



The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music

Friday 16 May 2025, 1.15pm
Holy Sepulchre

Choral Recital

The LFCCM Festival Singers
Alastair Carey *direction*

*A recital of contemporary choral music,
featuring works submitted to the Festival's
"Call for Scores" incubation project for new sacred music*

*Part of the Midtown Concerts series at Holy Sepulchre
presented by Music-at-Hill Concert Society*

In memoriam Ronald Corp (1951 – 2025)

David Truslove Nunc Dimittis on Plainsong Tones

Gregor Tümmeler Christe, qui lux World premiere

*“Christ, who is the light and day, you drive darkness away ... let us take our rest
in you, grant us a tranquil night.” – trad. Compline hymn, c. 14th century*

Edward Tait In the Bleak Midwinter

David McGregor The Lamb World premiere

John Smith Ave Maria World premiere

*“Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women ...
pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.” – trad. angelic salutation, c. 11th century*

Davide Mutti Ave verum corpus World premiere

*“Hail, true body, born of the Virgin Mary, sacrificed on the cross for mankind.”
– attrib. Pope Innocent III (13th century)*

Brian Inglis Locus iste London premiere

*“This place was made by God: a priceless mystery, without reproof.”
– Gradual for the dedication of a church, trad. c. 15th century*

Derry Bertenshaw The Lord’s Prayer World premiere

Adam Kujawa Ave verum corpus World premiere

Nigel Poole My Eyes for Beauty Pine World premiere

Joshua Gawley O nata lux London premiere

*“O light born from light, Jesus, redeemer of the world ... deign to receive our devoted praise and prayer.”
– Office hymn at Lauds of the Feast of the Transfiguration, trad. c. 15th century*

Alexander Voltz O God, the King of Glory World premiere

Programme Notes

David Truslove: My *a cappella* setting of the **Nunc Dimittis** is scored for five voices, with each of the odd-numbered verses based on the plainsong first tone. The full sections begin with accumulating entries intended to convey an awed and mystical encounter between Simeon and the Almighty. Melodic contours are mostly derived from the stepwise intervals of the plainsong and underpinned by discreet dissonances and suspensions. Inspiration for the use of plainsong came from a setting of the evening canticles by Barry Ferguson (formerly Master of the Choristers at Rochester Cathedral) and David Bevan, whose Magnificat setting (Septimi toni) I enjoyed singing while I was a lay clerk at Winchester Cathedral.

Gregor Tümmler: **Christe, qui lux** is a contemporary *a cappella* setting of this Latin hymn, which pleads for light, protection and peace through Christ in times of darkness. The work contrasts meditative, chant-like phrases with radiant, harmonically rich passages. The music explores the spiritual duality of light and shadow through open, floating harmonies and gently shifting sonorities. Carefully shaped dynamics and polyphonic interplay create a soundscape that evokes both contemplation and revelation. In a world marked by uncertainty, this music reminds us of the enduring human longing for hope and reassurance.

Edward Tait: I decided to set to music just the first two verses from Christina Rossetti's poem **In the Bleak Midwinter**, as they offer great contrast in theme and mode. The first feels cold and almost melancholic; the second is bright and more joyous. I emphasised this in the music with the dynamic key change between a cold and distant G minor, and an almost modal-sounding G major. Although my setting is largely homophonic, in the style of a traditional carol, there are many moments where the harmonic progressions overlap each other, particularly around the climax, giving a very fanfare-like quality. At the end there is a brief return of the opening theme, with the opening line of the song, almost like a whisper of what has passed.

David McGregor: **The Lamb** opens with interlocking soprano melodies, at times dovetailing and at others diverging melodically as the child asks, "Who made thee?" William Blake's child-like interrogation introduces a sense of ambiguity, mirrored by the shifting harmonies accompanying these imitative lines. Following a description of the lamb's soft wool and tender voice, the question is asked again, this time with greater vigour and harmonic dissonance in my setting. The opening soprano melody is augmented rhythmically, with increasingly assertive iterations of the phrase "I'll tell thee" permeating the other voices to create a dense, imitative texture. This promise of an answer is realised in a contrastingly hushed passage, as the "meek and [...] mild" lamb is revealed to be a symbol of Jesus, Lamb of God. A varied recapitulation of the opening idea follows, as the interlocking soprano lines express that both the child and the lamb, in their innocence, reflect the image of Christ. The work ends with a blessing of the lamb, a serene relaxation of the polyphonic texture which has figured so prominently in the work.

