



President – Patricia Parkes

Conductor – Michael Cayton

With Accompanists:

Ian Shaw on the grand orgue

Anna Le Hair on petit orgue/piano

An Early Evening of French Music

Saturday 20 November 2021
St Mary's Church, Rickmansworth

Welcome from the Chair



It is wonderful to be back performing in concert and very good to see you, our audience. Thank you for joining us for our first concert since the start of lockdown in 2020.

It has been so good to return to rehearsals, singing together and seeing one another in person rather than via a Zoom link. As you may know we ran regular rehearsals during the various lockdowns singing in our own homes, but that is not choral singing. Michael, our MD, managed though to keep us motivated and in the habit of singing throughout.

We do hope that the season ahead runs to plan. Please save the date for our Christmas Cheer concert in Chorleywood Memorial Hall at 17:00 on Saturday 18th December. Our spring concert will be on the evening of Saturday 19th March with details of the venue and the timings to follow.

It is lovely to see you here and I hope you enjoy this concert of French music.

Lyndsay Ward
Chair

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Programme

Cantique de Jean Racine

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

*Verbe égal au très Haut, notre unique
espérance*

*Jour éternel de la terre et des cieux,
De la paisible nuit nous rompons le
silence:*

Divin Sauveur, jette sur nous les yeux!

Word of the Highest, our only hope,

Eternal day of earth and the heavens,
We break the silence of the peaceful
night;

Saviour Divine, cast your eyes upon us!

*Répands sur nous le feu de ta grâce
puissante*

*Que tout l'enfer fuie au son de ta voix;
Dissipe le sommeil d'une âme
languissante
Qui la conduit à l'oubli de tes lois!*

Pour on us the fire of your powerful
grace,

That all hell may flee at the sound of
your voice;

Banish the slumber of a weary soul,
That brings forgetfulness of your laws!

*Ô Christ soit favorable à ce peuple
fidèle,*

*Pour te bénir maintenant rassemblé;
Reçois les chants qu'il offre à ta gloire
immortelle*

Et de tes dons qu'il retourne comblé.

O Christ, look with favour upon your
faithful people

Now gathered here to praise you;
Receive their hymns offered to your
immortal glory;

May they go forth filled with your gifts.

Berceuse

Louis Vierne (1870-1937)

Organ Solo by Ian Shaw

Quatre Motets

Marcel Dupré (1886-1971)

1 O salutaris

*O salutaris hostia,
quae coeli pandis ostium.
Bella premunt hostilia,
Da robur fer auxilium.*

O saving sacrifice,
who opens wide the gates of heaven.
Our foes press on to war,
give us strength when we ask for help.

2 Tantum Ergo

*Tantum ergo Sacramentum
Veneremur cernui;
Et antiquum documentum
Novo cedat ritui;
Praestet fides supplementum
Sensuum defectui.*

Down in adoration falling,
Lo! the sacred Host we hail;
Lo! o'er ancient forms departing,
newer rites of grace prevail;
faith for all defects supplying,
where the feeble senses fail.

*Genitori, Genitoque
Laus et jubilatio,
Salus, honor, virtus quoque
Sit et benedictio
Procedenti ab utroque
Compar sit laudatio
Amen*

To the everlasting Father,
and the Son who reigns on high
with the Holy Ghost proceeding
forth from Each eternally,
be salvation, honour, blessing,
might and endless majesty
Amen.

3 Ave Maria

*Ave Maria gratia plena
Dominus tecum.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
Et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesu.*

Hail Mary, full of grace
The Lord is with thee
Blessed art thou amongst women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
Jesus.

*Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
Ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae
Amen*

Holy Maria, Mother of God.
Pray for us sinners
Now and at the hour of our death
Amen

4 Laudate

*Laudate Dominum, omnes gentes;
Laudate eum, omnes populi.*

Praise the Lord, all ye nations;
praise him, all ye people.

*Quoniam confirmata est super nos
Misericordia eius
Et veritas Domini manet in aeternum.*

For his merciful kindness is great
toward us
And the truth of the Lord lasts for
ever.

