



The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music

Saturday 7 May 2022, 7.30pm
St Pancras Parish Church

“Hands, Eyes, and Heart”: Vaughan Williams, Bingham, and Cooke

The LFCCM Festival Singers
Paul Plummer *organ and piano*
Christopher Batchelor *direction*

pre-concert talk at 7pm by Gregory Rose

Programme

*Celebrating the 20th anniversary of The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music,
the bicentenary of St Pancras Parish Church,
and the marriage of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Ursula Wood in 1953*

<i>Judith Bingham</i>	Ave Virgo Sanctissima
<i>Ralph Vaughan Williams</i>	Kyrie Eleison <i>from</i> Mass in G Minor
<i>Judith Bingham</i>	The Pilgrimes Travels
<i>Ralph Vaughan Williams</i>	Gloria <i>from</i> Mass in G Minor
<i>Judith Bingham</i>	Sing, O Heavens
<i>Ralph Vaughan Williams</i>	Credo <i>from</i> Mass in G Minor
<i>Judith Bingham</i>	Jesu, dulcis memoria
<i>Ralph Vaughan Williams</i>	Sanctus <i>and</i> Benedictus <i>from</i> Mass in G Minor
<i>Judith Bingham</i>	The Morning Star Fades from the Sky
<i>Ralph Vaughan Williams</i>	Agnus Dei <i>from</i> Mass in G Minor

INTERVAL

<i>Ralph Vaughan Williams</i>	Four Last Songs <i>in a new arrangement for piano and choir by Jonathan Wikeley</i>
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- i. Procris
- ii. Tired
- iii. Hands, Eyes, and Heart
- iv. Menelaus

<i>Phillip Cooke</i>	Festival Te Deum
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Mass in G Minor (1921)

Ralph Vaughan Williams

The early 1920s marked a pastoral interlude for Vaughan Williams. As well as the opera *Sir John in Love*, the period also saw the composition of *The Lark Ascending*, the *Pastoral Symphony* and *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains*. In 1921, the same year as the latter two pieces, Vaughan Williams also wrote his *Mass in G Minor*. Its musical link with the pastoral works is unmissable, as the piece is full of the rich harmonies associated with the composer in his most “English summer-time” moments, but the origins of the piece are also – as with Howell’s *Requiem* – in the revival of English polyphony and with Vaughan Williams’ identification of his music with “the imperishable glories of English prose”.

Gustav Holst and Vaughan Williams were very close at this time, and the piece is dedicated to Holst and the Whitsuntide Singers. It received its first performance on 6 December 1922 in Birmingham Town Hall. The first liturgical performance was at Westminster Cathedral under R R Terry, who took an instant liking to the work and who (along with Holst) championed its liturgical use. The success of the Mass as a liturgical work in post-war Britain is best summed up in Terry’s own words to Vaughan Williams: “I’m quite sincere when I say that it is the work one has all along been waiting for. In your individual and modern idiom you have really captured the old liturgical spirit and atmosphere.”

*Adapted from notes by Barry Creasy
Chairman, Collegium Musicum of London*

Ave Virgo Sanctissima (2011)

The Pilgrimes Travels (2010)

Sing, O Heavens (2016)

Jesu, dulcis memoria (2015)

The Morning Star Fades from the Sky (2018)

The text of *Ave Virgo Sanctissima* comes from an old Spanish Antiphon for the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. The piece was commissioned by the church of St. Thomas the Apostle, Los Angeles. It is made up of contributions from three sources: the Roman poet Prudentius (b. 348), St Ambrose (c. 337–397) and an anonymous author.

The Pilgrimes Travels was commissioned for St Paul’s Cathedral using poetry by Emilia Lanier (1569-1645). Lanier was perhaps one of the earliest known female poets in England, and *The Pilgrimes Travels* is taken from a larger poetry collection, “*Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*” (Hail, God, King of the Jews). It was published in 1611 and is considered by many to be an early feminist work because of Lanier’s spirited defence of some of the female characters in the Bible (including Eve and Pilate’s Wife). The music is described by the composer as a “fantasy on 4 notes by Alfonso Ferrabosco II”.