John Smith: The genesis of **Ave Maria** came from a separate work I wrote in 1974 as director of music for Fallowfield Girls school choir, Manchester. The original work was a setting of the Angel Gabriel's text "Ave Maria" for SSAA voices only as a motet for Christmas. I decided to revisit this older composition and further extend it by setting the "Sancta Maria" as this would increase the liturgical usefulness of my earlier work. I added male voices for the "Sancta Maria" section to

increase the contrast with the earlier “Ave Maria” of the Angel Gabriel. The “Sancta Maria” section begins with an inversion of the opening figure of the piece in the relative major now sung by the lower voices. This is then followed by the upper voices replying with the opening phrase exactly in the relative major but in its original form.

Davide Mutti: The vivid, highly dramatic imagery of the medieval eucharistic hymn **Ave verum corpus**, describing Christ’s passion in relation to our own death and concluding with a tender invocation to Jesus, has inspired many composers of different eras and traditions, from plainsong to Byrd, from Mozart to Mawby. My own setting – for lower voices *a cappella* – attempts to paint both the drama and the tenderness of this beloved poem, in a highly chromatic – yet with a strong tonal centre on G – and contrapuntal style which distinctly characterises all my music.

Brian Inglis: This setting of **Locus iste**, completed and first performed when I was still at school, was inspired by a visit to Inchcolm Abbey (Inchcolm Island, Firth of Forth, Scotland) in August 1987. The structure is informed by Bruckner’s setting of the same text (which was included in my A level scores anthology). The neo-medieval soundworld, while suggested by the Abbey remains and perhaps influenced by Debussy and Mussorgsky, is also a reaction against my harmony studies – for I found that, contrary to what I was taught, sung parallel fifths and octaves sound really good!

Derry Bertenshaw: I’m delighted **The Lord’s Prayer** was chosen to be included in this concert. It is scored for *a cappella* mixed choir and is a simple, mainly homophonic setting in A minor of the traditional version (with doxology) from the Book of Common Prayer. There is some word painting on “trespasses” and “trespass” involving the interval of a diminished fourth originally used in late Renaissance *seconda prattica* madrigals to express pain and anguish. The word “evil” is also treated with a passing dissonance. The Doxology develops material from the opening bars and ends in the major.

Adam Kujawa: This setting of **Ave verum corpus** was created in June 2023 during the final year of Postgraduate Studies in Choir Conducting and Voice Technique in Bydgoszcz. The text is a Eucharistic hymn dating back to the 13th century. Most of the musical ideas are based on a simple four-note motif, derived from Mozart’s well-known masterpiece, the “Jupiter Symphony”. In the middle section of the piece there can be noticed traces of musical-rhetorical figures. This kind of thinking about the relation between words and music may well be explained by my fascination with language-learning.

Nigel Poole: I originally wrote **My Eyes for Beauty Pine** in response to a call for scores from an American choir in 2023, requesting choral works on themes of beauty and hope. The text by Robert Bridges (1844 – 1930) immediately sprang to mind, as I was familiar with the setting by Herbert Howells. So, I wrote my own setting and submitted it to the American choir; while it was not selected for performance on that occasion, it is now being premiered in London, and I am only sorry that I cannot get away from Canberra to attend the performance!

Joshua Gawley: **O nata lux** was written over a weekend in December 2023 where I consciously experimented with a looser harmonic style. It is based loosely on Tallis’s setting of the same text, which I was singing in choir in the Sunday service that same weekend. The piece changes between Ionian and Mixolydian modes throughout, offering a variety of harmonic colour while also paying

tribute to the modal harmonies of Tallis and his contemporaries (in particular, his liking of false relations). Structurally, the piece builds to a climax on the phrase (in English) “Grant us to be members of that blessed body”, symbolising the communal aspect of faith and the desire for believers to be in unity with Christ and the church at large.