Arabesque No 1

Piano Solo by Anna Le Hair

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Messe Solennelle

Louis Vierne (1870-1937)

1 Kyrie

*Kyrie eleison
Christe eleison
Kyrie eleison*

Lord, have mercy
Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy

2 Gloria in Excelsis Deo

*Et in terra pax hominibus bonae
voluntatis
Laudamus te, benedicimus te
Adoramus te, glorificamus te
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnum
gloriam tuam*

And on earth, peace, good will to all
men
We praise you, we bless you,
We adore you, we glorify you.
We give you thanks for your great
glory.

*Domine Deus Rex coelestis
Deus Pater omnipotens
Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe
Dominus Deus Agnus Dei
Filius Patri*

Lord God, heavenly King,
Almighty Father
Lord Jesus Christ, Only begotten Son.
Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father

*Qui tollis peccata mundi
Miserere nobis
Suscipe deprecationem nostram
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris*

You take away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us
Receive our prayer
You are seated at the right hand of
the Father.

*Quoniam tu solus sanctus
Tu solus Dominus
Tu solus Altissimus
Jesu Christe*

For you alone are the Holy One,
You alone are the Lord
You alone are the Most High
Jesus Christ

*Cum sancto Spiritu
in gloria Dei Patris
Amen*

With the Holy Spirit,
In the glory of God the Father
Amen

3 Sanctus

*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua
Hosanna in excelsis*

Holy, holy, holy
Lord God of hosts,
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory
Hosanna in the highest

4 Benedictus

*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini

Hosanna in excelsis*

Blessed is he that comes in the name
of the Lord
Hosanna in the highest

5 Agnus Dei

*Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi
Miserere nobis*

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world, have mercy upon us.

Dona nobis pacem

Grant us peace

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Programme Notes

Cantique de Jean Racine

The Cantique is a setting of words by the 17th century dramatist and poet Jean Racine. It was Fauré's first significant composition, written in 1865 whilst he was in his final year at the École Niedermeyer, the 'École de musique religieuse et classique'. He submitted the piece for the composition prize, and won, though it was only published eleven years later, with a full orchestral version following in 1906. Fauré went on to write a good deal of religious music – most notably the Requiem – but of the shorter sacred pieces it is the Cantique that has particularly captured the affections of choirs and audiences.

Organ Solo - Berceuse - Louis Vierne

Without doubt, this is Vierne's most performed work. It's a cradle song based on the French children's song "Dodo, l'enfant do"(the paroles classiques of the title) and is dedicated to his then seven-year old daughter Colette. Largely diatonic, the melody is coloured with a chromatic alto line on its reprise on the third page, but otherwise the clouds of the previous movement could not be further away. The delightful 'call-and-response' passage at the top of the second page is mirrored in the coda under a high dominant pedal.

Dupré Motets

Dupré studied the organ with Guilmant and Vierne, and composition with Widor. Dupré became Assistant Organist at Saint-Sulpice, where he remained until his death. It was during the First World War that he wrote these motets. Dedicated to Bellenot, the first piece (choir and organ) is an ardently lyrical, almost sensual setting of O salutaris hostia; maybe an uneasy combination to modern ears, but it is certainly a good tune. The enigmatic Tantum ergo (choir and two organs) seems to be a deliberate departure from more conventional versions of this text; the converging chromatic lines recall Vierne's Kyrie, and the dedication to Abbé Renault may indicate that Dupré had Notre-Dame in mind, for it was about this time that he began to deputize there during Vierne's protracted absence due to recurrent problems with his eyes. The third piece (boys' voices and organ) is a sombre, dark-hued Ave Maria, very different from Vierne's innocent vision, with a striking premonition of Poulenc at 'ora pro nobis'. The final Laudate Dominum (choir and two organs) is an exultant outburst of praise, with another memorable tune; toccata figuration on the Grand Orgue and some unconventional and demanding vocal writing contribute to the impressive effect of the whole.

Piano Solo Debussy Arabesque No 1

This is one of Debussy's earliest works, composed between the years 1888 and 1891, when he was still in his twenties.

Although quite an early work, the arabesque contains hints of Debussy's developing musical style. The suite is one of the very early impressionistic pieces of music, following the French visual art form. Debussy seems to wander through modes and keys, and achieves evocative scenes through music. His view of a musical arabesque was a line curved in accordance with nature, and with his music he mirrored the celebrations of shapes in nature made by the Art Nouveau artists of the time.

