



The Saint Cecilia batik

Presented to the Company by Peter Fowler, after his Installation on Thursday 9 November 2005

The Master commissioned the Saint Cecilia batik artwork from Ivor Magee, who studied at Ulster College of Art and Sussex University. After teaching art for a number of years in Northern Ireland and the West Midlands, he now pursues a career as a freelance artist. His work is individual, often with much colour and great decorative details and his recent commissions have included work as far afield as Australia and the USA.

Java is the home of batik; the name comes from the Javanese work 'tik' meaning a fine point, a point of light in the dark. The Javanese believe that this art was brought to them by the Hindus – from Turkey and Egypt and perhaps from Persia. Originally an aristocratic occupation, it was practised at home by the daughters of noble families. The work is entirely freehand and required endless patience. Months were spent on the production of a single piece.

Batik is one of the so-called resist styles of dyeing. The design is applied to the

white fabric by means of some dye-resisting substance, in this case melted wax. The fabric is then dyed, with each colour being protected by the application of wax until the fabric is almost completely covered with wax. Finally the wax is removed using a hot iron on absorbent paper and the design emerges.

The Master chose Saint Cecilia as the subject as she is the Patron Saint of Music. She is said to have been a Roman woman of noble birth who was martyred for her Christian faith circa 230. As far as can be established she was not musical and there is some doubt as to whether she actually existed at all.

The Musicians' Company has celebrated her Festival over centuries apart from Puritan times. The 'Musical Society' was formed in 1683 to celebrate their Patron Saint. In order to keep Saint Cecilia's Day in a worthy manner, each year, on 22 November, the Society attended a service in London, generally at St Bride's Church, to enjoy a sermon preached in defence of cathedral music and with a newly composed anthem.

The congregation then moved to Stationers' Hall where it was entertained by a performance of an *Ode* followed by a luncheon. The composer at the first festival was Henry Purcell. The event had a varied history but eventually, under the auspices of the Musicians' Livery Club, the celebrations



Ivor Magee with Saint Cecilia and the Master at the Installation



The Installation Dinner Drapers' Hall

were revived in 1905 and the Company celebrated Festival Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral. A stained glass window in honour of St Cecilia was placed in the north transept of the Cathedral in 1907, but it was destroyed by enemy action on 9 October 1940. In 1906 a second stained-glass window was



commissioned by a member of the Musicians' Company and dedicated to St Cecilia in the Lady Chapel of Southwark Cathedral.

In 1942 Benjamin Britten, whose birthday was St Cecilia's Day, revived the practice of writing an ode to commemorate St Cecilia and Sir Henry Wood wished to recreate the Festival but died before its revival in 1946. There was a public luncheon at which the Prime Minister spoke, the Poet Laureate recited a poem, the Lord Mayor attended a service in the Church of St Sepulchre without Newgate and, finally, there was a concert of English music at the Albert Hall, attended by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and Her Royal Highness, The Princess Elizabeth. Herbert Howells composed a *Hymn to St Cecilia* in 1961.

Today the Company holds a special Evensong in St Paul's Cathedral, inviting all Masters of the Livery Companies to join us; and the Musicians' Benevolent Fund organises the Saint Cecilia Service annually on or near 22 November, when it is held in rotation at St Paul's, Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral, with the congregation retiring to lunch, often in the Banqueting House, Whitehall.

Whether she lived or not, St Cecilia's memory has produced some beautiful music!

PRESERVE HARMONY QUIZ

The Livery was defeated by Maurice Summerfield's quiz in PH 31, as no all-correct responses were received.

The answers appear below.

- 1 a) Franz Schubert
b) Manuel de Falla
c) Nicolo Paganini
d) Frederic Chopin.
- 2 Hector Berlioz
- 3 Carl Maria Von Weber
- 4 Charles Gounod
5. Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco
- 6 *Concierto de Aranjuez*
by Joaquín Rodrigo.
- 7 Heitor Villa-Lobos.
- 8 Malcolm Arnold
Lennox Berkeley
Peter Maxwell-Davies
Robert Saxton
Michael Berkeley
Benjamin Britten
Michael Tippett
William Walton
Stephen Dodgson
- 9 Anton Diabelli.
- 10 Thomas Moore

ADVANCE NOTICE

Common Hall will be held on 11.30am on Monday 26 June at Guildhall. Please contact the Clerk's office for a pass.