



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
10th October 2007

First Performance of new Choral Setting for Auden's Centenary in Canterbury Cathedral

A new choral work by the Cathedral's Precentor and Liturgist, the Revd Jeremy Frost, will be given its first performance this Sunday. The Canterbury Arts Festival gets under way this weekend, with a "Festival Evensong" in Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday, 14th October 2007, beginning at 3.15 pm, where the anthem, called *The Healing Fountain*, will be performed by the Cathedral's Choir. The service will also include Benjamin Britten's *Hymn to St Cecilia*, again to a text by Auden.

Written in honour of the centenary of the birth of poet W.H. Auden, the new work is a setting of the final stanza of Auden's *In Memory of W.B. Yeats*:

*In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.*

Jeremy Frost has written a number of pieces for choir already, including *A Litany for St Cecilia*, and the carol *Moonless Darkness* (to a text by G. M. Hopkins). Later this autumn two more of his works will receive premieres in Canterbury: *O Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem* (marking the 40th anniversary of the Six Day War), and a setting of Blake's *The Lamb* (for the 250th anniversary of the poet's birth).

Speaking about *The Healing Fountain*, Jeremy Frost (who read music and theology at university before ordination) said, "I tend to think most creatively when confronted with dialectical ideas or sharp contrasts, so this stanza has always been one of my favourite bits of Auden. I've tried to re-create Auden's dialectic in music – on the one hand there's the arid and threatening nature of the desert and the prison, and on the other hand the freshness and beauty of water and freedom." He added, "In the past, I have written mainly instrumental works; but being based at a cathedral has prompted me to write more for choirs – and it's certainly addictive!"

E N D S

Notes to Editors

- 1 Jeremy Frost can be contacted for further information on 07725 014345
- 2 The Precentor and Liturgist are responsible for co-ordinating the worshipping life of the cathedral, and advises the Dean and Chapter on musical and liturgical matters. Jeremy Frost moved to Canterbury in February 2004, having served as a curate in the Diocese of Lichfield.

Christopher Robinson
Press Officer to Canterbury Cathedral
Direct Tel: 01227 865282
Fax: 01227 865250
Mobile 07759 215537
Email: robinsonc@canterbury-cathedral.org