Vierne Messe Solennelle

Louis Vierne was born with severe cataracts that rendered him essentially blind. When he was six, he underwent an experimental procedure that restored some vision, but he could only read oversized text and wrote music at an easel using a large pad and thick crayon.

He was a precocious musical talent who studied theory, piano and violin at Paris' Institute for Blind Youth, where he met the composer and organist César Franck, who steered him toward the organ. He soon began private harmony lessons with Franck and enrolled in his organ course at the Conservatoire de Paris. When Franck was tragically killed in a traffic accident, Vierne began studying with Franck's successor, Charles-Marie Widor. He rapidly developed into a virtuoso performer with a mastery of improvisation. He became Widor's assistant at the Conservatoire and his deputy organist at the fashionable Church of St. Sulpice. In 1900, he won the prestigious post of organist titulaire of Notre Dame Cathedral. While it was prestigious, the position was neither lucrative nor very musically satisfying, for the organ was in very poor repair. Vierne spent the better part of the next two decades playing concerts to raise money for its restoration, with tours in England and the U.S., including an appearance in Philadelphia where he performed on the great Wanamaker Organ.

Vierne never achieved an academic position at the Conservatoire, despite having served as an unpaid assistant for 19 years, but he did teach some of the most prominent organists and musicians of the next generation, including Nadia Boulanger, Marcel Dupré and Maurice Duruflé. In June 1937, Vierne was giving a recital on the now restored Notre Dame organ, assisted by his student Duruflé, when he suffered a fatal heart attack. As he collapsed, his foot struck the E pedal, and the single tone echoed throughout the cathedral, a wonderfully poetic and fitting end for a man who had devoted his life to his art.

The Messe Solennelle in C-sharp minor was written between 1898 and 1900. Vierne originally planned to set it for chorus and orchestra, but Widor persuaded him to prepare a two-organ version instead. It was premiered in 1901 at St. Sulpice, with Widor and Vierne at the church's two organ consoles.

The term Solemn Mass usually signifies a High Mass, in which all the parts of the Ordinary (liturgy) are sung, but Vierne's Messe Solennelle omits the Credo. It was evidently intended for liturgical use, since the opening for the Gloria is not set but rather is meant to be intoned by the celebrant. There is a strong chromatic flavour to the Messe Solennelle and Vierne displays considerable harmonic freedom.

While solennelle does not mean serious in this context, there is something foreboding in the descending line of the organ that opens the Kyrie. The chorus enters sequentially with a chant-like melody that outlines the C-sharp minor triad. A middle section displays more harmonic freedom before returning at last to the opening melody.

The Gloria has a similar tripartite structure. After the opening is intoned, the organ immediately takes up an arch-like phrase, creating the feeling that the music was already in motion during the intonation. A long central section, starting with the Domine Deus, is more introspective, with a somewhat mysterious organ accompaniment.

The final Agnus Dei is the most lyrical movement, with a long, gentle chant-like melody. An organ line like bells softly ringing and a quiet dona nobis pacem brings the work to a close.

Performing today:

Michael Cayton, Conductor

Conductor Michael Cayton has been Musical Director of the Chiltern Choir since 2003. Since then he has led the choir in a wide variety of works from Purcell to Eric Whitacre.

Lockdown brought new challenges and although the Choir was unable to meet in person it continued with weekly Zoom rehearsals and the creation and broadcast of virtual concerts. During this period Michael was kept extra busy recording sessions for BBC Radio 4 and St. Martin in the Fields.

Michael is also Director of Music at Watford Philharmonic Society where he is into his 8th season. During that time, he has conducted performances of Britten's War Requiem, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Bliss' Morning Heroes to commemorate the centenary of the end of the first world war.

Since 2003, Michael has been the Director of Music at St John's Wood Church in London, where he conducts both the critically acclaimed professional choir and the successful community Chamber Choir.

Having attended the Royal College of Music, where he studied piano, organ, and conducting, Michael won the Hilda Deane Anderson prize for conducting and improvisation, and became the first Millennium Organ Scholar at the Royal Hospital in Chelsea. As well as conducting, Michael is in demand as a pianist and organist, with regular appearances in Central London venues, especially at St. Martin in the Fields. He lives in Watford and is married with two boys.