Alexander Voltz: Previously set by Gibbons and Purcell, **O God, the King of Glory** is the collect said on the Sunday after Ascension Day. My setting is a gift to my friends Tian and Emma on the occasion of their wedding. That wedding served as a precious reminder of the very real and intimate relationship two people, now joined in faith, can have with the Lord.

The LFCCM Festival Singers

Soprano Felicity Hayward Eve McGrath Tess Pearson Sumei Bao Smith
Alto Leonora Dawson-Bowling David McGregor Eleanor Messenger
Tenor Graham Neal Matthew Howard Gareth Treseder
Bass Sebastian Bosley Francis Brett Gavin Cranmer-Moralee Benjamin Tomlin

The Festival’s own professional vocal ensemble, The LFCCM Festival Singers, brings together singers from across London’s world-class choral institutions. Most members of the ensemble have come from a collegiate background and have studied 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 repertoire 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.

Alastair Carey

Alastair Carey has been involved in choral performance since the age of six. He has performed, recorded and broadcast throughout the United Kingdom and Europe, appearing as a vocal performer with ensembles including The Gabrieli Consort, The Oxford Camerata, The Brabant Ensemble, and The Nederlandse Bachvereniging in performances ranging from the BBC Proms to the Leipzig Bach Festival. As a conductor, Alastair has directed concerts in Asia, Australasia, Europe, and throughout the United Kingdom, including award-winning performances at competitions in the European Grand Prix in Spain and the World Choir Games in South Korea.

The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music

The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music was founded by Christopher Batchelor in 2002 with the aim of showcasing contemporary liturgical music in both service and concert. Now more than 20 years old, the LFCCM has grown to include nearly 60 events, dozens of composers, hundreds of performers, and thousands of audience members, both live and online.

Make the LFCCM part of your Legacy

Artistic groups across the United Kingdom have seen funding cuts and financial pressures since the global coronavirus pandemic. In the face of challenges like these, the secure future of classical music in this country can no longer be taken for granted.

The LFCCM's endowment fund ensures the Festival's ongoing financial security and independence for generations to come. Your lasting legacy will be reflected in new commissions, live performances, educational programmes, and supporting the development of church music in perpetuity.

Find out more at lfccm.com/support/legacy, or write to legacy@lfccm.com.

Midtown Concerts by the Music-at-Hill Concert Society

Music-at-Hill Concert Society is pleased to welcome you to Holy Sepulchre Church for this lunchtime concert forming part of our Summer 2025 season of Friday chamber music recitals.

Music-at-Hill Concert Society is now in its second full year of residency at Holy Sepulchre, and we are most grateful to the home team here for the generous hospitality they are extending to us. Light refreshments are served at the back of the church both before and after the performance.

Full concert listings can always be checked out on our website at **www.musicathill.org.uk**, or you can visit our Facebook page **www.facebook.com/MusicAtHill** for up-to-date Society news.

Admission to this recital is free, but the whole event – including the hire of this building – costs us a considerable sum to put on, so we welcome your generous contribution towards our expenses.

Donations can be left in one of the retiring collection baskets, or you can donate online by going to our society website and using the click-through to JustGiving (see link in the bottom left corner of our homepage).

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

All events are free unless otherwise noted

Saturday 17 May

5.30pm

Organ Recital by students of The Royal College of Music Junior Department

Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall, Royal College of Music, SW7 2BS

Contemporary organ music is featured in this delightful organ recital presented by students of The Royal College of Music Junior Department.

7.30pm

“Wisdom and Strength”:

Concert at St Paul’s Knightsbridge, SW1X 8SH

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

Renowned British ensemble Siglo de Oro presents an exceptional programme of new sacred music by women composers to celebrate the launch of their new CD recording, *Wisdom and Strength*.

More details about these events and many others at

www.lfccm.com