Sing, O Heavens is an ecstatic setting of verses from Isaiah (49:13) and Michelangelo (1475-1564), translated by William Wordsworth (1770–1850). After an initial declamatory statement of the biblical verse, the composer responds to Michelangelo’s intimate text much more delicately, alternating between upper and lower voices over upper and lower pedal notes.

Jesu, dulcis memoria is based on a text by St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) and medieval anon. The work was commissioned by Headington School as part of the school’s centenary celebrations at St Paul’s Cathedral.

The Morning Star Fades from the Sky was commissioned for The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music and was premiered during 2018's Festival on BBC Radio 3 as part of a live broadcast of Choral Evensong. It sets texts from Goethe's *Faust*, translated by Shelley and Bingham, alongside verses from the "Liturgia Horarum", translated by John Julian (1839-1913). It is dedicated to LFCCM founder and artistic director Christopher Batchelor.

Four Last Songs (1958)

Ralph Vaughan Williams

arr. Jonathan Wikeley (2022)

Vaughan Williams married Ursula Wood in 1953 in the Vestry Chapel here at St Pancras Parish Church; These four songs were composed during the following years of Vaughan Williams' life, setting texts by Wood. Tonight's performance is the premiere of a new choral arrangement of the songs by Jonathan Wikeley in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Vaughan Williams' birth.

Of course, "last pieces" are hardly conceived as such – rare is the composer who writes a final work and lays down their pen knowing they will not pick it up again. And Ralph Vaughan Williams' four last songs may be "last", but it is likely they were not even thought of by him as a set. *Menelaus* (1954) and *Procris* (1958) were to be part of one cycle; *Hands, Eyes, and Heart* (1956) and *Tired* (1956) part of another.

That said, as a sequence these four songs offer a beautiful snapshot of two different aspects of Vaughan Williams' writing. He wrote for amateur choirs all his life; like his younger colleague Britten he was able to write accessible music for the inexperienced singer that wears its learning lightly while losing none of its emotion. The middle two songs, *Tired* and *Hands, Eyes and Heart*, are simple and affecting, and in arranging them for unaccompanied choir I have tried to retain their simplicity.

Procris and *Menelaus* show a different side of the composer: this is the Vaughan Williams of mystery and intense colour, of swirling mists and (occasionally dark) magic. The ever-shifting harmonies in both of these piece offer both a challenge and an opportunity to the arranger. I have tried to harness some of the floating magic of Prospero in *Three Shakespeare Songs*, aiming to add an extra dab of colour to Vaughan Williams' already fantastical piano score.

So, not "last" perhaps, but they *are* his last songs, and why not allow ourselves to listen to them as such? In which case what could be more apt and moving than the final words of *Menelaus*: "You shall come home and love shall fold you in joy, and lay your heart on her Breast."

Programme note by Jonathan Wikeley

Festival Te Deum (2022)

Phillip Cooke

This second setting of the *Te Deum* is more expansive than my first (a liturgical setting written in 2010). It is split into four movements and featuring a prominent solo soprano part. It takes a short self-quotation from an earlier work, the *Missa Brevis*, as the basis for a fifteen-minute modal fantasia where key themes, chords and gestures are woven throughout. The third movement, *O Lord, Save Thy People*, was composed first and can be used separately as an anthem. This movement was written in response to the crisis in Ukraine and the helplessness that I, like many, felt in the face of such horror. The text ("O Lord, save thy people and bless thine heritage") seemed

apposite in the circumstances, and the plangent opening bass solo, the unresolved material and static harmonies mirrored my feelings toward the conflict. The material from this is then filtered throughout the surrounding movements, colouring even the most triumphant outbursts.

