
In an oyster shell on top of the sea;  
At sounds so entrancing the angels dancing  
Came out of their trance into time again,  
And around the wicked in Hell's abysses  
The huge flame flickered and eased their pain.

***Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions  
To all musicians, appear and inspire:  
Translated Daughter, come down and startle  
Composing mortals with immortal fire.***

II

I cannot grow;  
I have no shadow  
To run away from,  
I only play.

I cannot err;  
There is no creature  
Whom I belong to,  
Whom I could wrong.

I am defeat  
When it knows it  
Can now do nothing  
By suffering.

All you lived through,  
Dancing because you  
No longer need it  
For any deed.

I shall never be  
Different. Love me.

III

O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall,  
O calm of spaces unafraid of weight,  
Where Sorrow is herself, forgetting all  
The gaucheness of her adolescent state,  
Where Hope within the altogether strange  
From every outworn image is released,  
And Dread born whole and normal like a beast  
Into a world of truths that never change:  
Restore our fallen day; O re-arrange.

(Solo) O dear white children casual as birds,  
Playing among the ruined languages,  
So small beside their large confusing words,  
So gay against the greater silences  
Of dreadful things you did: O hang the head,  
Impetuous child with the tremendous brain,  
O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain,  
Lost innocence who wished your lover dead,  
Weep for the lives your wishes never led.

O cry created as the bow of sin  
Is drawn across our trembling violin.

(Solo) O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain.

O law drummed out by hearts against the still  
Long winter of our intellectual will.

(Solo) That what has been may never be again.

O flute that throbs with the thanksgiving breath  
Of convalescents on the shores of death.

(Solo) O bless the freedom that you never chose.

O trumpets that unguarded children blow  
About the fortress of their inner foe.

(Solo) O wear your tribulation like a rose.