Ian Shaw, Accompanist, Grand Orgue

Ian Shaw studied at Cambridge (where he was Organ Scholar of St John's College and a John Stewart of Rannoch Scholar in Sacred Music), at the Sweelinck Conservatorium in Amsterdam and (more recently, as a mature student) in the drama department of Goldsmiths College in London.

He has been Sub-Organist at Durham Cathedral and Director of Music at St Peter's Eaton Square. Subsequently, he has worked as a pianist with English National Opera, Opera North, Northern Ballet Theatre, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and, for eleven years, Scottish Opera, where he was responsible for numerous tours of the Highlands and Islands, once including Bermuda.

Since returning to London, he has continued to work as a freelance repetiteur, especially for Scottish Opera, Music Theatre Wales and Nederlandse Reisopera, and often in contemporary repertoire. He has been involved in a number of world premieres in UK



and abroad, including *The Trial* (Philip Glass), *Anthropocene* (Stuart MacRae), *Jab Molassie* (Dominique Le Gendre, in Trinidad) and *Deniz Kustu* (Michal Ellison, in Istanbul). He has also coached young singers and pianists at the National Opera Studio and British Youth Opera and played with London choirs, including the BBC Singers, the Bach Choir and, on many occasions, the Chiltern Choir.

When Covid brought his work to an abrupt halt, he turned instead to composition, winning a number of prizes, most recently from Syracuse University in New York for *Solomon and the Gnat*, a tone-poem for organ based on the poem by Rumi, and from El Cor Canta in Barcelona for an orchestral cantata to Jacint Verdaguer's *La Lluna*.

Anna Le Hair Accompanist, Petit Orgue/Piano

Anna Le Hair gained an honours degree in music at Edinburgh University, and her postgraduate studies were at the Royal College of Music, London. Anna has a busy and varied career as a performer, teacher, accompanist, ABRSM examiner, adjudicator and conductor. Engagements have included recitals, both solo and as chamber musician and accompanist, in many venues in London, including St Martin in the Fields, St John's Smith Square and the Queen Elizabeth Hall, and around Britain and abroad, including a concert tour to New Zealand in 2014 with the violinist Arwen Newband.



Anna has given performances of several piano concertos and has performed at many festivals in Britain and abroad, including Edinburgh and Buxton, where she was nominated for the title of 'Performer of the Fringe'. Anna works with several choirs both locally and in London. She teaches piano and accompanies at St Albans School, and she also has a thriving private teaching practice at her home in Tring. She is the founder of and runs the successful 'Piano and more' concert series at St Peter and St Paul in Tring, and is a founder member of the Icknield Ensemble as well as the Icknield and Arensky Trios. She is also a member of the Pisces Ensemble, based in North Wales, with whom she gave a well-received concert at the Criccieth Festival in June 2019, and completed her first international examining tour for ABRSM in summer 2019 to Malaysia.

Over lockdown, Anna was lucky to continue to teach and play via Zoom and Skype, even acquiring some new pupils, and was very happy to be able to find alternative ways of communicating her love of music with others, such as recording several solo recitals, many of which can be found on YouTube. She has several upcoming performances, details of which can be found on her website: www.annalehair.co.uk.

Chiltern Choir Members singing this evening

Soprano

Caroline Bartlett
Mary Bungard
Anni Facer
Jennifer Gorsuch
Jill Haslam
Sue Kesteven

Lyndsay Ward

Hilary Broadbent
Marian Davies
Gabrielle Fisher
Christine Guy
Barbara Johnson
Sarah Moreton
Beverley Small
Gill Watson

Alto

Sue Canderton
Ana De'Ath
Philippa Goss
Gillian Pugh
Maggie Shrive
Beryl Whittaker

Roy Cottrell
Rita Fryer
Clare Hearnshaw
Miriam Morgan
Marion Wax

Tenor

Mike Currey
Andy Etchells

Gijs Crone
Isabel Walker

Bass

Paul Davies
Martin Robinson

John Haslam
Richard Watson

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The following people have been made honorary members in recognition of their extended service to the choir:

Mrs K. Darby	Mr J. Facer	Mr M. Gaudie
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Programme compiled and designed by Beryl Whittaker



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Family Friendly concert of Christmas music

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Saturday 19 March 2022

Mendelsohn's Elijah

Highlights

Venue to be confirmed

Saturday 2 July 2022

An Evening of Jazz

Details to be confirmed

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