Like my previous setting, this is a Te Deum that is both questioning yet reaffirming, present yet distant, and majestic yet fragile. It was written for the 20th anniversary of The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music, which has been so supportive of my music over the past twelve years and continues to bring light, beauty, and innovation into the church music of today. Tonight's performance is given in memory of all of those who have lost their lives in the Ukraine conflict.

Programme note by Phillip Cooke

Biographies

Judith Bingham

Born in Nottingham in 1952, Judith Bingham studied composition and singing at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Her composition studies with Alan Bush and Eric Fenby were later supplemented by lessons from Hans Keller. She was awarded the Principal's prize in 1971 and, six years later, the BBC Young Composer award. Other composition prizes include the Barlow Prize for a cappella music (2004) and three British Composer Awards (two in 2004, one in 2006). She was made a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music in 2007.

Her first commissions, in the 1970s, were from The Finchley Children's Music Group, The King's Singers, and Peter Pears, but she also wrote 4 pieces for the newly formed Songmaker's Almanac, and a string of chamber works for, amongst others, the New London Consort; she was one of the first composers to write contemporary music for medieval instruments. In 1983, she joined The BBC Singers as a full time member of the chorus and toured extensively with them, singing many solo parts. She left the group at the end of 1995 to concentrate on her activities as a composer, though she continued to sing professionally for some years.

Judith has enjoyed a long association with The BBC Singers, both as a singer and as a formal Composer in Association. On first joining the group she wrote a series of choral works, many of them based on texts compiled from disparate sources as an integral part of the compositional process. Several of these were for The BBC Singers, but there were also pieces for other professional, amateur and collegiate choirs, including *Salt in the Blood*, written for the BBC Symphony Chorus to perform at the 1995 Proms, a *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis* for King's College, Cambridge, and diverse anthems and church works for St John's College, Cambridge, the cathedrals of Winchester and Lichfield, and Westminster Abbey.

Judith has been involved in many education projects, with the LSO, the BBC Philharmonic, and the BBC Young Composer of the Year. Recent premieres include *Les Saintes Maries de la Mer*, a new piece for girl's voices commissioned by the City of London Festival and first performed by the combined girls' choirs of Southwark and Guildford Cathedral, in Southwark Cathedral, London.

Jonathan Wikeley

Jonathan Wikeley is Director of Music at All Saints Church, Fulham and Choral Consultant and Editor for Hal Leonard Europe. He also works as a freelance journalist, composer and music arranger, including commissions from choirs as diverse as Whitstable Choral Society and The BBC Singers. In 2020 over 20,000 people sang his arrangements for Gareth Malone's "Great British Home Chorus". He has written for publications in Britain and the USA and has spoken about early music for BBC Radio 3. He conducts several ensembles in London, and has accompanied Ladysmith Black Mambazo at the Royal Opera House. His arrangements and compositions have been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and BBC Radio 4 and published and performed around the world.

Phillip Cooke

Phillip Cooke was born in Cumbria in 1980, spending the first 18 years of his life in the Lake District. He studied composition in Durham and Manchester Universities and for a PhD with Anthony Powers at Cardiff University. In 2012 Phillip was a winner of the Musica Sacra International Composers Competition which led to performances in Poland and Lithuania. In 2016 he won the Gesualdo Six Composition Prize for his motet *Judas mercator pessimus*. In 2017 his anthem *For He is Our Peace* won the Tenth Annual Anthem Competition in Worcester, Massachusetts, and in 2020 his work *Ave Maria, mater Dei* won the ORTUS prize.

Recent works have been featured at The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music, the Lake District Summer Music Festival, Tête à Tête Opera Festival, Musica Sacrae (Poland), Sound Festival (Aberdeen), St Magnus Festival, The Cumnock Tryst and the John Armitage Memorial (JAM) concerts. Phillip's works have been performed in many of the leading cathedrals and churches in the UK by ensembles including The BBC Singers and The Sixteen.

His work has regularly been premiered and broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and has also recently been broadcast on BBC Radio 4 and Classic FM. His large-scale choral/orchestral work *Noah's Fire* was premiered in Chester Cathedral in November 2015. A CD of his choral works performed by the Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge and Onyx Brass was released to great acclaim on Regent Records in 2014, and recordings of his pieces *The Eternal Ecstasy* (recorded by Selwyn in 2015) and *The World on Fire* (recorded by the Choir of The Queen's College, Oxford in 2017) have reached the classical charts top 10.

Phillip is strongly influenced by his native Lake District and its history. His main musical influences are found in continuing and reconciling a pastoral British tradition; he has written articles on James MacMillan, Edward Elgar, Herbert Howells, Francis Pott, and British secular Requiem settings. He co-edited a book of essays on Howells, published in 2013, and wrote the first major study on MacMillan's music, published in 2019.

From 2007 to 2008 he was a Career Development Fellow at the Faculty of Music, Oxford University and a Junior Research Fellow at The Queen's College, Oxford from 2007 to 2010. He was composition tutor at Eton College from 2011 to 2012. In 2013 he was appointed a Lecturer in

Composition at Aberdeen University, becoming Deputy Head in 2015, Senior Lecturer in 2017, and Head of Music from 2018 to 2021. His choral music is published by Novello and Schott.

The LFCCM Festival Singers

Soprano Felicity Davies Felicity Hayward Jenni Harper
Alto Catherine Backhouse Helen Hughson Karl Gietzmann
Tenor Matthew Howard Michael Solomon Williams Graham Neal
Bass Christian Goursaud Gavin Cranmer-Moralee Sebastian Bosley

The Festival's own professional vocal ensemble, The LFCCM Festival Singers, expands and augments the Choir of St Pancras Parish Church with additional singers from London's world-class choral institutions. Most members of the ensemble have come from a collegiate background and gone on to study as postgraduate students at one of the London conservatoires. This combination of superb sight-reading and world-class vocal training gives the group tremendous flexibility, enabling the performance of a repertory that spans five centuries: ranging from motets from the Eton Choirbook to new commissions by composers such as Roxanna Panufnik, Michael Berkeley, Cecilia McDowall, Howard Skempton, Michael Finnissy, Gabriel Jackson, Francis Pott, Sebastian Forbes, Francis Grier, Kerry Andrew, Antony Pitts, and many more.

Paul Plummer

Paul Plummer was Organ Scholar of New College, Oxford before moving to London to study piano accompaniment. He worked as Assistant Organist of St Marylebone Parish Church and Director of Music at St Stephen's, Gloucester Road. At St Stephen's in 1998, he set up the Rush-Hour Recital series which continues to attract substantial interest and is connected to the nearby Royal College of Music. He also oversaw the rebuild of the church's large Norman & Beard organ before leaving in 2002.

Organ recital engagements include St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, and Westminster Cathedral; he has also played on tour in the United States with the Cathedral Singers of Christ Church, Oxford and deputised in many British cathedrals. From 2008 to 2013 he lived in Germany and Austria, working as a pianist in opera houses, but has since been back in the UK working as a freelance vocal coach and piano accompanist. He has worked as a vocal coach for the young artist programmes of The Royal Opera and for the Polish National Opera in Warsaw, and accompanies rehearsals regularly for London choirs such as The BBC Singers and Chorus of Opera Rara. In October 2016, he was organist for the acclaimed CD of choral works by William Petter, *Ablaze with Light*.

During the Covid period Paul was the piano accompanist of many live-streamed concerts with the collective Proud Songsters (still available online), and also accompanied baritone Jamie W. Hall on a CD recording of *Die Schöne Müllerin* recently released on Convivium Records. He enjoys tweeting angrily as @LonOperaCoach.

Christopher Batchelor

Christopher was an organ scholar of Hertford College, Oxford, during which time he was taught by James Dalton. After graduating he moved to Cambridge where, under the supervision of Peter le Huray, he pursued research into 17th century English church music, being awarded both an MPhil and a PhD. During this time he held positions at both Downing and Gonville & Caius Colleges. He moved to London in 1988, succeeding Christopher Bowers-Broadbent as Director of Music and Organist of St Pancras Parish Church. He has taught at a number of institutions, including University College School and the Royal Military School of Music where he was Professor of Orchestration and Arranging. Following the re-establishment of the London College of Music in 2006, Christopher became head of the institution, working with many well-known colleagues and establishing a modern conservatoire. His contributions to education and contemporary church music have recently been acknowledged by the award of an Hon. FLCM. Alongside his performing experience, he has a long-standing practical interest in the organ and was Managing Director of Harrison and Harrison Organ Builders until July 2017; his legacy has been described as “unprecedented”. He continues his association with the organ as an advisor/consultant.

Christopher founded The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music in 2002.

More events this week at
The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music

All events take place at St Pancras Parish Church

Saturday 7 May and Sunday 8 May

2pm – 6pm

Ralph Vaughan Williams and Ursula Wood at St Pancras Church: Exhibition

The crypt gallery hosts an exhibition celebrating the bicentenary of St Pancras Parish Church, including a curated display of artefacts from The British Library related to the marriage of Vaughan Williams to Ursula Wood in the Vestry Chapel of the church in 1953.

Monday 9 May

7.30pm

“Contrapunctus”: A History of the Mass: Concert

This event is ticketed. Book online at lfccm.com/tickets

This performance by The Swan Consort places a new *Missa Brevis* by Alastair Borthwick in the context of 16th-century English sacred music, with works by John Taverner, Thomas Tallis, and William Byrd.

Tuesday 10 May

5.30pm **“Cymbals and Dances”:** Organ and Dance Rush-Hour Recital

An innovative collaborative event that takes a journey into the world of music and movement, adding a fascinating new dimension to the traditional organ recital. Four groups from London Contemporary Dance School are joined by organist Paul Plummer in this presentation of new organ music submitted to the Festival’s “Call for Scores” project.

Thursday 12 May

1.15pm **"Retrospective": 20 Years of Commissioning New Music:** Lunchtime Concert

Founded in 2002, the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music has been promoting and performing new sacred music for 20 years. In this lunchtime recital, Artistic Director and Festival founder Christopher Batchelor presents some of his favourite selections from the past 20 years of new sacred music at St Pancras Parish Church.

5.30pm Organ Recital by the Organists of Highgate School

A delightful recital programme of contemporary organ music performed by the organ teachers and students of Highgate School.

Friday 13 May

1.15pm **"Da pacem, Domine":** Lunchtime Concert

The Byron Consort of Harrow School performs a programme of music focusing on commemoration and remembrance, with music by Kenneth Leighton, William Mathias, Arvo Pärt, John Tavener, and Roxanna Panufnik, who introduces the performance.

5.45pm **"The Clouded Heaven":** Rush-Hour Recital

University College London Chamber Choir presents this beautiful programme of choral works by Judith Bingham to celebrate her 70th birthday in 2022.

Saturday 14 May

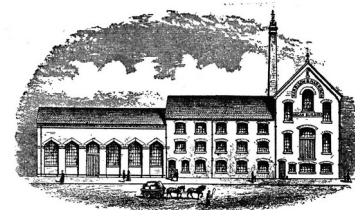
7.30pm **"Dazzling Light": Choral Music for 40 Voices:** Concert

This event is ticketed. Book online at lfccm.com/tickets

A stunning programme of ancient and modern repertoire for large-scale choirs performed by The Lacock Scholars, featuring the iconic *Spem in alium* by Thomas Tallis, the ethereal *Ecce beatam lucem* by Alessandro Striggio, and contemporary works for 40-part choirs by David Bednall, Gabriel Jackson, and Alec Roth.



The
Thanet Street
Trust



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ORGAN BUILDERS

The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music was founded in 2002
with the aim of showcasing contemporary liturgical music
in both service and concert.

www.lfccm.com